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China's Defence White Paper

Modernisation of Internal Security Mechanism

Why Siachen Matters

India's Ties with Israel

and many more

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Contents

<u>EDITOR'S NOTE</u>	3	Why Does Siachen Matter to India?	
		- <i>Nitin A. Gokhale</i>	
<u>DIPLOMACY</u>		TERRORISM	49
Taking India's Ties with Israel to a New level	4	The Reasons behind ISIS Picking up Pace Again	62
- <i>Ajay Kumar</i>		- <i>SK Chatterji</i>	
US 'Re-Balance' in Asia Pacific and India's 'Act East' Policy	9	INSURGENCY	
- <i>Ramanand Garge</i>		Middle Class Boost to Baloch Struggle	66
		- <i>Ahmar Mustikhan</i>	
<u>DEFENCE</u>		EVENTS	
China's Defence White Paper, 2015 and Implications for India	20	Vimarsha: Northeast as the Backbone of India's Act East Policy	71
- <i>Jayadeva Ranade</i>		Round Table Discussion on India's Energy Security	73
Need to Reform India's Defence Acquisitions: The way forward	28	Interaction with Mr. Stewart Beck	74
- <i>KV Kuber</i>		Seminar on Make in India & DPP 2013	76
<u>INTERNAL SECURITY</u>		Seminar on 'Design and Make in India in Electronics'	78
Modernisation of India's Internal Security Mechanism	34	Seminar on Indian Civilization (2000-500 B.C.)	80
- <i>PM Heblikar</i>		Round Table Discussion on Counter Measures against Naxalism	82
<u>ECONOMY AND GOVERNANCE</u>			
Digital Revolution to Empower India	41		
- <i>Radhakrishna Rao</i>			
<u>MILITARY</u>			
Policy Options for Trans-Border Operations	45		
- <i>Gurmeet Kanwal</i>			

Editor's Note

Dear readers,

We are happy to present the latest issue of Vivek, our e-magazine published every two months.

As usual, there is a wide variety of opinions offered by our authors, drawn both from within the Vivekananda International Foundation and those who contribute from outside.

Of particular interest would be the analysis of China's latest White Paper on Defence authored by an old China hand and former Special Secretary in the R&AW, Mr Jayadeva Ranade and an article on the much-needed reforms in India's Defence Acquisition process, written by a specialist in the field, KV Kuber.

We also have a new contributor, Mr Ajay Kumar a former IAS Officer, who has weighed in with his view on why India needs to take its already robust ties with Israel to the next level. Our regular contributor Dr Radhakrishna Rao, has written a timely piece on how digital revolution is all set to empower the people.

Hope you will enjoy the rich fare on offer here.

Feedback is welcome at editor@vifindia.org

Nitin A. Gokhale
Senior Fellow & Editor

[Back to Contents](#)

Taking India's Ties with Israel to a New Level

- *Ajay Kumar*

For last 20 years India has had the most intimate strategic relations with Israel but given the sensitivities it has remained mostly below the radar. All that is now set to change with Narendra Modi about to create history by becoming the first Indian Prime Minister to visit Israel. It has taken a long time. An elated Israel has welcomed the announcement of Narendra Modi's visit to the Jewish nation, the first ever by an Indian Prime Minister, saying it would lead to "tightening" of the bilateral ties and further expand the relation and take them to new heights.

New Delhi recognized the birth of Israel in 1950 but established diplomatic relations only as late as in 1992. This caution in establishing a close relationship with Tel Aviv had arisen from a fear of a domestic Muslim backlash as well as the need to balance India's relationship with the Arab world and its historical support to the Palestinian cause. So Israel always remained a lesser

priority in India's foreign policy. No longer.

Today no other country is so intertwined with India's national security at so many levels as Israel. India sources critical military technology from Israel. Technology that it does not share with any other country. Israeli avionics are what make India's Russian-made fighters and cruise missiles superior to their Chinese variants. Israeli cyber-security firms are the only foreign companies to receive security classifications at par with the best Indian ones. Israel too has benefitted with sales of \$10 billion to India's military-security establishment in the past decade which makes India easily the world's largest buyer of Israeli weapons.

Given this well-established relationship, a visit by an Indian Prime Minister to Israel was long overdue despite the sensitivities involved in balancing New Delhi's ties with the Gulf states. External

**Ajay Kumar, Former IAS officer*

affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj has also put to rest the fears that India is building its ties with Israel at the expense of its equation with Palestine by saying that there would be “no change in India’s policy towards Palestine”. New Delhi appears ready to suggest publicly what many officials already acknowledge privately: “A burgeoning strategic partnership with Israel matters more to India than reflexive solidarity with the Palestinian cause.”

In a way, the Prime Minister is building on the legacy left behind by the previous BJP Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee. It was during the previous NDA Government headed by Vajpayee when the then Prime Minister Ariel Sharon became the first Israeli Prime Minister to visit India when he came visiting in 2003. Mr Vajpayee’s vision has led to the transformation of Indo-Israeli ties from minor cooperation in defence and security fields to a higher strategic level relationship.

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The proposed visit by Mr Modi comes in the wake of a meeting he had with his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in 2014.

Netanyahu in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in 2014. “We are very excited by the prospects of greater ties with India. We think the sky’s the limit,” Mr Netanyahu said. Mr Modi proudly told Netanyahu of the historic Jewish community in India, and of the fact that “India is the only country where anti-Semitism has never been allowed to come up and where Jews have never suffered and have lived as an integral part of our society.”

Commonality of interest between India and Israel

Increasing defence cooperation has been one of the central themes of

improved India-Israel relationship. It is but natural therefore to see that Israel has emerged as India’s third largest defence supplier only behind US and Russia. There is increasing cooperation in the IT sector and counter-terrorism, especially related to cyber terrorism.

The Indian Navy too is equipping itself with missiles sourced from Israel.. The Navy recently put in a requisition of 300 more Israeli-manufactured Barak missiles to

equip the Brahmaputra Class 'guided missile frigates' namely the Ranvir, Bramhaputra, Betwa and Bias.

Make in India: Keeping pace with the rising cooperation, Moshe Ya'alon became the first Israeli defense minister since the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1992 to visit India. "This visit is incredibly significant for the strengthening ties with a rising world power such as India," Ya'alon said before leaving Israel. "India is a true friend to Israel, and advancing joint interests will greatly benefit both nations and their defense establishments, which have excellent relations," he added.

"We are open to more or less (selling) anything. We believe that we have the better product," he said at the Israeli pavilion. "We see India as a partner and a friend. That is why we are ready to share technology," he said, adding that he was looking for ways to upgrade the defense relationship. He also met Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar during the biennial Aero India show in Bengaluru.

Under Modi, Israel and India have pushed ahead with the joint development of an aerial defense

system, which passed its first trial simulating combat conditions in November.

In October, India opted to buy Rafael's Spike anti-tank guided missile in a deal worth \$525 million, choosing the Israeli product over a U.S. offer of its Javelin missiles.

More than just security: But there is more potential in the relationship than closer cooperation in defence alone. The Indian Prime Minister in fact sees Israel as more than just a security partner. Half of his discussions with Israel would probably be in areas of state-of-the-art water management technology, Nanotechnology, dairy etc. Israel is also a leader in software, pharmaceuticals and has one of the world's most advanced tech startup ecosystems.

Trade: India has become one of Israel's largest trading partners. Trade and cooperation between the two nations extend beyond defense to agriculture, water desalination and space. Many Israeli companies feel India has an edge over China in being a stable democracy with an effective court system to protect patents. A large population of technically qualified English-speaking people also makes India attractive for Israeli

investments . Trade Surplus for India stands at \$962.33 million with exports at \$3090.18m and import of 2127.85m. Bilateral trade, excluding defense, in 2014 was at \$4.5 billion and this is set to grow.

As P.R. Kumaraswamy, a professor of West Asian studies at JNU says “It’s an economic priority, not a political one. In that context, India's engagement will be on the economic agenda in the Middle East, not on political friendships and things like that and whichever country is willing to be a part of India's economic development will be a priority.”

The 26/11 attack in Mumbai in fact brought India and Israel closer. Nariman House, a Jewish establishment was one of the targets of the attack by Lashkar-e-Toiba (Let) terrorists, trained and equipped by Pakistan.

Terrorism: Israel and India face terror threats from organizations with similar radical ideology such as al-Qaida, ISIS, LeT and Hamas. Pakistan has waged an undeclared war to “bleed India with thousand cuts “ India has been hardly compensated for supporting Palestine. India may be home to the world's second largest Muslim population, but it has been consistently blocked from membership of the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC). “India has received no worthwhile

backing from the Arab countries in the resolution of problems it faces in its neighborhood, especially Kashmir,” wrote Harsh V. Pant, a scholar of international relations at King’s College London. “There have been no serious attempts by the Arab world to put pressure on Pakistan to reign in the cross-border insurgency in Kashmir.” Modi and BJP India’s nationalist party has long seen Israel as a natural ally against Islamist militancy.

The 26/11 attack in Mumbai in fact brought India and Israel closer. Nariman House, a Jewish establishment was one of the targets of the attack by Lashkar-e-Toiba (Let) terrorists, trained and equipped by Pakistan. The killing of six Jews in the attack propelled the two countries to work more closely together on counter-terror measures.

"Counter-terrorism is something that I — and Israel — believes all like-minded countries need to work together on. At the end of the day, the extremism felt on all parts of Islamism is something that affects India, Israel and the entire civilized world," Mark Sofer,

former Israeli ambassador to India and current deputy director-general and head of the Asia Pacific Division at the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told Defense News. "All like-minded countries need to put their heads together and find ways of dealing with this, we can't tackle this on our own. None of us can."

According to the conservative political writer Swapan Dasgupta, "Israel has far more friends in India than TV anchors and left-leaning policy correspondents realize." The same Internet army of right-wing Indians that supported Modi's election has mobilized in support of Israel. In fact, the Twitter hashtag "#IndiaWithIsrael" trended across the country, galvanizing real-life rallies in support of Israel's campaign in Gaza.

There is a human element to Israel-India relationship too. About 50000 Israeli tourists throng places like Goa, Old Manali and Dharamshala and about equal number of Indian tourists visit Israel. In many of these areas, Hebrew signs on businesses and public transportation are not uncommon. Dozens of Chabad-operated community centers

across India allow many Israelis to celebrate their holidays and observe religious traditions. There is thus immense scope of taking tourism to a much higher level.

