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Chinese PM Li's Visit

Reforming Indian Police

India-Japan Relations

Indian Media's Priorities

and many more

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Editor's Note

It is indeed an honour to be associated with Vivek, an intellectually stimulating journal, whose enlightened readership is continually on the rise. It was very kind of Ambassador P P Shukla to have introduced me in such glowing terms (in the last issue) to the distinguished readers. I sincerely hope and pray that I live upto the expectations raised by him.

In the days to come, among other things, we are planning variety in content and contributors besides enhanced readership. We look forward to your valuable inputs and guidance in this regard.

The month of May has been extraordinarily active. We have had several summit level meetings between the Indian leadership and their counterparts from China, Japan, Afghanistan, Thailand et al. We also witnessed the gruesome Maoist attack in Chhatisgarh, which raised several questions pertaining to internal security.

In this issue, our eminent analysts have attempted to put forward the significance and implications of these developments and suggested short term and long term measures to deal with some of the major issues confronting us vis a vis bilateral relations and national security.

We welcome not only feedback from your end but also contributions in the form of articles, occasional papers and monographs on our different areas of study. Readers are also requested to circulate further the e-journal to their friends and well-wishers who are interested in/concerned about the issues that we highlight in this humble effort.

As Henry Ford once famously said, "[Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.](#)"

K G Suresh

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Chinese Premier Li's Visit To India: Engaging To Contain

- *Brig (Retd) Vinod Anand*

Strategic Backdrop

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang's visit to India took place at a crucial time when the geopolitics at the international level are in a state of flux with the US pursuing its pivot to Asia-Pacific strategy besides its ongoing draw down from Afghanistan. China, as a possible response to the US maneuvers, is moving to forge new strategic equations and strengthen its old ones. China's involvement in territorial disputes with some of its neighbours like Japan, Vietnam and Philippines also not only restricts its freedom of strategic maneuver but also paints a negative image of China's peaceful rise theory and motivates affected countries to move closer to the US and the West to balance China. Therefore, President Xi Jinping's first visit abroad to Russia was in this context aimed at stressing the importance of its relations with a close ally.

Similarly, Prime Minister Li's visit to India was with an understanding that India was a key power that could tilt the emerging international strategic balance either way. While Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Beijing was due in the coming months, yet Li's visit to India prior to that exhibited the level of urgency and keenness with which the new leadership wishes to engage India and possibly reduce the trust deficit and address mutual differences on a number of issues of concern to both. Chinese leadership is also concerned with Indian moves to forge a closer relationship with Japan and therefore the timing of Li's visit before Singh's scheduled trip to Tokyo was also significant in the strategic context.

That Li chose to make India his first visit abroad after assuming office has given a positive thrust to Sino-Indian relations and also underscored the importance of this

**Brig (Retd) Vinod Anand, Senior Fellow, VIF*

relationship in shaping the emerging world order. The Joint statement issued at the end of the visit notes that "both countries view each other as partners for mutual benefit and not as rivals or competitors."

Issues of Concern: No Easy Solutions

Evidently, the most important issue is the settlement of border dispute where both sides have failed to find a solution despite 15 rounds of talks by Special Representatives' (SRs). This is further compounded by the fact that the Chinese side has not communicated to India their perception on as to where does the Line of Actual Control (LAC) lie. Despite the so called 'candid and frank' exchange of views there is a general impression that the Indian Prime Minister was not assertive enough in communicating New Delhi's views on recent incursion by PLA. Singh's statement terming it as an 'incident' in the Western Sector has not been well-received in the strategic community.

As expected, the Chinese proposal for formulating a new mechanism in the shape of a Border Cooperation Agreement/Border Defence Management Agreement has not been agreed to by India, as according to New Delhi, the 'existing mechanisms have proved their worth' in the recent border stand-off. Not only India had put forward its own proposals to deal with border flare-ups India also sought more time to examine Beijing's proposal. Further, suggestions for demilitarization of border areas are fraught with risk

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so far as India is concerned because of lack of development of strategic infrastructure on the Indian side.

However, what has been stressed by India is that an early boundary settlement is a necessary pre-condition for stabilizing the relationship between the two nations. Though these issues have been left for the next round of SR talks, yet the dissonance in Sino-Indian relations is likely to persist unless this fundamental divergence is addressed in a substantive manner.

Another issue flagged by Indian leadership was the construction of

dams on Yarlung Tsangpo/Brahmaputra River without taking into account the interest of lower riparian countries. India proposed a joint mechanism for the same but this did not find any positive response from the Chinese side. China was only ready to share some hydrological data of river flows which might cause floods on the Indian side. In fact, India's demand was that the mandate of existing Expert Level Mechanism should be expanded to include information sharing on upstream development

projects on these rivers. Li also spoke reassuringly of China's respect for the rights of the

It needs to be remembered that China had prevented the Asian Development Bank from advancing funds for projects in Arunachal Pradesh.

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lower riparian states. This has been interpreted by Indian officials as a "movement forward" but it is not clear up to what degree. Generally, China has been known for disregarding the rights of downstream countries over the rivers flowing down from Chinese territory which is contrary to international conventions on river water flows.

The third important issue from Indian perspective was a large number of Chinese (possibly PAP or some other militia personnel)

working on projects in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) which is recognized by even China as a disputed area. Though this point was not brought up by India during the deliberations with Li, it remains an area of concern for New Delhi. Conclusion of an agreement with Pakistan on constructing an economic corridor through POK with construction projects in admittedly disputed territory indicates double standards being followed by China. It needs to be remembered that China had prevented the

Trade Imbalance and connected issues: Some Promises

Imbalance in trade was another area which was sought to be addressed by both sides though; largely the Chinese delegation consisted mostly of export representatives rather than importers. A number of proposals were made, and these included greater Indian access to the Chinese market, investment in each country by the other, and exploring ways to allow Indian

manufactures to export their products to China. Beijing also offered to invest in and build infrastructure in this country. India's infrastructure requirements are huge but there are also some concerns about Chinese ways of working and investing in such projects which may be disadvantageous to Indian firms.

The Chinese Premier did promise to help the IT, pharma and other Indian companies to promote their businesses in China. Apparently, this may not help much as the trade deficit with China is very large and India would have to think of innovative ways to reduce the imbalance. India was also not keen to enter into a bilateral Regional Trade Agreement as also a Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) which would have further skewed the trade balance in favour of China.

It was also the first time that a mention of promoting the Kunming Initiative or BCIM (Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar) Forum for Regional Cooperation for improving connectivity and trade relations through multimodal corridors from Yunnan- Myanmar and India's

North East was made at the highest level.

Earlier, India viewed it as only a provincial initiative by Yunnan; it had also not gained much traction due to reservations by India on grounds of security and connected issues. Hopefully, some substance would be added to it in the coming years. So far only conferences of the forum have been held and some publicity to the BCIM concept has been given through Kolkata to Kunming car rally. Surprisingly, there were no members from Yunnan in China's business delegation. However, overall on the question of addressing trade imbalance and allied issues Li exhibited receptivity and reasonableness.

Apparently, the Joint Statement also reflected that China and India were ready to discuss bilateral cooperation in civil nuclear field for the first time. India is looking forward to China removing its opposition to India becoming a member of the NSG (Nuclear Suppliers Group). India is also keen that China should not provide its technology etc. to Pakistan for Chashma III and IV nuclear plants. The Joint Statement maintains that "the two sides will carry out bilateral

cooperation in civil nuclear energy in line with their respective international commitments.” However, it is envisaged that China would continue to cooperate with Pakistan under grandfathering clause which, perhaps, could be termed by China as part of its ‘international commitments’.

A total of eight agreements were signed between India and China in areas of military-to-military cooperation to include exercises between respective Armies, Air Forces and Navies; cooperation in non-traditional areas of security, relaxing of visas for enhancing people to people relations etc. These were largely areas of congruence except that in military exercises, the scope and scale is very limited.

Regional and Global issues

For sometime, both India and China were interacting with each other at Track II and even Track I levels on the question of evolving scenario in Afghanistan post 2014 where both countries are

concerned about security and stability. India and China have invested huge capital in Afghanistan and are also apprehensive about the adverse fallout of instability in Afghanistan on the region. Both have endorsed an “Afghan-led, Afghan-owned” reconciliation process. India believes that a positive Chinese involvement in Afghanistan may have the effect of moderating Pakistan’s stance on the issue. Though, so far China

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has largely viewed the Afghanistan issue through Pakistani prism.

There has also been general convergence on most of the global issues where both India and China

have largely cooperated on climate and trade issues i.e. in Doha Development Round of WTO and Durban climate change summit and WTO issues. Further, for long both sides have been supporting the central role of the UN in the international affairs which the US has been disregarding for many years.

A mention of Asia Pacific security was also made where both sides

observed that principles of international law should be followed to maintain peace and stability; this was somewhat of an indirect and mild criticism of America's Asian pivot strategy. Another clause in the joint statement states that both sides "take a positive view of each other's participation in regional and sub-regional cooperation processes, and support each other in enhancing friendly relations with their common neighbors for mutual benefit, and win-win results." From Chinese perspective, it would mean that India should not be concerned about China's engagement with its South Asian neighbours while India would interpret it as China should, therefore, take similar view of India's engagement with Vietnam, other ASEAN nations as also Japan and other East Asian countries.

Assessment

It has been said that that talks took were candid and frank indicating that both sides articulated their views freely.

India, in a way, did underline its unhappiness with lack of progress on the border issue and connected issues by not restating the Chinese demand of including the usual averment of Tibet being part of China and 'One China' policy etc. However, India did try to play down the issue as basic policy of India on Tibet has not undergone any fundamental change. It appears to be a bargaining tactic for China's one-sided policies on POK. Indian officials feel that there is no point in making such remarks/commitments without getting anything in return as Kashmir is of core concern to India.

Further, China also wanted to make mention of South China and East China Sea as areas of core concern but was not accepted to be included in the official statement because of the larger ramifications on the sovereignty and freedom of navigation issues.

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Overall, the visit can be described as moderately successful from Indian perspective as both sides have strived to resolve the core divergences but no easy solution is

likely in the short-term. The new Chinese leadership has tried to reach out to India without offering any strategic concessions while giving minor concessions and making some promises. Positive development could possibly be that the Chinese Premier visited India first thereby indicating the new leadership's priority. Li's visit to Pakistan immediately thereafter

denotes that China is still playing balance of power games in South Asia. Convergence on most of the global issues will not help much unless the bilateral divergences are settled amicably.

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Prime Minister Singh's Visit And India-Japan Relations

- Prof. G V C Naidu

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's recent visit to Japan could not have come at a more appropriate time. Though it was scheduled to take place last December, the summit had to be postponed due to sudden announcement of elections to the Japanese Parliament. Thus, the Indian Prime Minister got an opportunity to talk to his newly elected counterpart, Shinzo Abe, who was the chief architect of India-Japan relations when he was Prime Minister for about a year in 2006-07.

Undoubtedly, the credit goes to the Japanese leader for conceptualising the idea of 'Indo-Pacific' that has become among both policymakers and analysts the new geostrategic template to denote growing interface between the Indian and Pacific Oceans and, importantly, the rising stature of India as a great power of consequence.

In his highly appreciated address to the joint session of the Indian

Parliament during his last India visit, Abe had talked eloquently of the emergence of 'confluence of two seas' and the need for India and Japan to join hands to address a number of issues at the global, East Asian regional and bilateral level.

In an article to the Project Syndicate soon after his election as Prime Minister, Abe passionately advocated the need for open and democratic countries to forge close links. In that short article, he devoted more space to India than any other country. He wrote, "I envisage a strategy whereby Australia, India, Japan, and the US state of Hawaii form a diamond to safeguard the maritime commons stretching from the Indian Ocean region to the western Pacific. I am prepared to invest, to the greatest possible extent, Japan's capabilities in this security diamond." Further, he stated, "Of the two countries, India – a resident power in East Asia, with the Andaman and

**Prof. G V C Naidu*

Nicobar Islands sitting at the western end of the Strait of Malacca (through which some 40% of world trade passes) – deserves greater emphasis. Japan is now engaged in regular bilateral service-to-service military dialogues with India, and has embarked on official trilateral talks that include the US. And India’s government has shown its political savvy by forging an agreement to provide Japan with rare earth minerals – a vital component in many manufacturing processes – after China chose to use its supplies of rare earths as a diplomatic stick.”

The visit gains considerable significance

because of the backdrop in which it took place: the recent standoff with China over its incursions across the line of control in Ladakh, Beijing’s growing stridence on its claims over the Senkaku islets in East China Sea currently under Japanese control and its inflexibility and use of force over sovereignty of islands in the South China Sea. The visit provided an appropriate strategic setting for India and Japan to

chart a new course in their relationship, which appeared to be losing steam not because the Japanese had lost interest in India but because of India’s own indecision and a lack of robust response. China is the elephant in the room and invariably would figure in the discussions, but there is a host of other issues of common interest and concern that deserve a lot more attention.

Fortunately for India, the drift that Japan has witnessed in its domestic politics in the last few years with six prime ministers in five years appears to be over with Shinzo Abe successfully staging an unprecedented

come back at the helm of affairs with a clear mandate. Unlike in his previous stint, Abe is far more resolute and confident and is willing to take bold steps on both economic and diplomatic fronts. He has unleashed his own brand of an economic revival programme, some call it Abenomics, which is risky but seems to be working. And this should be good news for India. There are three specific areas that figured prominently one

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way or another during the Singh's interactions with his counterpart.

Firstly, India has been the largest recipient of Japanese aid for the last several years but in terms of investments, though steadily growing, they have not come up to expectations. Compared to more than US\$ 100 bn. that Japan has invested in China, it is hardly 14 bn. in India till 2012, which constituted less than 4 percent of Japan's total outbound investments. The fruits of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between India and Japan that became operational in August 2011 are yet to be seen. The bilateral trade at \$18 bn. last year was about 1/20th of Japan's trade with China.

To be sure, it is not that Japanese are not interested but it is a fact that India is a far more difficult place to do business with woefully poor infrastructure, an enduring licence Raj system and other associated evils such as red tape and corruption. The much touted mega project, Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor, signed in 2006 is yet to take off and similarly the progress on dedicated rail freight corridors that Japan has committed to fund connecting

Delhi with Mumbai and Kolkata is excruciatingly tardy. More fundamentally, India is still an outlier when it comes to extensive East Asian production networks where Japanese are deeply involved and unless it integrates with that region, India will remain unattractive to Japanese investors. Hence, there is an urgent need to strengthen this weak link in order to make the strategic partnership truly comprehensive.

Secondly, a quick agreement on civilian nuclear cooperation (talks stalled consequent to the March 2011 Fukushima accident) is critical for two reasons. First and foremost, Japan has the most advanced technology in this sector and the other, except Russian, most major global reactor building companies have close links with Japanese companies: Toshiba owns American Westinghouse, Hitachi and Mitsubishi have close technical tie ups with General Electric (U.S.) and Areva (French) respectively. Further, Toshiba alone has more than 30 percent of global reactor building capacity. Hence, India cannot hope to forge any meaningful cooperation in this direction without an agreement with Japan.

Despite continued scepticism and complete closure of all nuclear reactors in Japan, Abe has been actively promoting Japanese reactors. Besides Vietnam, he recently signed agreements with United Arab Emirates and Turkey. India is a huge market Japan cannot afford to miss, lest Russians and even South Koreans may corner it. Yet, a deal is not easy to arrive at in the present environment in Japan although the two Prime Ministers have agreed to expedite the negotiations. Some progress can be expected after the crucial elections to the Japanese Upper House in July.

Thirdly, with an eye on China, intensified security cooperation is another key area that has figured quite prominently in the discussions.