And then of course there is a personal bond. Prime Minister Modi has developed a strong personal relationship with his Israeli counterpart, Benjamin Netanyahu. When the latter won re-election in March, Modi tweeted in Hebrew and English: "Mazel tov, my friend Bibi @Netanyahu. I remember our meeting in New York last September warmly." Likewise when Modi got overwhelming mandate Netanyahu was the first to congratulate. Modi does not use "my friend" to describe almost no other world leader.

Despite the euphoria about the upswing in India-Israel relationship, India will need to balance its approach to Tel Aviv keeping in mind the importance of India's ties with and dependence on Iran for its energy needs. India will have to be cautious in not getting caught in the fierce Iran-Israel rivalry that exists in West Asia.

[Back to Contents](#)

US 'Re-Balance' in Asia Pacific and India's 'Act East' Policy

- *Ramanand Garge*

Asia-Pacific is one of the strategic coherent systems in the contemporary geopolitics and geo-economics of the world. Over the last few years the world has witnessed a gradual shift of global fulcrum of power from the West to the Asia Pacific region. In the midst of the rapidly evolving geo-strategic imperatives of the region, two significant developments have recast its strategic and security contours. First, the phenomenal rise of China both as an economic and military power has given rise to a strategic assertion in the region. The second development of note is the response of the United States under Obama administration to counter the Chinese agenda in the region. These together, could possibly set the stage for a new balance of power struggles in the coming decades of the 21st century.

In 2012 the Obama administration came to a conclusion that it needed to intensify interaction with the Asia Pacific to cobble

together a new architecture to deal with the rising power and ambitions of China. In the US perception, the rise of China with its growing assertiveness could affect its treaty alliances in the region. Since the rapidly evolving regional economic integration highlighted the need for a 'rebalance' in its regional policies/strategy post 9/11, the focus of its priorities had shifted from this region to deal with the series of events that distracted the US from its traditional geopolitical challenge.

What is Rebalance?

In an article in September 2014, Jeffery Bader, Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institute and who had earlier served as Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs at the National Security Council, described the Obama administration policy toward the Asia-Pacific region as one of "rebalancing," by assigning higher priority and political, economic, and security resources to the Asia-Pacific region 'because

* *Ramanand Garge, Senior Research Associate, VIF*

of its dynamism and opportunities for the U.S'. According to Bader, the fundamental elements of the policy include:

- Strengthening of relationships with allies and partners, including emerging powers such as India and Indonesia:

- Embedding the U.S. in the emerging political, security, and economic architecture, including the East Asia Summit, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), and a more extensive and structured relationship with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN); and

- Maintaining a positive and stable relationship with China, in which cooperation on global issues develops and competition on security and economic issues is contained and managed.”

With the introduction of the concept of ‘rebalance’, the US would expect to prevent growth of regional hegemony and deal with the other complex set of challenges in managing ‘China in the game of Nash Equilibrium’¹. The intertwined US-China relation makes this equilibrium more complex and thus emerges as a

significant and serious challenge for USA. It is the effort of the US to pull together a new strategic solution that satisfies both the economic demands of interdependence to revitalize its economy while safeguarding its national interests against geopolitical risks associated with rise of China.

Rebalance in detail

The policy of Rebalancing, as indicated earlier, seeks to achieve its grand objectives of ‘deterrence and reassurance’ through three sets of well-calibrated strategic, diplomatic and economic initiatives.

Strategic – This is being touted as the ‘captivating component’ of Rebalance. The core of the strategy will be maintain requisite military capabilities in the region for the purpose of achieving ‘deterrence’ and providing ‘reassurance’ to its allies in the region along with preserving the requisite military capabilities over the horizon capable of entering the region when required under the condition of inevitability. Its manifestation can be expressed in different ways;

With the introduction of the concept of ‘rebalance’, the US would expect to prevent growth of regional hegemony and deal with the other complex set of challenges in managing ‘China in the game of Nash Equilibrium’¹.

(a). US would be maintaining flexible network of military visible presence in the region. This will enable US to engage all littoral powers of the region with frequent visits as also build a network that can shape choices of alliance for China. For example, a new configuration of four Littoral Combat Ships of US Navy will operate out of Singapore, Darwin, U-Tapao Royal Thai naval air field used for logistics by US Military and Perth as the 'host station' of new US naval deployment.

(b). This will also enable US to counter any Chinese anti access and area denial moves and for this US wants to operate as close as it can to the shores of the Asia-Pacific without putting its own assets at risk.

(c). These strategic moves will through force restructuring will give the US Navy and Air Force greater maneuverability and flexibility than land component of the US military, because the Indo-pacific is primarily a maritime theater and to operate in this region comfortably, US is strengthening its expositional capabilities.

(d). As part of the strategic move, US is keen on improving the capabilities of its partners and allies in the region, which will define the new strategic calculus

in this region and it could restrain China and its capabilities from using its power.

Diplomatic – Diplomatic initiatives under the policy of Rebalancing will involve maneuvers in three major areas;

(a). The US efforts would be focused on establishing effective presence in every multilateral forum in Asia-Pacific to help it stay engaged and intricately connected, complementing its existing relations with its allies and partners' thereby shaping/strengthening a reassuring mechanism in the region.

(b). While doing this, US will have to walk a tightrope while simultaneously establishing and improving relations with China without disturbing the synergy of its strategic allies in the region.

(c). The defining factor will be engaging with china as much as it can rather than its traditional cold war approach of isolation of adversary. For the success of this entire move it is essential for the US to develop closer strategic partnership with key states of the Asia-Pacific like Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, India, Singapore and Australia as its obvious partners.

Economic – Economic engagement would constitute the third major initiative of US under the rebalance. Hereunder, efforts can be focused in two areas namely:-

(a). Developing and strengthening global multilateral trading system centered around WTO (one of the initiatives by US) and such others on the one hand and;

(b). Seeking to supplement the global expansion of the trading regime with new preferential free trade agreements with its partners and establishing and strengthening the

two existing preferential trade agreements i.e. Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)

Evolution of new terminologies is not a new phenomenon, as it emerges with the changing geopolitical realities.

with 11 Rim countries and US-EU Free Trade agreements. Along with these revitalizing its entire North American trade policy would be an essential component of the Rebalance.

Maneuvering precisely and skillfully in the above framework will determine the success of the US rebalance to Asia Pacific. It will also decide the level of financial benefits and uninterrupted availability of resources to itself and its partners.

Evolution of Indo-Pacific as a Linked Concept

Evolution of new terminologies is not a new phenomenon, as it emerges with the changing geopolitical realities. By this parameter, the use of the present terminology of Asia-Pacific is perceived as restrictive, focusing primarily on US, China and Japan relations, ignoring the new reality of the growing integration of SouthEast and East Asia dynamics. South Asia and South East Asia today present itself as

region with huge economic and human resource potential that imparts it considerable

strategic importance. In this direction, the efforts of the US to expand the concept of Asia Pacific with the inclusion of the rich potentials of Indian Ocean region countries is a timely initiative that underscores the fact that, “Successful rebalance to Asia Pacific cannot occur without keeping India as a part of the equation”. It recognizes the fact that this will neither be quick nor easy, but the exclusion of India will leave the equation of the ‘rebalance’ rather imbalanced. The use of the revised terminology of

Indo-Pacific in the 'rebalance' mechanism thus is not a mere game of semantics, but represents a broader vision in tune with the new reality and the future regional order.

Pivotal role for India

The US is well aware of the crucial role of India with its fast growing capabilities and yet not fully tapped potentials to change the strategic calculus of the region. It must also be mentioned here that in recent times India too has clearly announced its intent of playing a major role in the region through its 'Act East' policy initiative. Also sentient about India's desire for strategic autonomy is not harmful for US. Therefore, based on these considerations, the US has endorsed India's desired role as a "net security provider" to preserve maritime transportation routes and global commons in the Indian Ocean (*Scott, The "Indo-Pacific" - New Regional Formulations and New 2012*).

In this context it may be mentioned that India-US partnership approach in the extended region was clearly spelt out in the recent joint statement issued at the end of President Obama's visit to New Delhi (Press

Secretary 2015) wherein, they recognized the "important role that both countries play in promoting peace, prosperity, stability and security in the Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean Region, and noting that India's 'Act East Policy' and the United States' rebalance to Asia provide opportunities for India, the United States, and other Asia-Pacific countries to work closely to strengthen regional ties, the Leaders announced a Joint Strategic Vision to guide their engagement in the region". Under this, the US and India as "important drivers of regional and global growth from Africa to East Asia", will in partnership, support sustainable, inclusive development, and increased regional connectivity, support regional economic integration, accelerate infrastructure connectivity and economic development to link South, Southeast and Central Asia, enhance energy transmission, encourage free trade, safeguard maritime security, ensure freedom of navigation and overflight throughout the region, especially in the South China Sea, call upon all parties to avoid the threat or use of force and pursue resolution of territorial and maritime disputes through all peaceful

means etc. United States welcomed India's interest in joining the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, as the Indian economy is a dynamic part of the Asian economy.

It can thus be seen that from the days of look east to act east, India's relationship with ASEAN, China, Japan and Australia have evolved exceptionally well. India has been long desirous of playing a significant role in the regional growth dynamics. It began with India acquiring sectoral dialogue partner status of ASEAN in 1992, becoming full dialogue partner in 1996. As far as APEC is concerned, it had under consideration a long pending request from India for inclusion in the grouping. Recently, it gained momentum during the meeting of Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the Chinese President Xi Jinping with the later inviting Mr. Modi to attend APEC trade forum's next meeting in Beijing (Bagchi 2014). The move received immediate endorsement from Russia during the 13th trilateral meeting of foreign ministers of Russia, India and China held in Beijing recently (Press Division 2015). These would

India has been long desirous of playing a significant role in the regional growth dynamics. It began with India acquiring sectoral dialogue partner status of ASEAN in 1992, becoming full dialogue partner in 1996.

possibly set the stage for India's formal admittance into APEC in the near future.

The question that naturally arises here is whether India has the capacity to play the larger role envisaged for it? Does it have the wherewithal to extend its role and reach to the extended region? A quick look at the essential ingredients involved in this extended outreach should help in arriving at a fair assessment of the possibilities.