Thirdly, with an eye on China, intensified security cooperation is another key area that has figured quite prominently in the discussions. Effectively the India-Japan 'strategic partnership' began to take off only in 2009, though the progress since then has been stupendous. There are currently some eight bilateral institutional mechanisms including annual Prime Ministerial meetings, Two-Plus-Two Talks, and military-to-military talks. The low key coast guard exercises have been

upgraded to the navy-level in view of the rapidly changing maritime security environment in the Indo-Pacific region where both have high stakes, which now is becoming the global centre of gravity. There are a number of opportunities for them to work together in addressing innumerable non-traditional security challenges as also in Myanmar and other countries of Southeast Asia.

What is noteworthy is that New Delhi could not have asked for a more favourable line up of top Japanese political leadership: Prime Minister Abe, Deputy Prime Minister Taro Aso, Secretary General of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, Shigeru Ishiba, and several other cabinet ministers are known Indophiles. Time is most opportune to take full advantage of this.

While it is true that for more than two decades the Japanese economy has been mired in virtual stagnation buffeted by deflation and mounting debt, it would be foolhardy to undermine its strengths: Japan is sitting on a mountain of more than \$18 trillion

of private savings, is a major supplier of investible capital and it continues to a leader in several advanced technologies. Tokyo has also been loosening its self-imposed restrictions on export of arms and dual-use technologies. It means a huge opportunity for India to work with Japan in certain niche areas. The bottom line is that Japan has been

instrumental in transforming East Asia with its generous investments and technology transfer and the same thing can happen with India too provided India gets its act together and plays its cards well.

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The Pakistan Factor In India's Afghanistan Policy

- *Monish Gulati*

During his last week's visit to New Delhi, Afghan President Hamid Karzai sought a pro 'active' Indian involvement in Afghanistan's security even as across the border, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang committed to improve the connectivity of the strategically located Gwadar port to realize the Pakistani dream of turning it into a regional trade hub for China, Afghanistan and the Central Asian Republics (CARs).

Also the first US convoy of 50 trucks and armoured vehicles reached Quetta from Kandahar on 21 May, carrying US equipment being withdrawn from Afghanistan through the Chaman crossing on the Pak-Afghan border to Port Qasim, Karachi. This came even as Pentagon put in a request for 'reprogramming' its budget for 2013 on account of additional expenditure of \$ 1.8 billion it had incurred when Pakistan had closed NATO supply routes to Afghanistan from Karachi last

year.

Contrasting events over the last week point to how Pakistan's foreign policy trumps India's foreign relations in the sub-continent. It also indicates how Pakistan with an economy propped up by aid handouts finds itself on the same table as US and China without declaring itself a regional superpower. India on the other hand appears to be blundering through its foreign policy options or operating with its hands tied. The question to be asked is whether India lacks the capability to articulate and realize its interests in Afghanistan or its foreign policy manoeuvres have been constrained by certain 'red lines' Pakistan has managed to frame through a dexterous manipulation of international interests and concerns.

Afghan-Pak Relationship

Despite a common and porous border, ethnic bonds and shared

**Monish Gulati*

Pashtun culture, Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan have at best, been tenuous. After the dismal outcome of the recent Afghan-Pak-UK trilateral and the failure of Hagel and Kerry to achieve a significant breakthrough in Af-Pak, it is becoming increasingly difficult to predict what direction the relations between the two countries will take after the ongoing security transition in Afghanistan. Quite simply, as one analyst put it, "There are way too many things in play." The failure of the two countries to come to an understanding on their relationship has bred an atmosphere of suspicion and frustration making third party intervention on behest of either side very difficult.

The failure of the two countries to come to an understanding on their relationship has bred an atmosphere of suspicion and frustration making third party intervention on behest of either side very difficult.

Other than the China and Iran, the two neighbours Pakistan shares with Afghanistan, Pakistan's relations with US and India have been playing a crucial role in shaping its strategy in Afghanistan. Besides the Pakistani fears of encirclement by India and the perceived Indian interference in its internal security affairs particularly in

Baluchistan, it is the blatant Pakistani demand at virtually all recent bilateral and multilateral forums that Afghanistan has no meaningful relationship with India and it has proved to be a major obstacle in ties between the two South Asian countries. This insistence has been shrill of late on Indo-Afghan bilateral security cooperation, which is largely confined to training of personnel as against any Indian military presence on Afghan soil. What is worse is the tacit support such demands have received from countries such as the UK.

However, it is the choppy dynamics of its relations with the US that has had overbearing influence on Pakistan's strategic outlook and external policy. Post 2001, US has displaced India as Pakistan's prime foreign policy concern which in turn strongly influences the country's dealings with Afghanistan because it regards the US as one of the major causes of instability in Afghanistan and indeed, within Pakistan itself.

Like all regional stakeholders, Pakistan has also hedged its

interests in Afghanistan, which unfortunately is premised on the outcome that in the end, US will not have its way in Afghanistan. It is this factor that makes Pakistan's hedging strategy distinct from that of other regional actors, who too are safeguarding their interests, but against the uncertainty of the final outcome in Afghanistan. Therefore, Pakistan will oppose directly or indirectly any move to prolong US presence across the border. Many analysts infer that it is this position which induces duplicity in Pakistan's approach towards US/NATO in Afghanistan.

Contrary to what many in India would like to believe, it is very likely that the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan and the consequent reduction of US influence in the region will take away even the economic cooperation plank from the Indo-Afghan relationship. Pakistan, on the other hand, has doubly hedged its bets against Indian role in Afghanistan by reinforcing the perception that its support for the Afghan Taliban is a reaction to Indian assertiveness in Afghanistan. This ensures that any Pakistani assistance in furthering Afghan reconciliation that involves Taliban's cooperation

comes with the underlying precondition of keep India out of the picture. A condition that remains valid even after the US drawdown and as long as Taliban remains a force to reckon with in Afghanistan. It also gives credence to this ungainly argument that a part of Afghanistan's woes are due to India's 'hegemonistic' aspirations in the region.

Thus, India finds itself in a position where Pakistan's support to the insurgency in Kashmir is being viewed as legitimate assistance to a local independence struggle while any notion that India might harbor for a tit-for-tat in Baluchistan will be construed as interference in Pakistan's internal affairs and in the eyes of the international community an 'irresponsible' act to destabilize the fragile situation in Afghanistan and regional peace. International sentiments remain equally 'understanding' of Pakistani fears on 'encirclement' by India, while it is India that is finding itself increasingly isolated by China in its own backyard.

In addition to managing its affairs with the US, Pakistan appears to utilise its 'all-weather' relationship with China as a counterbalance to both the US and

India and at the same time partake economic benefits through development of bilateral trade . It also looks to increased transit revenue on account of trade traffic through its transportation routes and ports as a spin off from the Chinese economic activity in Afghanistan. The recent handover of commercial operations of Gwadar port to the Chinese is an indicator of this approach Pakistan is also trying to manage its disagreements with Iran over the strategic approach to Afghanistan and Central Asia. This would provide Pakistan access to Iran's energy resources, prevent diversion of potential transit trade revenue from Gwadar and simultaneously deny India access to the CARs. The recent Iran Pakistan gas pipeline deal with Iran showcases this approach which Pakistan formalized against US opposition and the seemingly irreconcilable Sunni-Shia sectarian divide.

Internally the situation in Pakistan is equally confounding as the country which continues to face major concerns on economic stability, growth and security,

professes lack of state control over militants on its territory and what it has got many to believe- its nuclear arsenal. Pakistani non-state actors who appear to be beyond Pakistani control (in the process absolve it of any responsibility for their actions) strangely, at times, find common ground with the Pakistani state in pursuit of their 'criminal' objectives. The recent decision of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) to participate in Afghan Taliban's spring offensive in Afghanistan against Afghan and foreign forces is one such case. TTP also confirmed that its cadres were already active against Afghan and foreign forces, especially in the Logar province.

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Red Lines

Through a deft management of international opinion and a subtle exploitation of their vulnerabilities and fears, Pakistan has managed draw certain 'red lines' for Indian foreign policy on Afghanistan. The first line ensures India deals with Pakistani support to foreign militants in Kashmir on its side of line of control only, as an internal security issue. Second, any

support to militancy in Baluchistan, even financially, is an irresponsible act of interfering in the internal affairs of an economically and politically fragile nuclear weapon state. Third line restricts support to Afghanistan to non-military /security areas and no measure is taken to upstage Pakistan's influence and leverage with the government of the day in Afghanistan. That comes with minor discomfort of issues such as no Most Favoured Nation status, no transit for Indian trade, TAPI (Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India) gas line remains a pipe dream etc.

Conclusion

It is imperative for India, therefore, for to find its way out of the 'foreign policy confines' Pakistan has created for it with regards to its relations with Afghanistan. There is a need to replace the theory of Indian 'irresponsibility' in seeking a greater role in future of Afghanistan with Pakistani 'responsibility' to acknowledge the fact that that as an independent sovereign nation, Afghanistan has the right to manage its own relations with its neighbours driven by the interest of its own people.

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The Art Of A Bloodless War

- *Kanwal Sibal*

This is the lesson from Ladakh — when cracks are papered over, they reappear several conclusions can be drawn from The India-China Stand-off in Ladakh. One, China can create an incident on the unsettled border at a time and place of its choosing, irrespective of positive developments in other aspects of the bilateral relationship. We should not believe that expanded political and trade ties will dissuade China from asserting its unreasonable territorial claims. It treats territorial issues as a core interest, separating them from even massive advantages it can obtain from a bilateral relationship, as in the case of China-Japan ties.

Two, we have no effective political answer to such provocations. In what can be termed as political whimpering, we downplayed the Chinese action, characterising it as acne on an otherwise beautiful face, advising against losing sleep over it, calling it localised and even an occurrence in no man's

land.

We seemed reluctant to point a political finger at the Chinese leadership for the provocation. Our extraordinarily restrained reaction showed greater concern than that of China itself about not disturbing the dynamic of our improving relationship. Risk-averse and believing that we lacked good options, we calculated that a conciliatory posture and stress on dialogue offered the least damaging way out of the crisis.

We wanted the forthcoming visits of Foreign minister Salman Khurshid to China and that of Chinese premier Li Keqiang to India to proceed as planned, as if we had more stakes than China had in their success. Such high-level visits are intended to bolster ties, not to paper over militarily provocative acts to the advantage of the stronger country. By treating the Chinese incursion as incidental, with little political import, capable of being resolved at the local level and preferring,

**Kanwal Sibal, Dean, Centre for International Relations and Diplomacy, VIF*

meanwhile, business as usual to continue with China, we gave the latter considerable room to defuse the issue as opportune.

Three, we lack confidence in a military option. Our armed forces believe that they could have forced the Chinese intruders to withdraw without a fight, but our political leadership is excessively cautious. Apparently, it took the Cabinet Committee on Security 17 days to seek a briefing directly from our army chief, indicating that we preferred dealing with the PLA intrusion as a diplomatic issue, not a military one.

It can be safely assumed that the Chinese, adamant about not withdrawing despite several flag meetings and diplomatic demarches, would not have agreed to restore the status quo ante without some Indian concession. To force India to cease its defensive activity in other parts of Ladakh, China ignored the existing border mechanisms to resolve differences and relied on an act of force in the Depsang Valley. We have been cautioned about what to expect if we persist in objectionable activities in areas

where actual control is disputed in their reckoning. Our failure to respond militarily will cost us in the future. It would be naive to believe that Khurshid's toughened tone in describing the Chinese response to our demarches as "unsatisfactory" and PM Manmohan Singh's decision to extend his stay in Japan by a day persuaded the Chinese to end the stand-off. They might have decided that their limited objective had been served.

Three, we lack confidence in a military option. Our armed forces believe that they could have forced the Chinese intruders to withdraw without a fight, but our political leadership is excessively cautious.

Four, the incursion clearly caught us unawares as we had begun to believe that China, pre-occupied with its eastern

neighbours, was genuinely reaching out to us, and that by imaginatively using this opportunity we could lay the foundation of a new bilateral relationship. While it is true that a stable relationship with China serves our foreign policy interests well, it can not be a one-sided affair. Underneath the rhetoric of wanting improved ties with India, China is steadily undermining our interests in our neighbourhood by wanting equal treatment with India in Nepal, courting the Sri

Lankan government with economic and military aid, wooing the maldives government, strengthening ties with Bangladesh and continuing to strategically instrumentalise pakistan with nuclear cooperation and the takeover of Gwadar port.

Our unduly positive projections at the official level of our developing

ties with China are in conflict with reality. When cracks are papered over, they reappear — that is the lesson to be drawn from the recent drama in Ladakh.

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Sarabjit Singh: Execution By Murder

- *Sushant Sareen*

In the end, Sarabjit Singh was executed not by a hangman but by Pakistan's famed 'non-state' actors – his fellow prisoners on death row – who are believed to have been put up to the job of bludgeoning him into a lifeless pulp by 'state' actors (jail officials). Of course, instead of someone pulling the hangman's lever, in Sarabjit's case it was the proverbial plug being pulled on the life support machines by 'state' doctors. Regardless of what spin is put on his death by the Pakistani authorities, it is quite clear that it was a political decision taken by them to put a closure to the entire drama surrounding Sarabjit.

The entire Sarabjit saga is a tale of clinical solutions being used by Pakistani authorities against him: his arrest – he was a convenient scapegoat for the Pakistani security forces who needed someone to blame for a series of bomb blasts; his conviction – all evidence proving that he was not the person responsible was disregarded, and fake and tutored witnesses were produced (some of whom later retracted their testimony) to procure a guilty verdict and have him sentenced him to death; his murder – get already

condemned prisoners to beat him to death (their punishment can't get any worse but they will be able to earn 'sawab' or rewards in the after-life for having killed a despicable infidel) and pre-empt any possible reprieve or release for him, in addition to getting even with the 'hated Hindus' for executing two soldiers of Islam (Ajmal Kasab and Afzal Guru) and sending a strong signal to Infidel India; and finally his execution – carried out by doctors who switched off his life support systems because it was too expensive for to keep him alive indefinitely and it was not politically possible to send him to India.

Even after Sarabjit was reduced into a vegetable as a result of the brutal beating he was subjected to, the Pakistani bloodlust wasn't satisfied. It was almost as though the only thing that would satisfy the talibanised Pakistani mindset was stringing Sarabjit's comatose body on the gallows! Having committed the terrible wrong of outsourcing his execution to 'non-state' actors, the Pakistanis could still have done the right thing by sending a lifeless but still alive Sarabjit back to his country and his family. For anyone to argue

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that the interim government in Pakistan was not empowered to take a decision on releasing even a comatose Sarabjit is complete nonsense. If it wanted, the caretaker government was fully competent to have advised the President to grant him clemency and repatriate him to India on humanitarian grounds. That it chose not to, suggests that it is either scared of a right-wing reaction or else subscribe to the extremist mindset.

Having blown this opportunity, the Pakistanis should be prepared for a blowback of hostility, if not from an effete Indian government then at least from an incensed public opinion in India. The murder of Sarabjit will certainly add bitterness in relations and serve as a setback to efforts to promote people-to-people ties between the two countries. Perhaps, this is exactly what those who conspired to murder Sarabjit were aiming for. But to say that Indian people should not play into the hands of enemies of peace by giving in to their emotions over the brutal killing of Sarabjit is to miss the point.

If indeed peace is such a desirable objective and is in the interest of

peoples of both countries, then is the onus for peace only on India? Doesn't Pakistan also have a responsibility to rein in these enemies of peace? Didn't Pakistan understand the sensitivities attached to Sarabjit's case and how any untoward incident could embitter an already tenuous state of relations? And if it did, why didn't they take precautions of the type India took with Ajmal Kasab to safeguard Sarabjit from any assault? Or is it that they didn't care a whit for the sentiments and emotions of Indians? If so, then what is this people-to-people relation that is being promoted and incessantly parroted by apologists for Pakistan? Isn't it therefore time that we re-evaluate the state of relations and re-examine the assumptions that are guiding India's policy on Pakistan? Of course, if we want to prove Einstein's definition of insanity – doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result each time – correct, then we are on the right track. Otherwise, there needs to be a new approach adopted towards Pakistan, one that sheds the shibboleths of the past.