India has been developing its blue water naval capabilities and also strengthening its naval ties with countries like Singapore and Oman in the Indian Ocean region, giving it the critical capability of expanded area of influence from the Persian Gulf to the straits of Malacca. India is also operationally better engaged with the major regional navies of south East Asian as well as pacific countries through a series of joint naval exercises such as the 'Malabar' series with the US navy and 'Varuna' with France etc.. The Malabar-2 exercise of September 2007 also involved Japan, Singapore and Australia

underlining its 'Indo-Pacific' orientation (Scott, The "Indo-Pacific" - New Regional Formulations 2012). On non-traditional security front, the challenges faced by India and its response to them will define the 'Indo-Pacific' policy formulation. These circumstances demand India to step up its role in safeguarding the nerves of the trade routes i.e. sea lanes of communication from the Indian Ocean region till western pacific region.

Also in the maritime domain, India has initiated various initiatives for improving maritime governance and has sought regional as well as global cooperation. These include, Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (RECAAP Secretariat 2004). Indian Ocean Naval Symposium, a well acclaimed initiative of Indian navy to cooperate with navies of the region to tackle natural as well as manmade disasters, narcotics, gun running, is one of the initiatives. India is also a party to the African Union Mission in Somalia and it has been an active member of bilateral and trilateral naval coordination and patrolling with the maritime giants like China, Japan along with

underdeveloped countries such as Kenya, Madagascar and Seychelles in Africa. India is also putting all efforts to strengthen organizations like Indian Ocean Region Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC) which has established cooperation amongst 46 littoral and 11 hinterland states of the region. Its commitment for regional free trade is underlined by its Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) with Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Nepal (Secretariat 1997).

India also has strategic partnership with Russia and China in areas of free trade, technology transfer and sharing of resources. The dynamism and structural fluidity of the Asian market have evolved such strategic tri-nation partnership. Thus, it is in India's interest to engage itself more in such activities to maximize its own priorities and needs. The recent endorsement by China and Russia for the Indian membership to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation during 13th trilateral meeting of foreign ministers of Russia, India and China at Beijing is a growing testimony of India's pivotal role in

the regional development (Aneja 2015).

The most important issue that would determine India's capacity to play the role expected of it in the regional and global context, would be its economic 'might'. Power does not in today's world flow so much through the 'barrels of the gun' as it does through money power. In this context, India's evolving economic progress and its likely emergence as a major economic power in the next 15 to 20 years, is well recognized by the world community. In the process of eventually reaching that goal, its 'Act East' policy through the APEC and other regional forum and bilateral mechanism, will have to be actively pursued. It would also be necessary for India to create conditions internally that would place its economic development programs in a fast forward track. India can aspire to become a major strategic player of consequence across the wider Indo-Pacific region by reaching a critical level of economic strength. However, while doing so it would have to make well considered and measured moves to ensure that it

In the process of eventually reaching that goal, its 'Act East' policy through the APEC and other regional forum and bilateral mechanism, will have to be actively pursued.

does not get dragged into a confrontationalist and aggressive political or military interplay in the region but instead act as a leading power that provides peace and stability not emerge as power broker.

India as a stabilizer of the region

Not so long ago, with China's growing economic and military might, there was a view among strategic analysts that it may eventually emerge as a well-equipped regional power to provide peace and stability in the region. This assessment seems to have rather quickly vanished primarily on account of China's assertive if not aggressive approach in regional issues particularly in the South China Sea and further east. This seems to have shifted the focus on India's role in the region as the net security provider. It may be noted here that even before the India-US partnership approach for regional peace and stability enunciated during the recent Obama-Modi meeting in New Delhi, former Indian Prime Minister Dr. Man Mohan Singh had referred to the idea on May 23, 2014, while laying

the foundation stone of the proposed National Defense University near Gurgaon, Haryana, when he said, “We have also sought to assume our responsibility for stability in the Indian Ocean Region. We are well positioned, therefore, to become a net provider of security in our immediate region and beyond”, He added, “These challenges and opportunities should prompt a reorientation of our strategic thinking (Kumar 2013).

With its key geographical location in the region along with its evolving military and diplomatic might, India is being rightly looked as one of the key states of the region capable of stabilizing region by its wide-ranging capabilities. The evolving military might of India coupled with rapidly growing economy and above all a mature and consistent foreign policy approach, provides ideal strategic opportunities for India to become a net security provider to its immediate neighborhood and beyond. Prime Minister Modi also mentioned this in his speech while launching of *INS-Vikramaditya* in June 2014, “*Indian -made arms and equipments should also serve as protectors for small nations across the world* (Modi 2014).” This new role of India is driven by its

evolving security interests and concerns along with changing scenario of world affairs reviews and redefines the strategic context for India. The aid provided to its neighbours during Tsunami of 2004, the recent floods in Pakistan alongside of the state of Jammu and Kashmir in September 2014 (BBC 2014) and the recent catastrophic earthquake in Nepal (Pradhan 2015) signals a timely assurance to its immediate neighbours and beyond. All these developments have not only projected India as a net security provider, but also induced a sense of urgency in India to build up its own capabilities to play a more determining role in the region. As mentioned earlier the recent ‘US-India Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region’ endorsed these capabilities when it noted, “*Over the next five years, we will strengthen our regional dialogues, invest in making trilateral consultations with third countries in the region more robust, deepen regional integration, strengthen regional forums, explore additional multilateral opportunities for engagement, and pursue areas where we can build capacity in the region that bolster long-term peace and prosperity for all* (Press Information Bureau 2015).

Needles to mention here that these transformative shifts in India's strategic ambitions backed by international endorsements, would demand major shift in India's foreign policy approach from a passive bilateral mode to an active multi-national drive, taking into account national sensitivities and core interests of its regional partners especially, in the Asia-Pacific, where China is expected to contest India's growing presence and influence. While analyzing India's role in providing security and stability of the region, the recalibrated foreign policy will have to tread cautiously between US's interests in maintaining its dominant power status in the Asia-Pacific region and wish to utilize Indian capabilities as a balancing power against China. Though, India shares similar concerns pertaining to aggressive behavior of China in the region, the recent US-India joint strategic vision for Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region' highlights the fact that India will make its own decisions and arrive at policy decisions in consonance with its national interests. India has precisely that in its recent high-level interaction with its neighbours as also with close partners of the region like Japan, Singapore and Australia. Its

indeed going to be a tightrope walk in striking the right balance in managing its relations with other powers like Russia and Europe and of course, China.

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End Notes

1. In game theory, the **Nash equilibrium** is a solution concept of a non-cooperative game involving two or more players, in which each player is assumed to know the **equilibrium** strategies of the other players, and no player has anything to gain by changing only their own strategy.

[Back to Contents](#)

China's Defence White Paper, 2015 and Implications for India

- *Jayadeva Ranade*

On May 26, 2015, China's Ministry of National Defense (MND) issued its ninth White Paper entitled 'China's Military Strategy'. This 9000-character (in Chinese or 6,393 words in English), 6-chapter long White Paper is the first ever to have been issued which solely discusses China's military strategy. Reflecting Beijing's self-confidence, the White Paper spells out China's expanded 'national interests' and role envisaged for its armed forces which, it asserted, must "effectively secure China's overseas interests". Outlining the PLA's role, the White Paper says "national security is more vulnerable to international and regional turmoil, terrorism, piracy, serious natural disasters and epidemics, and the security of overseas interests concerning energy and resources, strategic sea lines of communication (SLOCs), as well as institutions, personnel and assets abroad, has become an imminent issue".

Important is the White Paper's assessment of China's domestic security situation. Unlike in 2013, this White Paper makes specific mention of Tibet indicating the upgraded importance of the Tibet issue to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leadership. The toughly-worded paragraph in the White Paper emphasises that "China faces a formidable task to maintain political security and social stability. Separatist forces for "East Turkistan independence" and "Tibet independence" have inflicted serious damage, particularly with escalating violent terrorist activities by "East Turkistan independence" forces. Besides, anti-China forces have never given up their attempt to instigate a "color revolution" in this country. Consequently, China faces more challenges in terms of national security and social stability".

The PLA is predictably enjoined to "firmly follow the goals of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)",

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“resolutely safeguard China’s sovereignty, security and development interests”, and provide a “strong guarantee for realising the Chinese Dream of achieving the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation”. Unlike those issued earlier, this White Paper includes none of the purportedly conciliatory references to the ‘Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence’ or ‘harmonious world’.

China’s first officially described White Paper was issued nearly 20 years ago in November 1998, and was simply called “China’s National Defense.” Thereafter, in a bid to build its credentials as a ‘responsible’ major power which is transparent on defence issues, China has issued defence-related White Papers almost every two years. The series of white papers are official statements of Chinese government policy and usually provide Beijing’s official view of the contemporary international and regional situation, relations with Taiwan and a statement of the major elements of China’s defense policy. Most of the White Papers contained only general information regarding China’s

China’s first officially described White Paper was issued nearly 20 years ago in November 1998, and was simply called “China’s National Defense.”

military policies or the People’s Liberation Army (PLA), except for those issued in 2011 and 2013, which included new details of China’s force structure and strength, organization, doctrine and the national defense mobilization system.

China’s White Papers of 2011, 2013 and the current White Paper of 2015, all reveal that efforts continue to formalise the identities of the different services and distinguish between the PLA’s ground forces and the PLA Air Force (PLAAF), PLA Navy (PLAN) and the PLA Second Artillery (PLASAF). The White Paper of 2011, in fact, for the first time referred to the ground forces as the PLA Army (PLAA) and this practice is continued in the subsequent White Papers. The White Paper of 2013, titled “Diversified Employment of China’s Armed Forces,” also for the first time ever officially provided details of the force strengths of the PLAA, PLAAF, PLAN and PLASAF.

The latest White Paper reflects Beijing’s continuing concern about

its periphery and, while acknowledging that the international environment is generally peaceful, dwells on the likelihood of “immediate” and “potential threats of local wars”. It notes that “small-scale wars, conflicts and crises” continue to recur in some regions. It identified the “international competition for the redistribution of power, rights and interests” as a new threat confronting China. Others were listed as including increased terrorist activities and complex and volatile “hotspot issues, such as ethnic, religious, border and territorial disputes”.

Pertinent is the assessment in Chapter I of the White Paper which, while reiterating China’s maritime territorial claims, conveys a thinly veiled warning to countries in the region. It observes that “as the world economic and strategic center of gravity is shifting ever more rapidly to the Asia-Pacific region, the US carries on its “rebalancing” strategy and enhances its military presence and its military alliances in this region. Japan is sparing no effort to dodge the post-war mechanism, overhauling its military and security policies....On the issues concerning China’s territorial sovereignty and

maritime rights and interests, some of its offshore neighbors take provocative actions and reinforce their military presence on China’s reefs and islands that they have illegally occupied. Some external countries are also busy meddling in South China Sea affairs; a tiny few maintain constant close-in air and sea surveillance and reconnaissance against China. It is thus a long-standing task for China to safeguard its maritime rights and interests. Certain disputes over land territory are still smoldering. The Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia are shrouded in instability and uncertainty. Regional terrorism, separatism and extremism are rampant. All these have a negative impact on the security and stability along China’s periphery”.