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Reforming The Indian Police

- *Dr M N Buch*

In the case relating to irregularities or even criminality in the allocation of coal blocks, where investigation was handed over to the CBI, the Supreme Court has taken strong objection to government intervention in proceedings pending before the agency and the Hon'ble Judges have remarked that they will not rest till CBI becomes independent of government control. This has once again led to clamour for police reforms.

Let us go to the Act which created the Indian Police, the Indian Police Act of 1861. The Preamble of the Police Act reads, "Whereas it is expedient to reorganise the police and to make it a more efficient instrument for the prevention and detection of crime ..." Let us compare this with the Delhi Police Act 1978, which followed 117 years later. The Preamble to this Act reads, "An Act to amend and consolidate the laws relating to the regulation of the police in the Union Territory of Delhi". This Act does not in any

way detract from the objective of the 1861 Act which was to make the police a more efficient instrument for the prevention and detection of crime. In other words, the primary function of the police is to prevent and detect crime and it is for this purpose that we have organised a police force. Section 23 of the Police Act of 1861 reads as under:- "It shall be the duty of every police officer promptly to obey and execute all orders and warrants lawfully issued to him by any competent authority; to collect and communicate intelligence affecting public peace; to prevent the commission of offences and public nuisances; to detect and bring offenders to justice; and to apprehend the persons whom he is legally authorised to apprehend and for whose apprehension sufficient ground exists..." When we look at the Delhi Police Act of 1978 we find that under sections 59 and 60 the provisions of section 23 of the Police Act of 1861 have been elaborated but in essence the duties of the police remain as was prescribed in 1861. Even in the Model Police Bill prepared by the

**Dr M N Buch, Dean, Centre for Governance and Political Studies, VIF*

Soli Sorabji Committee this position has not substantially changed. The duty of the police is to prevent offences from taking place, investigate crimes when they occur and apprehend criminals. This is fundamental to every police force in the world.

The Police Act notwithstanding, the principal powers and functions of the police are given in the Code of Criminal Procedure. For example, the power to arrest persons is given in chapter V Cr.P.C. and in effecting an arrest the police officer is bound by the provisions of law. He has no arbitrary powers, nor can an unauthorised person direct or pressurise a police officer to arrest any person or persons. In fact section 60A Cr.P.C. is very specific in this behalf and it reads, "Arrest to be made strictly according to the Code: No arrest shall be made except in accordance with the provisions of this Code or any other law for the time being in force providing for arrest". A Magistrate, a Judge, a superior police officer who is directly connected with the case in hand may order the arrest of a person but certainly no minister, no

politician, no other officer can give such an order to the police. If such an order is given the police must ignore it.

Chapter X Cr.P.C. gives the Executive Magistracy and the police the additional duty of maintaining public order and tranquility. In other words, the police is responsible for ensuring that law and order is maintained. For this purpose it is empowered to use force, including lethal force, to disperse an unlawful assembly, to prevent riots and to ensure that

there is peace and tranquility.

The Police Act notwithstanding, the principal powers and functions of the police are given in the Code of Criminal Procedure.

Chapter XI reminds the police that it is its duty to interpose for the

purpose of preventing the commission of any cognisable offence. Preventive action, therefore, is not only permissible, it is enjoined and failure to take preventive action could be treated as dereliction of duty. A police officer may arrest without a warrant a person designing to commit a cognisable offence and to intervene to prevent injury to public property. Once again the police is required to follow the law and intervene whenever there is adequate information to suggest that a cognisable offence may be

committed. In this behalf the police is not subordinate to anyone and must act according to law.

Chapter XII Cr.P.C. is one of the most important parts of the Code of Criminal Procedure because it is under this chapter that the police registers information in relation to a cognisable offence and then proceeds with its investigation, arrives at a conclusion about the person or persons against whom there is sufficient evidence to establish a prima facie case, or decides that no case is made out against any person and, therefore, the case should be closed with the permission of a competent court. This is the chapter under which the police presents a challan before a Magistrate and if the Magistrate takes cognisance thereon, the police thereafter proceeds to help the prosecution in the trial which would follow.

In the matter of investigation the police, which includes the Delhi Special Police Establishment in whose name CBI takes action, is totally immunised from pressure by anyone. There are only three authorities which can ask questions to the police regarding an investigation. The first is the superior police officer who, under section 36 Cr.P.C. by virtue of his

right to exercise the same power as the officer incharge of the police station located within his jurisdiction, can call the station officer to account. The second is a designated police officer who is so directed by the state government under section 158 Cr.P.C to be the channel through whom a report under section 157 is to be forwarded by the station officer to a competent magistrate. Such superior officer may give instructions to the officer incharge of the police station as he thinks fit and may record such instructions on the report under section 157 while forwarding it to the Magistrate. The limitation here is that no officer who is competent to give directions to the station officer may order him to function in contravention of law, add to the charge-sheet names of the persons against whom no prima facie case is made out or delete from the list persons against whom there is a prima facie case. The instructions have to be aimed at improving the quality of the investigation and nothing more and nothing less.

A third authority would be the Magistrate before whom the report is presented. Under section 159 Cr.P.C. a Magistrate may direct investigation, depute a

subordinate magistrate to hold a preliminary enquiry or himself hold such enquiry. Such intervention is legal and lawful, but it cannot replace the police investigation, nor can it result in the police being given instructions which are not lawful. When the investigation is completed and the police officer sends his report under section 173 to a Magistrate, either by way of a challan or as a final report requesting permission to close the case, such report may be submitted through a superior police officer designated under section 158 and such officer may either immediately forward the report to the Magistrate or order further investigation. Once, however, the challan has been presented the responsibility passes to the Judiciary for further action, except to the extent that under section 173 Cr.P.C even after the challan is presented the police is competent to make supplementary investigation and forward a further report to the Magistrate.

This elaboration of law becomes necessary in order to explain that in the law as it stands today there is an absolute bar on anyone,

other than a superior police officer or a Magistrate, to intervene in the investigation of an offence. The Chief Minister, the Minister in charge of Home, their officers, other politicians, members of the media, people at large are totally precluded from any role in the investigation of an offence. The autonomy of the police in this behalf is absolute and it has been so ever since the British established the present system of policing and justice in India. The amendments to the Code of Criminal

The Chief Minister, the Minister in charge of Home, their officers, other politicians, members of the media, people at large are totally precluded from any role in the investigation of an offence.

Procedure, various Acts governing the police, have not altered this position, that is, in the investigation and prosecution of offences the police is totally independent of any executive or political authority. This does not mean that if the police needs legal advice it cannot refer the matter to the Home Department for obtaining the advice of the Law Department, of the Advocate General or the Attorney General, but this has to be done formally, specific questions have to be forwarded for a clarification or advice and the legal advice must be in writing and in the form of an opinion. It can never take the form

of a directive because ultimately the decision whether to prosecute or not and the charges on which the prosecution is to be done rests with the investigating officer. The Law Ministry or Law Department cannot give any directive whatsoever to the police in this behalf. This becomes all the more important in the light of the DSPE/CBI investigation of the cases relating to coal allocation. The mistake that the DSPE made was in showing a status report meant for submission to the Supreme Court to the Union Law Minister, the Attorney General and certain officers representing the Coal Ministry and the Prime Minister's Office. These are all persons who have no authority whatsoever in either suggesting to the police or directing it to change any part of the report. This is all the more so because DSPE had not made any formal reference for legal advice and, therefore, all the unauthorised interveners were acting without jurisdiction. Whose fault is this? Certainly the law cannot be faulted because some persons violated the law. It is the Director of the SDPE/CBI and his officers who acted wrongly in answering a summons by the Law Minister. What they should have done is to politely but firmly tell him that they would be unable to

share any information with him regarding a specific case. The Supreme Court can direct that officers shall obey the law, but if an officer chooses to ignore this direction the only remedy is to punish him. Any other action by the Supreme Court in the face of the existing clear provisions of law would be tautological and uncalled for.