Declaring that “without a strong military a country can be neither safe nor strong”, the White Paper focused on the Preparations for Military Struggle (PMS) and directed the armed forces to accelerate efforts to raise combat capability. Modifying the guidelines for PMS which had last been revised in 2004, it said emphasis would now be placed on “winning informationized local wars, highlighting maritime

military struggle and maritime PMS”. China’s armed forces were mandated to conduct live-setting training, IT-based simulated training, and face-on-face confrontation training in line with real-combat criteria. Training in complex electro-magnetic environments, complex and unfamiliar terrains, and complex weather conditions are to be intensified. It said the PLAA will improve combat readiness with combined arms and ensure agile maneuvers and effective response. The PLAN will continue to perform regular combat readiness patrols and maintain a military presence in relevant sea areas. The PLAAF will maintain vigilant and efficient combat readiness with all-dimensional response and full territorial reach while observing the principles applicable in peacetime and wartime. It disclosed that the PLASAF will maintain an appropriate level of vigilance in peacetime and remain action-ready.

The White Paper listed the strategic tasks for China’s armed forces. These include to:

- (i) deal with a wide range of emergencies and military threats, and effectively

safeguard the sovereignty and security of China’s territorial land, air and sea;

- (ii) resolutely safeguard the unification of the motherland;
- (iii) safeguard China’s security and interests in new domains;
- (iv) safeguard the security of China’s overseas interests;
- (v) maintain strategic deterrence and carry out nuclear counterattack; and
- (vi) strengthen efforts in operations against infiltration, separatism and terrorism so as to maintain China’s political security and social stability.

The White Paper additionally detailed some of the enhanced capabilities that China’s armed forces will acquire in the coming years. This includes aero-space and cyber capabilities. Stating that the new tasks of the PLA ground forces require “mobile operations” and “multi-dimensional offense and defense”,

it said the PLA Army (PLAA) will “continue to reorient from theater defense to trans-theater mobility”, build small, multi-functional and modular units and “elevate its capabilities for precise, multi-dimensional, trans-theater, multi-functional and sustainable operations”. The importance of integrated joint operations (IJO) was underscored.

The PLA Navy (PLAN)’s role has been considerably expanded from one of “offshore waters defense” as at present to the combination of “offshore waters defense” with “open seas protection.” The PLAN has accordingly been tasked to build a “combined, multi-functional” marine combat force structure. Earmarked for enhancement is the PLAN’s “strategic deterrence and counterattack” capability.

The White Paper similarly added a definitive offensive role for the PLA Air Force (PLAAF). It said the PLAAF will “endeavor to shift its focus from territorial air defense to both defense and offense, and build an air-space defense force structure”. The PLAAF will also boost its

capabilities for “strategic early warning, air strike, air and missile defense, information countermeasures, airborne operations, strategic projection and comprehensive support”.

The PLASAF, it said, will continue to have nuclear and conventional missiles in its inventory and accelerate development of independent innovations in weaponry and equipment. It was tasked to improve the force structure by combining nuclear and conventional capabilities. The White Paper said the PLASAF will strengthen its capabilities for strategic deterrence and nuclear counterattack, and medium- and long-range precision strikes.

The People’s Armed Police Force (PAPF) came in for mention with the White Paper highlighting its role in effectively maintaining social stability and contingency response, counter-terrorism operations etc. The indication is that the PAPF will acquire more and modern equipment and that the domestic security apparatus

The PLASAF, it said, will continue to have nuclear and conventional missiles in its inventory and accelerate development of independent innovations in weaponry and equipment.

will continue to receive high budgetary allocations.

While the PLAN already receives a proportionately larger share of the defence budget, this latest White Paper highlights the importance of the maritime domain and goes well beyond the White Paper of 2013 in emphasising the importance of naval power. Appearing to set the stage for the next round of military reforms, it unambiguously declared: “The traditional mentality that land outweighs sea must be abandoned, and great importance has to be attached to managing the seas and oceans and protecting maritime rights and interests”. China, it said, must “develop a modern maritime military force structure commensurate with its national security and development interests, safeguard its national sovereignty and maritime rights and interests, protect the security of strategic SLOCs and overseas interests....so as to provide strategic support for building itself into a maritime power”.

The importance accorded to these issues by China’s leadership was immediately visible when Beijing deputed Admiral Sun Jianguo, PLA Deputy Chief of General Staff

and a potential successor to Admiral Wu Shengli as Commander of the PLAN, to lead a large Chinese delegation to the Shangri La Dialogue held in Singapore just three days later on May 29-30, 2015. Though Admiral Sun Jianguo delivered a mildly worded speech from a prepared text, he declined to respond to any questions regarding the South China Sea disputes from representatives of other participating nations and requested them to separately discuss issues bilaterally with the PLA delegation.

China’s effort to build the PLAN’s maritime capability has accelerated after the 18th Party Congress and articulation by Chinese President Xi Jinping of the muscular ‘China’s Dream’. Just months earlier in May 2012, Beijing had begun to issue new Chinese passports sparking protests internationally. The passports appeared to be a re-statement of China’s perceived territorial limits and mirror the extent of the Chinese nation as envisioned in the maps published by Beijing in 1954, and which continue to be taught in China till today. The map, which is part of a textbook titled “A Brief History of Modern China”, claims to show

nineteen of “the Chinese territories taken by the Imperialists in the old Democratic Revolutionary Era (1840-1919)”. These include Nepal, Bhutan, Burma (Myanmar) and in India the state of Sikkim and territories in the north-east comprising the former states of Assam, NEFA and Nagaland, as well as the Andaman Islands.

The latest White Paper also removes the ambiguity in the previous White Paper regarding use of nuclear weapons. It categorically states “China has always pursued the policy of no first use of nuclear weapons” and “China will unconditionally not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states or in nuclear-weapon-free zones, and will never enter into a nuclear arms race with any other country”. It did, however, say China “will optimize its nuclear force structure....and survivability and protection, and deter other countries from using or threatening to use nuclear weapons against China”.

The White Paper makes clear that China perceives this as "an

important period of strategic opportunity" during which it can realize "the Chinese Dream of great national rejuvenation". Its focus and tone have undoubtedly aroused concern among China's neighbours and especially the countries which have unresolved territorial, including maritime, disputes with China.

China's insistent push for its strategic geo-economic initiative of 'One Road, One Belt' (New Silk Road Economic Belt and Maritime Silk Route) strongly suggests it is intent on becoming a global maritime power. A US estimate claims that China has plans to increase its Navy to 351 ships by 2020. Release of the White Paper, 2015 also coincides with the growing tensions in the South China Sea and Beijing's testy relations with the US.

The White Paper is of direct relevance to India. It comes in the backdrop of the appreciably and recently visibly upgraded Sino-Pakistan strategic relationship which has impinged on India's sovereignty and territorial integrity and Beijing's continuing intransigence on tackling the issue

of the disputed border or intrusion by PLA troops.

It confirms that the PLA continues to rapidly build capability to win local wars. The focus is on acquiring the capability to rapidly move, by land or air, units of well-armed and well-equipped troops from locations across China to the borders. The White Paper additionally states that the PLAA and PLAAF will increase patrolling along the borders and the PLAN will enhance force projection activities in the South China Seas and increase its visibility in the oceans.

Of particular importance is the apparent upgradation of the Tibet issue and references to the “separatist forces” of “Tibet independence”, “serious damage” they have inflicted and “formidable task” of maintaining

security. Relevant are the observations that among the new threats that China confronts, are the “international competition for the redistribution of power, rights and interests”; that “certain disputes over land territory are still smoldering”; the existence of “hotspot issues, such as ethnic, religious, border and territorial disputes”; and the likelihood of “immediate” and “potential threats of local wars”. These highlight Beijing’s continuing concern of the situation on its periphery. The reference to “international competition for the redistribution of power...”, however, hints that Beijing views India as a longer term challenge.

[Back to Contents](#)

Need to Reform India's Defence Acquisitions: The way forward

- *KV Kuber*

Defence Acquisitions globally, have a character. The character visible in defence acquisitions of a nation, reflect the character of the country and its peoples. It has been well said, “It is costliest for a nation to have a cheap Armed Forces”.

Is there a need for Defence Acquisitions, can't our Armed Forces do with what the country has or what we as a nation can at best afford? Do we not have other methods to enforce peace? Is peaceful co-existence not our fundamental policy governing our living? Well, these and the many more questions that some skeptics raise, is answered by just one lesson that history has taught us, the 1962 war.

The geo-political situation that we are in, puts us as a nation in a compelling situation for us to remain in a state of ultimate readiness, to meet contingencies that arise due to external aggression and internal threat. There is no gain saying that our

Armed Forces need to be equipped with the state of art systems and equipment to be in a state of readiness to enable combat different situations that could arise.

Therefore, Defence Acquisitions are an essential prerequisite for our Armed Forces. Question now arises, if the requirement of our Armed Forces must be met from within the resources available in the country or from any source available that can meet the requirements of the Forces. Well, it is good for the nation to remember that the Armed Forces are but the last instrument to meet any contingency.

The Nehruvian philosophy of state owned industry to meet the requirements of our Forces has seen the evolution of the Defence Public Sector Enterprises and the Defence research and development Organisation. Ordnance factories were a legacy we carried from the British era. It was only in 2001, that the domestic private industry

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was opened up for defence business by removing the defence sector from the Reserved category and moving it into the Licenced category.

Coincidentally, it was around that time in 2001, that the Defence Ministry thought that they needed a procurement procedure of their own. This gave birth to the first Defence Procurement Procedure in 2002(DPP 2002). Till then, the ministry, was making their procurements for the Forces as any other ministry does for civilian procurement in conformance to the General Financial Rules(GFR). Did we require a Kargil type of situation to wake up the nation to reality of ensuring expeditious procurement for our Forces and not starve them in the hour of need. Does it beheld of a nation of our size and strength to run around globe trotting with a bowl in hand, at the hour of need(also known as arms shopping by empowered committees).