Having established that the existing law gives the police complete freedom in the matter of investigation of offences and for which the police must be protected from undue influence or pressure, what are the areas in which government may and in fact should give directions to the police and what is the manner of discharging accountability in the matter of the functioning of the police? When we talk of police reforms we must take these into account. First and foremost it must be recognised that the police is a part of the executive government, created by law and as such it is both a creature of law and a servant of society as part of the Executive. To state that the Executive has no role to play in the matter of policing is something which is totally unacceptable. The Executive brings legislation before the Legislature to further its own

ability to perform as an effective organ of the State. This authority of the Executive cannot be diluted. Similarly, it is the Legislature which legislates, even in matters relating to the police and this authority also cannot be diluted. The power of superintendence over the police, including the Delhi Special Police Establishment or CBI constituted under any law creating it, will have to continue to vest in the Executive, if for no other reason than the fact that rules, regulations, etc., framed under the Police Act, any Police Act, would come under the definition of delegated legislation and would form an extension of the law in question. Delegated legislation cannot be further delegated to subordinate authorities and, therefore, the ultimate arbiter of what rules and regulations will govern the police has to be the Executive Government.

The police, in addition to the matter of offences also is a guardian of public peace and tranquility. This calls for certain regulatory powers to the police and executive magistracy,

including regulating the congregation of people, prescribing instructions and standing orders regarding traffic movement, processions and assemblies, public meetings, etc. Standing orders or procedures of how to deal with a law and order situation, a mob, and an adamant procession must contain the instructions which government wants the police to follow. It is legitimate for government to state how force can be used, the quantum of force which may be used and the attitude of the police towards different types of assemblies. For example, government may desire that a crowd largely made up of women and children, students, a religious congregation, etc., should be handled with great restraint by the police even faced by the increasing defiance of orders by the assembly. It would not be permitted to use extreme force against persons who are individually quite helpless. Similarly, an agitation by students, workers with a genuine grievance, people who are handicapped would have to be dealt with patiently, sympathetically and with great

It is legitimate for government to state how force can be used, the quantum of force which may be used and the attitude of the police towards different types of assemblies.

restraint and government must make this clear to the police. On the other hand a violent riot in which there is arson, deadly assault, looting and in particular violence aimed at a particular community must be dealt with very firmly, with adequate force being applied at the earliest juncture to bring the situation under control. Here the police must act swiftly and if the use of firearms is called for, the police must do so, though under strict fire discipline. Here the instructions of government would be different from those relating to a collection of women and children. The power of superintendence covers all this. It goes further. If a police officer disobeys instructions or is derelict in his duty government should call him to account immediately and award suitable punishment. In this matter the subordination of the police to government has to be complete and there is no way in which the police can be made independent in this behalf. This does not mean that they will work under undue constraint, but they will observe the instructions given in this behalf by government, follow instructions or pay an immediate price.

It is argued that government should virtually have no power in the matter of postings and transfers of police officers. It is considered that one of the things which sap morale is arbitrariness in personnel management and, therefore, such arbitrariness must be removed. This is a principle which applies across the board to all government organisations and should not be restricted to the police only. There must be a specific policy regarding postings and transfers, but such a policy cannot eliminate government altogether from personnel management of the police. If there are charges of misconduct against a police officer, which are raised in the Legislature, can the Chief Minister or the Home Minister turn around and state that he has no authority in this behalf? Legislators can legitimately demand that if the law does not authorise the government to even look into police misconduct, except on the advice of a complaints authority which may take its own sweet time in reaching a decision, then the law should be changed and this would have to be done notwithstanding any instructions given by any court, including the Supreme Court.

Let us carry the argument further. At present the District Magistrate is an agency not under the police but with certain powers under the Police Act. Even the Soli Sorabji Committee has not recommended dilution of these powers. However, there is another power that the DM has, which is that people who have a grievance against the police can go to him and without in any way intervening in any matter in which the police has exclusive jurisdiction, he can at least ask the Superintendent of Police about the specific complaint made to him and then take steps to persuade the police to settle the grievance. This is an immediate remedy available to people against police excesses and so far it has been working fairly well. The grievances redressal machinery suggested by Soli Sorabji Committee and pleaded for before the Supreme Court by persons who are fighting a series of writ petitions in the form of Public Interest Litigation, would be procedure bound and would not be able to give quick relief to a person who has a complaint against the police. Imagine the fate of a person illegally detained by the police, not having the wherewithal to approach a court of law and being kept at the tender mercy of the police, which has its own agenda.

To whom should such a person turn? By the time the grievance redressal machinery swings into action the man may have already faced humiliation, illegal detention, physical violence amounting to torture and worse. Should there not be someone on the ground by whom at least his complaint can be looked at and the police be made immediately accountable for its actions?

We are not living in Britain or Scandinavia. We are living in India in which, like other arms of government, the police also can be arbitrary, venal, either deliberately or unknowingly uninfluenced by law and, perhaps, in some sort of arrangement with the very criminals it is supposed to suppress. One wants a civilised police force just as one wants an educated teacher and an honest revenue official, a knowledgeable forest official, a transport department which is not steeped in corruption and a municipality which actually serves the people. The police cannot be the only organisation to be subjected to reform, nor can the police be left to its own devices in which government virtually has no power to correct wrongdoing and, in the name of autonomy, accountability is shown the door. These are all

factors which must be taken into account when we talk of police reforms. It is not an easy task, but there have to be two different but parallel approaches to reforming the police. The first is to remind the police of its own authority under law and then keep a strict vigil to ensure that the police actually functions according to the law. The second, equally important approach is that

whereas arbitrariness by officials and politicians in dealing with the police is eliminated, the system of accountability is tightened and the police must be forced to render account and tread the right path. That, according to me, is the true reform of the police.

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Lip Service Is Still Being Paid To Defence Indigenisation

- *Brig (Retd) Gurmeet Kanwal*

The Defence Minister, Mr A K Antony, has repeatedly exhorted the armed forces to procure their weapons and equipment from indigenous sources in recent months. It is a well-established fact that no nation aspiring to great power status can expect to achieve it without being substantively self-reliant in defence production. However, it is not the armed forces that are the stumbling block. Unless the government drastically reorients its policies, the import content of defence acquisitions will continue to remain over 80 per cent.

India's procurement of weapons platforms and other equipment as part of its plans for defence modernisation, must simultaneously lead to a transformative change in the country's defence technology base and manufacturing prowess. Or else, defence procurement will remain mired in disadvantageous buyer-seller, patron-client

relationships like that with the erstwhile Soviet Union and now Russia. While we manufactured Russian fighter aircraft and tanks under license, the Russians never actually transferred technology to India. Whatever India procures now must be procured with the transfer of technology being built into the contract even if it means having to pay a higher price. The aim should be to make India a design, development, manufacturing and export hub for defence equipment in two decades.

Though it seeks to encourage public-private partnerships, the government continues to retain its monopoly on defence production and R&D. The latest Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) was amended in April 2013 to reflect the current thinking on 'buying Indian'. However, in effect it still favours the defence PSUs over the private sector. MNCs are allowed to bring in only up to 26 per cent FDI as against 74 per cent for non-defence sector joint ventures.

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Though the procurement of weapons and equipment worth more than Rs 300 crore from MNCs has been linked with 30-50 per cent offsets, it is doubtful whether the economy is ready to absorb such high levels of offsets.

The DRDO is in the process of implementing the report of the P Rama Rao committee that had asked it to identify 8 to 10 critical areas that best fit its existing human resource pool, technological threshold and established capacity to take up new projects. Since its inception in 1958, the DRDO has achieved some spectacular successes, but also has many failures to its name. However, to its credit, it worked under extremely restrictive technology denial regimes and with a rather low indigenous technology base.