Defence acquisitions have since evolved, over the years with modifications and fine tuning of procedures to now have a more or less mature procedure. But then,

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somewhere down the line we have become what I call, "Prisoners of Procedures". Letter is overriding the spirit, and the spirit has evaporated. We have forgotten the basic aim with which these procedures were evolved, we have forgotten Kargil, we do not seem to remember how we scouted for weapons and equipment at the last minute. The entire exercise of the Group of Ministers recommendations post Kargil in review of the national Security System, and what flowed from that, creation of a procedure, was to ensure expeditious procurement to our Forces. Battle ready forces equipped with the state of art systems and equipment was our vision, the entire spirit of the procedure was to make the soldier feel proud of what the nation can also do for him.

A glance at the information in public domain is indicative of the lethargy in the system to meet this aim. Probity, prudence, propriety, vigilance, fear of taking decisions have all contributed to this bureaucratic lethargy. The procedures have evolved, system strengthened and staffed more

than ever, ever increasing reports from the CAG, fear of audit/vigilance and a few cases and scams have all but ruined the system. There is a conflict in the procurement executive as to what he is and what he is to be. Army is starved of guns for more than 25 years, pre-world war vintage Air Defence systems, flying coffins, burning ships and such like examples only reinforce the need for a need to reform India's defence acquisitions.

What then are the fundamental problems in acquisitions?

Fundamentally, at the basic level, it is all about ownership. While it is the Armed Forces that need a system or equipment, they are at the mercy of bureaucracy to find them the equipment. Who then is responsible for "Capability Building" of the Forces? Does this responsibility rest with the Forces themselves or has this responsibility of capability building of the Forces, been outsourced to a few babus in the ministry? So, we must address ownership at the fundamental level.

Then, it is the nature of defence materiel that is so very unique and strategic that it requires a treatment different from what is

followed in the rest of the government departments. Decision making, as a function of efficiency, is more conspicuous by its absence. Adherence to promulgated timelines is by exception by the government. There is a lack of trust, amongst the various departments of the government, between the government and the industry, between private and public enterprises, and the list goes on.

We are (in)famous for figuring in the Sipri book for being the largest importer of arms, may be successively. Even today, as was the case more than a couple of decades ago, the import content in our acquisitions was as high as 70% and less than 30% sourced from domestic sources. While there were statements by many a government official occupying often enviable positions of power to reverse the buying trend, from the 70/30 to 30/70; little was done to improve the situation. Industry has emerged, private sector has exhibited its willingness to make huge investments, best practices are being absorbed by the industry, yet we have a long way to go.

Where do we go from here?

The Way Forward

At the outset, the nature of defence materiel needs to be understood by the nation to provide for the desired flexibility in undertaking procurements. We are dealing with a strategic sector and while doing so, we cannot subject the defence sector to the same rules and regulations that are applicable to the consumer goods sector. This has to change and the MoD be enabled to cater to such strategic requirements.

Ownership of the procurement process is fundamental to the many problems that are seeded in the system. There is an unequivocal need to provide the Armed Forces with the pride of place in the entire process. Forces must have a larger say in the system. It may not be proper for the system to question the requirements of the services at all levels, beginning from a desk officer level babu. Transparency, probity and other important facets of procurements do not reside in the exclusive domain of the bureaucracy, nor they can be made to believe they are holier than thou and therefore have a fundamental right to question every line of what the

Forces state. Accountability and ownership must be defined and transferred at each stage of the procurement process.

Duplication of work must be avoided at all costs. This is extremely costly in terms of time and trust. If the Forces have carried out a part of the evaluation of the system, there is no need for another bureaucratic department to accept the same. This if not addressed will lead to wheels within wheels and reinventing of the wheel. Once again the Forces will be relegated to depose and explain why they did or did not do something. While the other side reaps the benefit in terms of getting educated, our Forces are subjected to avoidable scrutiny from babus.

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It is not always that our Forces need the best available system in the world. Many a time they may have to do with the second best also. There is so much the country can afford. This is a mantra our Forces may like to bear in mind, to align their wish list to the reality of national economics. Many times, domestic industry can match the best globally, and in

some cases be second best and yet meet the requirement. Therefore, a realistic operational requirement generation from a perceived threat to consequently arrive at a broad based qualitative requirement is the call of the hour.

Financial jurisprudence is not the exclusive domain of the department of finance. It is more relevant at the Forces levels, and they are aware of this extant responsibility. Interference from the bureaucracy and finance departments must be more of an enabling nature rather than finding those so many ways why it can be stopped or stalled or rejected. An attitudinal change is called for.

Government and industry may like to work together in a collaborative mode. Industry may be seen as partners, some of them as strategic partners for the major weapon systems that comprise of beacon projects like aircrafts, helicopters, tanks, and the like. MoD may like to choose a strategic partner for each discipline and then build up a strong relationship with a long term perspective.

If India lives in villages, then industry lives in MSMEs. The small scale sector forms the base of the industrial pyramid. If the

base is large and strong, then the pyramid can be tall and effective. This is a fundamental rule in pure mathematics. An Institutional mechanism may be thought of to facilitate MSMEs in capability and capacity building. They are the temples of innovation. Lean, thin, strong, flexible, they provide for geographical and technical diversity. They are the largest employers expanding their presence in various parts of the country. They need hand-holding and an aggressive and involved mechanism to support them may be evolved.

There are some changes to procedures that are more of a refining of fine print. A very innocent and innocuous line in between can be very damaging for the process to proceed. These need to be addressed in the fine print.

Offsets, as an instrument of developing the domestic industry has paid certain dividends. This needs to be enhanced and optimized. The guidelines for offsets may be made more flexible to attract OEMs to place high end work in India and find our domestic industry as a preferred choice in the supply chain. Addressing taxation issues and providing deemed exports benefits

will enhance domestic competitiveness.

Technology is the key to “Make in India”. Focus of acquisition must shift from mere manufacturing to design and manufacture. Our nation’s strength in design capabilities, software and IT need to be harnessed and enhanced. We may begin our journey with, “Manufacture in India”, “Repair in

India”, progress towards, “Design and Make in India”. Let us not once again forget the vision, “Make in India” for the world to have “Made in India” products and systems.

[Back to Contents](#)

Modernisation of India's Internal Security Mechanism

- *PM Heblikar*

India's internal security mechanism, since Independence, has functioned in a silo system largely confined to the home ministry. It is obvious that this arrangement has outlived its utility and needs a massive make-over. Time has also become appropriate to make political administration of the internal security mechanism effective and result oriented. One way to achieving this objective is to create a set of principles that will ultimately constitute a national security doctrine or policy.

This policy should not be seen in a narrow military sense but expanded to include other organs of the government that also deal with the mechanics of national security. The connotation of national security must change making it incumbent of each citizen to consider it as his national duty. Contemporary developments underline the need to include central government

departments and ministries, state owned enterprises, think-tanks and academic institutions, state governments and the private sector as stakeholders in the overall national security architecture.

A road map is contained in the report of the Kargil Review Committee (KRC), which devoted particular attention to India's internal security challenges and responses. The KRC is the only comprehensive study undertaken on national security at the highest political levels in the country. Chapter-IV entitled "Internal Security" in the report of Group of Ministers Report on National Security is very relevant in present day context. The report of the Naresh Chandra Task Force which was constituted in 2011 on the reform of the intelligence apparatus adds new dimensions to the subject.

Management of internal security in today's environment is

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primarily recognised as being a police function. The police are usually the first responder to civil developments. The central government maintains a large body of central armed police forces and several police organizations for this purpose to provide the safety net and provide assistance at all times. In addition the central government incurs massive expenditure on several police modernisation schemes and also provides special assistance to state governments.

Despite this, threats to national security have remained undiminished and new ones are emerging at regular intervals.

There is no doubt that the security forces and agencies have developed appreciable degree of proficiency and success in dealing with internal security threats over the past several decades. However, no systematic efforts have been made to exploit these success stories to remove the root cause of the problems or issues that cast shadow on internal security. One of the fundamental reasons for this situation is attributed to the absence of strong political

The central government maintains a large body of central armed police forces and several police organizations for this purpose to provide the safety net and provide assistance at all times.

leadership to tackle reasons of instability. This factor also is responsible for absence of a road map or a strategy. It would appear that while dealing with internal threats, ruling parties have often times relegated national interests in favour of their narrow political agenda.

The police modernization program funded by the union government since the late 1960s till date has rendered yeoman service to the cause of national security and safety. Central assistance to the

state governments has also kept pace despite existing limitations. These limitations are perhaps arising out of Constitutional provisions

governing various aspects of centre-state relations on law and order related issues. The other factor is also attributed to the “coalition dharma” that prevailed at the centre for well over 30 years till May 2014, when the government of Prime Minister Modi took office. Failure to establish the National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) is a prime example of this dilemma. There are other instances, as well. Evidently, there is now a pressing

need to energise bi-partisan approach to such issues.

The time is opportune for the incumbent government to come up with new initiatives to make the modernization program more purposeful. It will be seen that the BJP led central government is yet to publicly announce contours of a national policy on pressing security related issues despite being in office for over fifteen months. It must address staffing arrangements so as to make the home ministry more broad-based and proactive in meeting its several responsibilities. Training of civil servants in national security is an important aspect. The need to induct laterally into its ranks best brains from other ministries, departments and “open” market such as Information Technology, Information and Communication Technology, Cyber experts to deal with state and non-state actors must be emphasized. Dependence on traditional staffing patterns must be done away as soon as possible. Several police officers and especially those from the central armed police forces opine that the officer-cadres must be strengthened with “even” more senior posts made available to them in both command and staff positions.

Adoption of best technology platforms by central armed police forces in prosecution of their duties is important. There is a very large reservoir of trained technical manpower available in the country. Among these are qualified young men and women pilots who are awaiting flying opportunities. The slump in aviation sector has created avenues for them to become eligible to join the air wing of the Border Security Force (BSF) both for flying and other ground duties. The sister forces of the BSF who may be considering their own air wing could benefit from open market recruitment.

Modernization must become a precursor to making our forces lean and mean and to bring in technology to act as a force multiplier. The recent advice of Shri Ajit Doval, National Security Advisor to the BSF on harnessing technology in its operational work is timely and worthy of quick implementation. A stage has arrived for our security forces to consider the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV's) for surveillance roles. There are several applications for this platform especially for BSF, ITPB, SSB, CRPF, CISF and NDRF units. Ideally, each unit should be

equipped with UAVs to act as “eyes and ears” in border guard duties, counter-insurgency operations, rescue and relief operations, crowd control and surveillance duties. This technology is available locally and can meet the requirements of our central forces leading to creation of force-multipliers and also give fillip to the fledgling local UAV industry. The experience of central forces in use of UAV technology can be shared with state governments. Technical personnel are available in the open market and if need be the services of short service commissioned officers of army, navy and air-force could be utilised to set-up the infrastructure including training, specialisation, analysis, repair and maintenance. Attractive pay and promotion packages for those joining the UAV stream or general pilot duties must be ensured. The induction of UAVs into central armed police forces must become an urgent item in modernisation programme of the central government and in doing so receive benefits from its “Make in India” policy. A definite timeline for this induction should be made

Lateral induction of short service officers, with special-forces background, into CRPF units deployed in counter-insurgency grid must be considered.

with adequate financial commitments under various modernizations schemes.