The DRDO must now concentrate its efforts on developing critical cutting edge technologies that no strategic partner is likely to be willing to share; for example, ballistic missile defence (BMD) technology. Other future weapons

platforms should be jointly developed, produced and marketed with India's strategic partners in conjunction with the private sector. The development of technologies that are not critical should be outsourced completely to the private sector. Also, the armed forces should be given funding support to undertake research geared towards the improvement of in-service equipment with a view to enhancing operational performance and increasing service life. Gradually, the universities and the IITs should be involved in undertaking defence R&D. This five-pronged approach will help to raise India's technological threshold over the next two decades by an order of magnitude.

The defence production process must provide a level playing field between defence PSUs and private Indian companies forming joint ventures with MNCs where necessary. The amount of FDI that MNCs can bring in must be raised to 49 per cent immediately and to 74 per cent in due course to make it attractive for MNCs. However,

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no MNC that is unable to provide transfer of technology – either due to the home country’s restrictive laws or due to proprietary considerations – should be considered for future defence acquisitions.

India cannot leap-frog to a higher defence technology trajectory virtually overnight. Transforming a low technology base to a higher plane will need time, patience and large-scale capital investment. It will also need strong support across the political spectrum. In the interim period, there will be a further dip in defence preparedness. This short-term weakness in capacity building will need to be carefully weighed against long-term gains that will be strategic in nature.

The immediate requirement is to think big in keeping with the country’s growing economic clout and to plan for the future with a level of confidence that policy planners have not dared to exhibit before. In 10 to 15 years India must begin to acquire most of its defence equipment needs from Indian companies—with or without a joint venture with an MNC. Only then will the era of self-reliance in defence acquisition truly dawn on the country. It will be a difficult quest, but not one that a great nation cannot realise.

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Indian Media Must Review Its Priorities

- *K G Suresh*

In February 2013, one of Delhi's leading newspapers published a news item which claimed that Indians don't believe in ghosts anymore and superstitions have reduced in the country. The report was based on a research conducted during the Kumbh Mela by scientists from Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), who claimed to have spoken to all sections of the society.

"In fact, Kumbh was chosen since nowhere else in the country can one find such variety of people," said Gauhar Raza, chief scientist of National Institute of Scientific Communication and Information — a part of CSIR — who led the team.

What is good news for the country at large must have been bad news not only for the Tantriks and black magic practitioners from all communities, who thrive on the superstition of the masses but also many a television channel, which over the years has been providing a staple diet of superstition such

as ghosts and revenge of the snake women to up their TRPs.

Having exhausted all such material in Indian folklore, the innovative producers did not hesitate to predict the world's end based on the Mayan calendar or to turn a God Damned Particle into God's Particle. It could not have been more outrageous and ridiculous.

Not that there is a dearth of news including positive stories in a nation of a billion plus, but then mediocrity has come to rule the roost, hard work has become a forgotten virtue and trivia the in thing.

It would also be unjust to dismiss these trends as an issue of convenience or lethargy. There are far deeper designs to it with profits being the only motive.

As the country's Vice-President Hamid Ansari put across couple of years back, "Indian media is facing a crisis of content. The phenomenon of convergence

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between news media, entertainment and telecom has meant that the demarcation between professional journalistic output, public relations, advertisement and entertainment is fast blurring”.

Apparently disturbed over the deteriorating trends in the media, Ansari was of the view that the "public perception today is that the ethical underpinning of professional journalism has weakened."

However, it is in the electronic media bogged down by TRP ratings that crisis of content is manifested more prominently,

However, it is in the electronic media bogged down by TRP ratings that crisis of content is manifested more prominently, Ansari said while referring to programmes devoted to astrology, superstition, crime and sleaze.

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Of late, another extremely worrying trend has been noticed. From the days of yellow journalism, ‘lifafa journalism’ and sting for blackmail to ‘Paid News’ and Radia Tapes, the disturbing trend now is even big media houses turning extortionist. Sensational cases of corruption are offered to be suppressed for a

price. There cannot be a more blacker period for Indian journalism.

Today, increasingly questions are being raised as to why a journalist has written a particular piece as against the earlier curiosity about what has been written by the scribe.

Referring to the "progressive transformation" of the Indian citizen into a significant consumer of media content and products,

Vice-President

Ansari had said, today questions were being raised whether journalists understand those demarcations and respect them or are willing to sacrifice

them for commercial gains.

Questions are also being asked in academic and policy quarters whether Indian journalism is aping the West blindly and not realising its role as a catalyst for inclusive development in a developing country.

Whose priorities are they battling for? P Sainath of The Hindu had once famously said that the Indian farmer would have loved to be born as the heavily subsidised

American cow. The recent race among English channels in favour of fuel price hike, deregulation, end to subsidies and FDI was absolutely out of sync with the needs and aspirations of the 'Aam Admi'. Comparisons were being made to western countries where spending on social security and farm subsidies is heavy.

While one may disagree with Press Council Chairman Justice Markandey Katju on several issues, he had a point when he asked, "What do we see on television these days? Some channels show film stars, pop music, disco and fashion parades (often with scantily clad young women), astrology or cricket. Is it not a cruel irony and an affront to our poor people that so much time and money are being spent on showing cricket, film stars, disco-dancing, and pop music? What have the Indian masses to do with cricket, film stars, fashion parades, disco and pop? The Indian media today are largely acting irresponsibly and not serving the people in their struggle against poverty, unemployment, and other social evils, as they ought to be doing.

But we are 126th in human development. The same nation that ranks fourth (in terms of number of) billionaires ranks 126th in human development.

Addressing the Speaker's Lecture Series in Parliament House in September 2007, Sainath, Rural Affairs Editor with The Hindu, sought to put the startling statistics in perspective thus,:

"We have the second richest billionaire in the world in dollars and we have the fourth largest number of billionaires in the planet. But we are 126th in human development. The same nation that ranks fourth (in terms of number of) billionaires ranks 126th in human development. What does it mean to be 126th? It means that it is better to be a poor person in Bolivia (the poorest nation in South America) or Guatemala or Gabon. They are ahead of us in the UN's Human Development Index."

We are the emerging 'tiger economy.' But life expectancy in our nation is lower than it is in Bolivia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia. We have 100,000 dollar millionaires, out of whom 25,000 reside in my city of Mumbai, I am proud to say. Yet, 836 million people in our nation exist on less than Rs. 20/- a day according to the Government of India. There is

no such thing as Indian reality. There are Indian realities. There is a multiplicity of realities.”

A report of the Food and Agriculture Organisation shows that between the period from 1995-97 to 1999-2001, India added more newly hungry millions than the rest of the world taken together. The average rural family now consumes significantly less than what it was consuming earlier. Indebtedness has doubled over the past decade. Cultivation costs have increased exorbitantly and farming incomes have collapsed, leading to suicides by farmers.

In the words of Sainath, while there were 512 accredited journalists covering the Lakme India Fashion Week, there were only six journalists to cover the suicides in Vidharbha. In that Fashion Week programme, the models were displaying cotton garments while the men and women who grew the cotton were killing themselves an hour away by flight from Nagpur, in the Vidharbha region. Nobody told

that story except one or two journalists locally.

At a seminar on “Changing Face of Indian Media: What needs to be done?” organised by the Centre for Economic and Social Studies in Hyderabad, Bella Mody of the University of Colorado argued that India needs a journalism curriculum and professional norms suited to its unique power context and the need for research to arrive at what needs to be done locally

India needs a journalism curriculum and professional norms suited to its unique power context and the need for research to arrive at what needs to be done locally and that domestic authors need to step up to the plate and write textbooks for ourselves.

and that domestic authors need to step up to the plate and write textbooks for ourselves.

It was argued and rightly so that 1960s American textbooks are being used to teach

journalism in India. The publishers of these outdated books are happy to have developing countries print these on the cheap and sell them. Cut-copy-paste culture sadly exists in this area too.

During the course of deliberations, it was also mentioned that journalists were trained on the job in India in the old days by sitting on the bench at a newspaper while

getting hands on training. Now, this training has been converted into a business. Most media houses have now set up their own media schools. This kind of profit driven training is along the lines of the “grab money and push them out” model that is the trend with most training programs today. With no uniform curriculum, this method too fails the Indian journalism student.