Strengthening of the “special units” of the central armed police forces must receive more attention of the home ministry. This involves a cross-synergy between the home ministry and the defence ministry. It has been discussed in public domain for considerable period of time with very little results. The need to augment capacity to deal with asymmetrical warfare cannot be over-emphasised and in this direction sharing of expertise and experience becomes inevitable. Lateral induction of short service officers, with special-forces background, into CRPF units deployed in counter-insurgency grid must be considered. The advantages are many and will add more teeth to those units involved in anti-insurgency operations.

Police modernization programme must focus on upgrading training both at central and state level. Shri NN Vohra, Governor, Jammu and Kashmir, in his address on “Management of National Security” at the United Services Institution, Delhi in August 2014

shared his concerns on the subject. The key point he made was that the arrangements in the states left much to be desired and considerable efforts were needed to close the gap in quality and response. Several former IPS officers have dwelt exclusively on this subject. Shri. V. Balachandran, former Special Secretary, Government of India has written several articles related to the Mumbai incident of November 2011. A colleague of his, Mr Prakash Singh has taken the legal route to bring in police reforms.

Two major subjects namely Intelligence and Training form the crux of modernization programmes. Experience indicates that technical intelligence has become the favoured tool in counter-insurgency operations. The failure to give Human Intelligence or HUMINT its primacy in the intelligence gathering process must be urgently addressed. There are several agencies in India depending on Technical Intelligence or TECHINT to fulfil their tasks. Techint has severe limitations and must be used with care and caution. There is no substitute for Humint and practitioners of intelligence

acquisition activities must “go back to roots”. While the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) and the Intelligence Bureau (IB) are foremost practitioners of Humint, they have developed high degree of skills in this format. Techint too forms part of their activities. The NTRO has its role cut out in this direction.

It would be ideal to create a **National Academy of Intelligence** as a platform to train state and central agencies in intelligence statecraft and also to look at impending threats and challenges to national security. Both the R&AW and the IB may provide the platform for civil and military agencies to partake of their rich experience.

Under the modernization programs, states may be encouraged to establish their own format of Centre for Counter-Terrorism (CTC) to combat terrorism which includes 24x7 automated surveillance mechanism, quick response and post incident analysis etc. These centres should possess the ability to detect, deter and destroy actions of “non-state” entities or “asymmetrical warfare”. The CTC would need to be separate from the state intelligence department, criminal investigation department

or the special branch. The coastal security arrangements must engage the attention of the home ministry. A former senior navy officer remarked that much more requires to be done to empower state governments in this direction. He recommends that each state government creates a separate organization within the police department to handle all aspects of coastal security (b) create a cadre of dedicated personnel drawn from former navy servicemen and directly recruited police constables (c) create an inventory of boats and other hardware including repair and maintenance facility and (d) induct advanced technology like UAV and specific coastal surveillance program. According to another Navy veteran, the east coast of India, especially West Bengal and Orissa, needs to tighten its vigil since several vulnerabilities are yet to be addressed.

There is reluctance in the government to allow private sector participation in not only in security related issues but also training matters. The private sector enterprises have developed

attractive packages in several interest areas such as counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism, security of vulnerable areas and vulnerable points, communications and safe communications technology and personnel security. With massive requirements to meet Homeland security demands, the relevant authorities must increase the area of private participation in related activities. The corporate sector too requires the assistance of private agencies to protect their assets. The home ministry must strive to create conditions for such participation.

A former senior navy officer remarked that much more requires to be done to empower state governments in this direction.

Police modernization must address the quality and effectiveness of the Civil Defence and Home Guards Organisation. Both are important elements in the national security scenario. The Home Guards Organization plays a variety of roles, both in war and peace. The terms and condition and remunerations must be made financially attractive for people to join and render service. The possibility of the corporate sector joining hands to give the Home Guards Organization must be considered especially for watch and ward duties. There is a

proliferation of private security agencies and private detective agencies nation-wide, there is however very little supervision and audit of their activities. A bulk of these fall short of set or expected standards. This is an issue for urgent redressal.

Police modernization must become an integral part of national security policy and therefore a strategic tool in its implementation. The political dimension of police modernization must be to ensure that while the police force gets the best possible attention, there must be equal

attention to others in the field especially private sector participation in its activities. The most important aspect here is to bring the state governments at the highest political level to the national security debate and management of internal security. Without this understanding between state and central government, the national security infrastructure will remain weak and ineffective. India certainly cannot afford this stalemate.

[Back to Contents](#)

Digital Revolution to Empower India

- **Radhakrishna Rao**

India's recognition as a global software powerhouse and Information Technology(IT) giant notwithstanding, a large part of the country continues to be enveloped in "digital darkness". The digital divide in the country, like the gulf between the poor and the rich, is quite staggering and strikingly visible. For instance, a number of rural settlements in the vicinity of Bengaluru, the pioneer of IT revolution in the country, continue to have virtually no access to "digital resources". Of course, there is now an all-round realization about the growing importance of digital empowerment for giving quick impetus to this sector. It is being done by opening up new avenues and opportunities for employment and revenue earning by expanding the horizons of literacy, health care as well as financial and banking services.

Clearly, digital empowerment goes beyond providing just "communications and connectivity". Indeed, digital

empowerment has all the potential to be the major driver of community advancement and social progress in all its manifestations. It was in August 2014 that the Narendra Modi Government announced Digital India mission with the view to reduce the digital divide between the urban and rural areas of the country by using the fibre optics cable broadband.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has been vigorously batting a for digitally empowered India, while speaking at the Nasscom(National Association of Software and Services Companies) leadership seminar held in March this year suggested that 'innovation should happen in this country and the government. The will adopt those innovations,' he went on to add. While a culture of innovation needs to be cultivated to give a big push to the digital transformation in the country, the biggest challenge is how to transform the government mindset and work culture that has

**Radhakrishna Rao, Visiting Fellow, VIF*

been shaped by conventional and conservative values.

There is also no doubt that at the heart of digital empowerment lies literacy and digital ability, easier and affordable access to digital infrastructure for all the citizens. It is hoped that the synergy unleashed by Digital India initiative will attract investment in electronics manufacturing and support trade in a big way. Only an active participation by all stakeholders--government agencies, IT and software companies, service providers, industry and trade as well as the common citizens-- will alone ensure successful implementation of Digital India mission.

However, as things stand today India appears to be a long way off from realizing the goals of Digital India mission. By all reckoning, infrastructure appears to be a major challenge for the successful rolling out of this Rs One lakh crore project. But then putting in place a robust and responsive infrastructure for this ambitious project would need an investment that is much higher than the originally envisaged outlay.

Moreover, ensuring the participation of the private sector in the project in a big way could help meet the objectives of Digital India speedily and efficiently. May be for the Digital India mission to succeed, a Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode needs to be adopted.

There are other concerns too insofar as boosting the prospects of Digital India is concerned. Data security for one. In the context of the growing menace of cyber intrusion, the fear of data pilferage is very much real. According to a recent study, as high as 63 per cent of IT decision makers admitted to delaying a project due to fear of security. Therefore, the issue of cyber security should receive top priority while implementing Digital India. Of course, to ensure data security India is now building its own certification labs to test electronic equipment used in data communications.

Another major concern is the issue of creating a trained workforce which will be capable of dealing with the pros and cons of digitalized workplace. At the end

There is also no doubt that at the heart of digital empowerment lies literacy and digital ability, easier and affordable access to digital infrastructure for all the citizens.

of the day, the aim of this ambitious project is digital empowerment of every citizen by 2019 through mobile phones which can be an instrument of change through access to services such as banking, trade, health care and education. Today a phone is more than a communications device; it is a facilitator of a number of services. Currently, only 74 per cent of the Indian population owns mobile phones. Moreover, mobile phone density in rural areas is still low.

So, getting more Indians online holds the key to Digital India mission which seeks to transform the nation from a service to knowledge economy. The three phases of the Digital India are designed to ensure that gram panchayats in the country would be connected, all government services would be brought on one single digital platform and every Indian would be digitally empowered. In the backdrop of slow progress in creating broadband infrastructure for the project, the Indian Government is planning to involve private players to help complete the creation of broadband network well on time. This is considered the best way to speed up the plan to link up

2,50,000 village clusters to the internet platform.

The Digital India project also subsumes many existing schemes including the national e-Governance plan. Basically, Digital India is an umbrella project comprising a range of schemes, some of which have been tweaked to give a push to the project. To cover all 2.5 lakh gram panchayats the three state owned enterprises—Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), Railtel operated by the Indian Railways and Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCIL)—need to lay 30,000- kms of optic fibre cable per month. But despite the best of efforts at present they are in a position to lay just 500 km per month. This implies that the project implementation needs to be speeded up and perhaps more players need to be roped in to complete the communication network well within the set deadline.

That said, the Digital India project will do well to take into account the existing ground realities in rural India. For many of the Indian villagers the immediate priority is to build toilets to end the ugly legacy of defecating in open. More importantly, despite the hype of

rural electrification, power supply in many of the villages in India is erratic and unreliable. As such the top priority should be accorded to put in place a system to ensure a regular and reliable power supply before Digital India project can be implemented.

On the positive side, with electronic manufacturers and operating systems incorporating voice capabilities and linguistic search capabilities, education can receive a comprehensive boost. Imparting education with technology built in with multi lingual capabilities would help meet the skills challenge and generate an industry ready talent pool. In the quest to transform India into a global knowledge hub through the successful implementation of Digital India project, industries, businesses and technology giants, all must play an important role.

According to Telecom and IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad,

“Once Digital India becomes a reality, we can give jobs to five crore plus people.” As pointed out by Prasad, “We have got 4000 startups in India. Many of them are back from Silicon Valley making their own products...I see they have the potential to become Google or Facebook of India.”

Digital India is expected to make available public and government services on demand by integrating services across departments and jurisdictions and making them available in real time for both online and mobile platforms. Digital India which weaves together a large number of ideas and thoughts could be harnessed in multiferous ways to ensure a bright future for India. In the ultimate analysis, an awakened and empowered India could be the beacon for the rest of the world.

[Back to Contents](#)

Policy Options for Trans-Border Operations

- *Gurmeet Kanwal*

In the short span of four days after the convoy of an infantry battalion was ambushed in Manipur close to the border with Myanmar, the Indian army launched two trans-border surgical strikes to neutralise the Naga and Manipuri extremists responsible for the attack. The bases of insurgents belonging to SS Khaplang's NSCN (K) and the Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (KYKL), a Meitei outfit, were targeted in the Sagaing division of Myanmar.

The retaliatory counter-attacks were based on hard intelligence obtained from multiple humint and electronic surveillance sources and were mounted by India's elite Special Forces. Two of the operating bases of the extremists were successfully destroyed. The extremists suffered "significant" casualties and have been dealt a crushing blow. However, there are a number of other militant camps across the border in Myanmar and reprisal attacks may be expected.

There is no reason for the conjecture that the operations conducted by India's Special Forces may have violated Myanmar's sovereignty. The two countries have an agreement on security cooperation and the Indian and the Myanmarese armies have been cooperating for over two decades in conducting joint counter-insurgency operations.

Several Indian insurgent groups (NSCN, ULFA and Manipur rebels among others) have been operating out of bases in the weakly-controlled areas across the borders of the Indian states of Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram. The members of some Myanmarese rebel groups have often taken shelter on the Indian side. It is in the interest of both the countries to cooperate with each other to fight these insurgent groups in a coordinated manner.

In April-May 1995, Operation Golden Bird was undertaken as a joint trans-border operation to

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destroy insurgent bases on the Myanmar side of the border. While the Myanmar army blocked the escape routes, Indian troops acted as the hammer. Approximately 40 insurgents were killed by the Indian army and a huge cache of arms was recovered.

Since then the two armies have been cooperating regularly with each other though the intensity of the cooperation may have varied in keeping with the state of the overall relationship. In November 2001, the Myanmar army had raided several Manipuri rebel bases, rounded up almost 200 rebels and recovered 1,500 guns. Again, in January 2006, joint operations were undertaken successfully by the two armies. India-Myanmar cooperation has also achieved some success in controlling narcotics trafficking from the 'golden triangle' of South-east Asia and in curbing the proliferation of small arms in the region. Hence, operations to destroy the remaining bases in conjunction with the Myanmar army must continue.

International Experience

'Hot pursuit' operations across international borders were commonplace during the Cold War. The South African Defence Force (SADF) had made trans-border raids part of its operational doctrine. The SADF repeatedly conducted hot pursuit operations into Angola against members of the People's Army of Namibia (PLAN, armed wing of SWAPO) and the MPLA. The MPLA supported SWAPO and provided bases to PLAN, while the SADF supported UNITA, an Angolan rebel group.

In November 2001, the Myanmar army had raided several Manipuri rebel bases, rounded up almost 200 rebels and recovered 1,500 guns.

Similarly, Israel has always claimed the 'right of hot pursuit' and such operations against Palestinian rebels

suspected of violent attacks are part and parcel of the operational planning of the Israeli Defence Forces. Retribution is usually swift and sometimes disproportionate.

Closer home, the Indian army and the army of Bhutan had launched joint operations against ULFA and Bodo extremists who were operating from 30 bases inside Bhutan. The King of Bhutan sought time to prepare his forces and then personally led the charge during Operation All Clear in

December 2003. Over 600 extremists were reported to have been neutralised.

The government of Sheikh Hasina has also taken stringent action against Indian militants being harboured by sympathisers on Bangladesh soil. ULFA Chairman Arabinda Rajkhowa, its deputy military chief Raju Barua and several other militants were rounded up and handed over to India in December 2009.

India's Policy Options

A nation's policy for trans-border hot pursuit operations depends on the combat capabilities of its forces, the type of border management forces deployed by the adversary on the border, their state of operational readiness and the nature of the terrain in the sector. It also depends on the international ramifications of a nation's actions and whether it has strong strategic partners and friends in the international community who will support it. Alternatively, the nation must have the gumption to go it alone – in complete disregard of international opinion.

Following the Special Forces raids into Myanmar, some political leaders and analysts have been

very vocally advocating that India should declare a policy of launching hot pursuit military operations to counter Pakistani terrorist groups launching strikes on Indian territory. While the operations conducted by India's Special Forces inside Myanmar have already sent a strong message to the Pakistan army and the ISI, a 'gung-ho' approach is not necessarily the best.

Against Pakistan the better option would be to undertake targeted covert operations against the leadership of the terrorist groups inimical to Indian security, and to systematically destroy purely military targets across the LoC through covert means so as to raise Pakistan's cost for waging its proxy war.

However, if another major terrorist strike is launched in India by terrorist organisations based in Pakistan and there is credible evidence that points to state sponsorship, like in Mumbai in November 2008, military retribution must be swift, including the systematic degradation of Pakistan army posts abetting infiltration. Operations must be carefully calibrated to inflict unacceptable punishment on the Pakistan armed forces, the ISI and the

terrorist organisations, but designed to avoid provoking large-scale conflict.

It will be argued that the risk of escalation is inherent in such a course of action. Pakistan's military leadership must be made to realise that India has shown

immense strategic restraint in the face of grave provocation and our threshold of tolerance has been severely tested. It can no longer be business as usual.

[Back to Contents](#)

Why Does Siachen Matter to India?

- *Nitin A. Gokhale*

Sixteen years ago this month, the Kargil conflict was raging in the heights of Drass, Kargil and Batalik. It took more than 45 days for the Indian army to evict the Pakistani intruders from those icy heights. Tololing, Tiger Hill, Three Pimples came into popular lexicon and brave hearts like Vikram Batra, Anuj Nayyar, Saurabh Kalia, Vijayant Thapar became household names, thanks to the non-stop media coverage of the Kargil conflict.

More than a decade and a half later, researchers and analysts continue to focus on the misadventure of Gen Pervez Musharraf, then the Pakistan Army Chief and the likely reason for his attempt to cut-off the link between Srinagar and Leh. To me, Musharraf's move in Kargil was rooted in a development that took place in far North—on the Siachen Glacier to be precise—in the summer of 1984.

Indian army occupied the Soltoro Ridge (that dominates the glacier)

to secure Siachen and the territory to its east. This deployment (a) dominates Pakistani positions in the valley west of Soltoro Ridge (b) blocks infiltration possibilities across the Soltoro Ridge passes into Ladakh (c) prevents Pakistani military adventurism in Turtuk and areas to its south. Its Northern most position at Indira Col overlooks the Shakshgam Valley (illegally ceded by Pakistan to China) and denies Pakistani access to Karakoram Pass.

Pakistan has never been able to reconcile to the fact that the Indian Army raced to the top of the Saltoro ridge and occupied three of its important passes. This loss, in the eyes of the Pakistani Army is second only to its military defeat in 1971. Musharraf, as a brigadier had tried--unsuccessfully--to wrest Indian positions but had failed spectacularly.

So why does Siachen matter to India?

Disputed boundaries are often

**Nitin A. Gokhale, Editor & Senior Fellow, VIF*

trip-wires of war.

Siachen, the 75-km long glacier, sometimes described as the third pole, sits astride two disputed boundaries: with Pakistan and China. Located in the Karakoram Range (beyond the Ladakh Range), the glacier descends from a height of 23,000 to 12,000 feet.

Along with other glaciers in this area, it is an important source of water to Indus River which passes through Ladakh and Kargil, and then into Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK). The area is claimed by India on the basis of accession of J & K to India in October 1947 and the Karachi Agreement of 1949, which described the ceasefire line beyond NJ 9842 (Saltoro Ridge and beyond) to be 'running thence Northwards to the glaciers'.

Pakistan's cartographic attempt to join NJ 9842 to Karakoram Pass on India-China boundary (a straight line moving Northeast instead of North) sending mountaineering expeditions and preparations to occupy it with military was foiled when India

launched 'Operation Meghdoot' in April 1984.

Over the past three decades, the Indian Army ably supported by the Indian Air Force has mastered the treacherous mountains and has evolved a high altitude doctrine that is the envy of the world. In the process, the Indian military has shed blood, made enormous sacrifices and braved the elements. No wonder, the military leadership has told the political executive time and again

that it is against any withdrawal from the Saltoro ridge and Siachen glacier.

At the heart of the problem is the interpretation of the 1949 Karachi and 1972 Simla agreements by both sides. During both these negotiations, India and Pakistan demarcated their borders only up to Point NJ 9842. This includes the 772 km Ceasefire Line in 1949, now known as the LoC or Line-of-Control. It was stated in the agreements that the border would run "thence north" from map grid reference NJ 9842.

The Cease-Fire Agreement was signed in Karachi by top military

Along with other glaciers in this area, it is an important source of water to Indus River which passes through Ladakh and Kargil, and then into Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK).

representatives of India and Pakistan and the UN Military Observer Group. The purpose of the Karachi meeting (July 18 to 27) was to establish “a ceasefire line in the State of J&K” in pursuance of Part I of the key UN resolution of August 13, 1948 that prescribed a ceasefire.

The Karachi Agreement delineated the entire CFL, demarcating over 740 km on the ground. With the CFL increasingly running through high mountains and glaciated areas as it traversed north, it often followed a directional path in the absence of clear landmarks. Thus, finally, “Chalunka (on the Shyok River), Khor, thence North to the glaciers,” passing through grid reference NJ 9842. The segment beyond NJ 9842 was by mutual agreement not demarcated on the ground, being a highly elevated, glaciated, unexplored and unpopulated region that had not witnessed any fighting. A plebiscite was soon to follow and the matter, it was assumed, would soon be settled.

The delineation of the northernmost segment of the CFL was, however, unambiguous: NJ 9842, “thence north to the glaciers”. If every one of 30 or more earlier

directional commands were meticulously followed in tracing the CFL, there was no reason whatsoever for any departure from this norm in the case of the very last command. “Thence North”, could only mean due north to wherever the boundary of J&K State lay. The very next section crucially directed that “the ceasefire line described above” be drawn “so as to eliminate any no man’s land”. Therefore, the Line, whether delineated or demarcated could in no way be left hanging in the air.