The stark contrast between English and regional language media also figured prominently in the debate. Among the issues that came up was that more masala in news is encouraged in the local language media. Infotainmentitis plagues the regional press more than the English media, very few working journalists in regional media had formal university-type training as against their English counterparts. Most significantly, severe salary disparities existed between the English and regional media and advertising revenue was higher for English papers as opposed to language papers despite larger readership.

The double standards practised by the media is another major challenge. Ever since the ghastly Delhi bus gang rape incident, television channels have been

working overtime espousing the case of women but they have absolutely no qualms allowing advertisements which commodify women and use them as mere sex symbols. All the advocacy on women’s rights and vehement opposition to their projection as sex symbols gets diluted during the commercial break when the viewer is shown semi clad women selling cars and men’s undergarments and swooning over men using a particular brand of deodorant.

If the media is so committed to the cause of women, why don’t they say a no to advertisements portraying women in such a demeaning manner as they do in the case of liquor and cigarette advertisements.

One can go on and on but what is required is a serious introspection, even as the Indian media raises its fingers at politicians, bureaucrats and others. The need of the hour is a serious re-look and review of media’s priorities. To rephrase a cliché phrase, this Caesar’s wife must be above suspicion, superstition, superficiality and sycophancy.

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Visit Of Delegation From RCDS, UK To VIF

A 20 member delegation from the Royal College of Defence Studies (RCDS) visited the Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF) on 14 May, 2013 for a Round Table Discussion that covered a wide range of issues. The RCDS delegation was led by Air Commodore (Retd) S Abbott. Welcoming the guests Lt Gen (Retd) Ravi Sawhney talked about his time spent in RCDS and how much he cherished the memories of his association with the RCDS. He noted the emergence of new threats, both traditional as well as non traditional, since his tenure at the RCDS in 1989, which he acknowledged was a watershed year in International Politics.

Mr Ajit Doval, Director VIF gave the Opening Remarks and his assessment about the enigmatic character of India, its strengths and weaknesses, role in global and regional affairs, its future trajectory etc. He highlighted India's important geo-political location, size, rising economic



power and demography, its pluralistic society as well as having a stable constitutional democracy with strong defence capabilities. He touched upon the problems and challenges faced by India that included environmental concerns, food and water security, the effect of global terrorism, the rise of Islamic radicalism and terrorism in Pakistan and changes in Afghanistan that would have an impact on the region. Whether the rise of China would be peaceful or could it become a destabilizing factor in the region was another important issue that was touched upon by him.

The need to develop strategic thinking was stressed by Air Commodore (Retd) S Abbott, leader of the RCDS delegation, in his opening remarks.

Amb PP Shukla presented a functional categorization of where India is and spoke at length about issues that were of priority for India. Essential constitutional requirements and commitments ensuring sovereignty, territorial

integrity and security of the country required a strong defence sector, a strong economy, and an active diplomacy. Giving an overview of the defence sector, he highlighted the desire of self reliance related to defence equipment although acknowledging that there was huge import dependence. Issues such as technology transfers, offsets and end use monitoring that underlie India's defence procurement were flagged by Amb Shukla. India's impressive economic growth was traced by him, that moved from a socialist pattern to following a liberal economic order in the 1990's. How far this growth has been inclusive was also discussed. Increased economic engagement of India post 1990's with the world was highlighted. Pakistan and China were identified as a cause of concern for India. According to him, the fundamental problem with Pakistan is not Kashmir but the inability of Pakistan to find an identity for itself, except in a way to oppose India in every way it can. With respect to Afghanistan, the narrative that Al Qaeda is finished, Taliban and Pakistan have changed and therefore things would turn out well after 2014 were described as being far from the truth. Stressing the need for

the current government to be financially and materially secure as being essential to be able to hold on their own in a similar manner as the Najibullah government was in 1989 when the Soviet's withdrew due to the financial support given to them by the Soviets. As soon as financial support was withdrawn, Najibullah government fell.

Gen NC Vij gave his perception about Sino- Indian relations and the security aspects in the Asia Pacific region. Two issues that were identified by him as a cause of concern in terms of the security calculus of the region were the rapid rise of China and the spread of Islamic Fundamentalism and terrorism in the region. The Chinese providing nuclear capability to Pakistan, investment in the Port of Gwadar, the string of pearls around India, challenging India's sovereignty by stapling visa's, mentioning only 2000kms as the land boundary it shares with India as against the actual 4000kms, their claim over Arunachal Pradesh and the recent 15 day intrusion in Ladakh were some of the issues highlighted by Gen Vij that were of concern to India. The Indian response, however to these issues is largely dictated by it being a peace loving

nation having other priorities like removing poverty rather than spending on defence. The Indian stance therefore has stressed on the co-existence of the two economic giants and co-operation to work towards the betterment of the world rather than confronting each other. In addition, the US China relationship, Japan China relations, the Taiwanese issue, the Korean Peninsula, South China Sea and Myanmar's Sittwe Port were also discussed and identified as factors that affect the security scenario in the Asia Pacific Region.

Amb Satish Chandra spoke about India's nuclear deterrent strategy and the reasoning behind their SSBN capability development vis-à-vis the risk of an arms race with Pakistan and China. In his talk Amb. Chandra demonstrated that India's nuclearization and strategy has in fact not contributed to a regional arms race in the region. He wove his talk around three basic strands, firstly India's aversion to nuclear weapons, the factors that have impelled India to go nuclear and the strategy itself. He spoke about the evolution of

nuclear doctrine and presented its main features. Expanding on the concept of Credible Nuclear Deterrence which is the core of the document taken together with no first use and non use which clearly envisages that India views its nuclear weapons only as a deterrent for defensive purposes and not as a means to threaten others or build a huge arms arsenal or engage in arms race. He also highlighted that survivability of India's nuclear forces that needs a combination of multiple redundant system viz. mobility, dispersion and deception, bringing out the importance of a triad and developing SSBN capability.

The presentations were followed by a vigorous questions and answers session which pertained to India's security environment and the evolving scenario in Afghanistan. Leader of the RCDS in his closing remarks expressed his keen desire to further interact with the VIF Faculty in the future.

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Vimarsha On Islamic Radicalism In South Asia – Implications For India

On 28th May 2013, VIF organized Vimarsha, where eminent author and columnist Hiranmay Karlekar delivered an enlightening lecture on “Islamic Radicalism in South Asia – Implications for India”. The session was chaired by Ajit Doval, KC, Director VIF, who succinctly summed up various dimensions of the subject that were to be addressed.

Karlekar began his talk by assessing the long term strategy of organizations such as Al Qaeda. Analyzing their psyche and doctrine, He emphasized that their strategy will be to strengthen their control, firstly, in the Middle East and in Northern Africa, following which they will target entire Africa and Europe. He also highlighted that Al Qaeda would attempt to spread and diffuse their bases of operations, making its containment and elimination further difficult. A vital part of their doctrine, as Karlekar underlined, is Islamic

Radicalization. He examined various factions in the Islamic society and argued that the hardliners have the tendency to reassert on the rest and dictate terms. Radicalization has been an effective tool of the hardliners and has been utilized well so far.

Considering the case of South Asia, the veteran author stressed that the times ahead are going to be challenging for India. Pakistan continues to export terrorism and it is unclear who or what represents Pakistan, their Government, their Army or the ISI, for us to assess whether or not there has been a change in Pakistan. Afghanistan faces tough days ahead with the withdrawal of the Western forces. Karlekar predicted that it could well be a repeat of 1989-91, where the civilian government would valiantly fight the Taliban, but eventually succumb to radical forces, due to insufficient financial assistance given by foreign powers.



Bangladesh, Karlekar argued, currently has one of the strongest leaders in Sheikh Hasina as its Prime Minister who can fight off radicalization. She is also very important for India in the fight against Islamic radicalism and India must do its best to strengthen her government before

the early 2014 national elections to ensure that hardliners are kept at bay.

The session was concluded with a brief round of Q&A.

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