The Cease Fire Line was ratified by both sides. Twenty-three years later, it was revalidated as the Line of Control by the Suchetgarh Agreement of December 1972, in the wake of the Shimla Agreement between Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Both sides also agreed in the LoC the military gains made by either side in J&K in the 1971 war. Thus in the Kargil-Siachen sector, all territorial gains went entirely to India which acquired the Turtuk salient comprising five villages (Chalunka, Thang, Tyakshi, Pharol and Turtok) just south and west of NJ 9842. This modest but important military acquisition provided India an additional territorial bulwark against hostile

cartographic or physical claims on Siachen.

History

Till the mid-1970s, neither India nor Pakistan gave any attention to Siachen but in 1978, India's renowned military mountaineer Col Narinder Kumar stumbled onto American maps that showed the LoC between India and Pakistan running to Karakoram pass. He persuaded the Army to launch expeditions to the area in 1978 and 1981. The reports brought back by the missions gave Northern Command a fair idea about the civilian expeditions that were now increasingly coming into Siachen via Skardu and Gilgit in PoK.

Clearly, Pakistan was throwing open the Karakorams for mountaineering expeditions. It began as an experiment to encourage tourism in the Northern Areas but soon turned into what Indian officials described as a bit of "mountain poaching," in which the line of control was extended to the Karakoram Pass from NJ 9842 showing the Siachen glacier as part of Pakistan!

Renowned mountaineer Harish Kapadia in his book, *Siachen Glacier: The Battle of Roses*, in fact claims that Pakistan had started permitting mountaineering expeditions into Siachen Glacier as early as 1974. "The first expedition to Siachen climbed the south ridge of Sherpi Kangri II. This was followed by an Austrian expedition, which climbed Sia Kangri from the southwest. A major expedition from Japan climbed peak K12. Two climbers reached the summit and communicated this but they

"The first expedition to Siachen climbed the south ridge of Sherpi Kangri II. This was followed by an Austrian expedition, which climbed Sia Kangri from the southwest.

never returned to the base camp. They died during the descent. All three expeditions were in 1974 and

on the rim of the Siachen Glacier...it was not long before an expedition entered the main Siachen Glacier. The Shizuka University team had applied to the Pakistani authorities for permission to climb peaks here every year between 1964 and 1969, but had always been denied it. In fact, between 1961 and 1974, Pakistan had steadfastly refused permission to climb in the vicinity of the Siachen. Sometime in 1974, the Pakistani authorities informed the Japanese that their expeditions

would now be permitted. The Japanese were offered a 50% discount on peak fees as well as the assistance of the Pakistani Army. Their permit stated that the peak was located 'near the frontier of China and Pakistan.' Final permission was granted to them in January 1975. The 14-member expedition was accompanied by Capt Shaukat Nazir Hamdani of the Pakistani Army as the LO (Liaison Officer)."

Literature of the time also shows that Pakistan had launched a well-planned promotional campaign to attract mountaineers to come and climb some of the well known peaks in the region— According to one report, between 1975 and 1980, at least five Japanese and one American expedition were allowed to cross the Salto ridge via Sia La and Bilafond La to explore the Siachen glacier.

Harish Kapadia says the Pakistanis were testing waters. And waiting for Indian reaction. As he writes: " It is indeed surprising that Indian agencies showed no interest in the reports of mountaineering activities that were taking place right under their nose, even though details were published in many journals, including one from India. Was

history repeating itself? The Indo-China war of 1962 had been triggered by a road that was being built in the Indian territory of Aksai Chin..."

They Indians realised the importance of Pakistani activities only in 1978 (after Col Kumar's expedition returned) but did not take it seriously until a protest note from Pakistan laying the claim to Siachen actually arrived in Northern Command in 1983, although three Army expeditions had been sent to the glacier in 1980, 1981 and 1982.

Lt Gen ML Chibber who had taken over as Northern Army Commander in 1982 after commanding a Corps in Punjab, was alerted to the Siachen issue during one of the early briefings when his staff showed him a protest note by Pakistan's Northern Sector Commander warning India to keep off the Siachen area, following India's expeditions in the previous three summers. Gen Chibber couldn't help recall the episode in 1978 when he, as Director General Military Operations, had permitted Col Kumar to launch the first operational reconnaissance patrol disguised as a civilian expedition to the Siachen glacier.

Gen Chibber, writing in a defence journal after his retirement, recalled: “To understand the origin of the Siachen conflict, it would be relevant here to look at the developments in the Gilgit region. In the mid-seventies, the Pakistani government adopted the policy of throwing open the Karakoram to international mountaineers. It was a step to promote tourism, and they simplified the procedure to clear expeditions. They even waived off the royalty for mountain peaks below 6100 metres.

A well planned promotional campaign was launched to attract mountaineers to come and climb some of the well-known peaks in this region—Gasherbrum group, Mount Godwin Austin and Nanga Parbat. Travel facilities to Gilgit and Skardu were improved, as were hotel facilities in these towns. The response was really good. In clearing expeditions, a bit of ‘mountain poaching’ was undertaken!”ⁱ

By the summer of 1983, it was clear that India needed to keep a close watch on Siachen. Two patrols, Polar Bear I and Polar

Bear II were sent between June and September 1983. The second patrol was tasked to build a small hut. A ‘shelter of sorts’ was put together by the end of September, 1983. It was good enough to protect the patrols from strong winds. To be fair, these patrols never came across any Pakistani ground patrols, although Pakistani helicopters did buzz them on a couple of occasions. The troops came back to base by end September as the winter set in.

A well planned promotional campaign was launched to attract mountaineers to come and climb some of the well-known peaks in this region—Gasherbrum group, Mount Godwin Austin and Nanga Parbat.

Northern Command HQ should have been satisfied with the feedback brought back by the patrols, but two protest notes by Pakistan in August 1983

were unusually strong and gave the first official indication of Pakistan’s stand. The note sent on 21 August 1983 by the Northern Sector Commander for the first time claimed all areas northwest of the line joining NJ 9842 to Karakoram Pass as Pakistan’s! It read:

“Request instruct your troops to withdraw beyond line of control south of line joining Point NJ 9842, Karakoram Pass NE 7410 immediately. I have instructed my

troops to show maximum restraint. But any delay in vacating our territory will create a serious situation.” Ironically the note ended on a conciliatory note: “Assuring my fullest cooperation in maintaining peace and tranquillity along line of control.”

Northern Command was in no mood to accept the unilateral extension of the line of control. It sent a counter-protest note pointing out air violations.

But, Pakistan was not willing to accept India’s protest. Another note received on 29 August was more explicit. It read:

“Your reply to our protest note of 21 August 1983 received.

A) Your troops have carried out intrusions across LC north of Point NJ 9842-Karakoram Pass-NE 7410. They intruded approximately 25 miles inside our territory in Siachen glacier, NJ 9797, NK 0689.

B) Last year also your troops had intruded into the same area for which protest had been lodged by our government.

This is a serious violation and unless stopped forthwith is likely to disturb the

peaceful condition. Therefore please instruct your troops to remain south of the line Point NJ 9842-Karakoram Pass NE 7410.”

Gen Chibber now recalls: “We considered the protest note and took a view that such routine protests are a common feature of life in Jammu and Kashmir, where the armies of India and Pakistan are deployed against each other in a ‘no-war-no-peace’ confrontation. A suitable counter-protest was lodged and decision taken to continue our patrolling during the summer in 1983. It was during 1983 that the Pakistani side precipitated matters which developed into a conflict. In 1983, it became obvious to us that the Pakistani side was getting ready to physically come onto the Siachen glacier. Hence, we had to act swiftly in order to prevent them from doing so.”

Northern Command kept the Army HQ in the loop and began its own assessment of the situation.

A detailed appreciation of the situation on Siachen and its importance as assessed at that time is buried in Indian Army files. A part of the assessment said:

“We had been launching expeditions and patrols onto the Siachen glacier since 1978. Pakistan launched protests against our activities in 1983 on the plea that our patrols have intruded into their territory. Their claim to the territory is part of their geostrategic scheme backed by the incorrect and unilateral marking of the imaginary extension of the LC on maps published in the USA. From the various intelligence reports received it was confirmed that Pak was sending an appropriately equipped force in the area to contest our patrol in 1984.”

The assessment was based not only on the Army’s own intelligence reports, since even RA&W (Research and Analysis Wing), India’s external intelligence agency, had picked up information that suggested that the Pakistanis were shopping for Alpine clothing and equipment in thousands from Europe in the winter of 1983.

The former chief of RA&W, Vikram Sood, was the agency’s Srinagar station head in those years. He remembers walking into the 15 Corps Commander Lt Gen

PN Hoon’s office in the Badami Bagh Cantonment, and passing on this and other inputs about increased Pakistani activity in the area. “That time, we knew Pakistanis were sending more and more civilian expeditions into Siachen, but its importance was not so apparent until we put two and two together and realised Pakistan was up to something far more serious than just sending mountaineering expeditions into the area. When we got reports of

When we got reports of the large scale snow clothing and high altitude equipment purchase by Pakistan, there was enough urgency for me to go and share it with Prem (Lt Gen Hoon),” Vikram Sood recalled during an interview with me in 2013.

the large scale snow clothing and high altitude equipment purchase by Pakistan, there was enough urgency for me to go and share it with Prem (Lt Gen

Hoon),” Vikram Sood recalled during an interview with me in 2013. “The Pakistanis were not buying all that for a picnic,” he quipped.

As matters came to head, it fell upon Brig. VN Channa then commanding 26 Sector headquartered in Partapur to plan the occupation of Saltoro codenamed Operation Meghdoot.

He recalls: “The decision wasn’t taken in haste. It was a very

deliberate, conscious decision taken at the highest level. The Prime Minister was involved in it. My only regret is that they only told me to hold the crest line. They didn't permit me to go down (towards Pakistani areas). One should have and closed the chapter once and for all. If we had gone down to Gyari, go and hold the area, you didn't need to occupy the glacier, at all because all routes are blocked by you. But, of course those are all bigger political decisions. I remember pressing for it, though I was a small fry in the whole game. Had we done that, today's situation needn't have arisen. Siachen ensures that Pakistan and China don't link up on top of our head, but also makes sure that Pakistan alone does not create problems for us in the Nubra Valley. You have forestalled all that. Look at Siachen, look at Karakoram Pass and look at DBO," he points at the map and explains. "As it is, Pakistan has given Shagksham Valley to China. Why do you allow the two adversaries to encircle you," he asks.

Why India can't vacate Saltoro/Siachen

As many officers who have served on the glacier and in the Northern

Command have pointed out time and again, occupation of the Saltoro and Siachen provides a buffer to Ladakh and in military parlance, the much needed depth to important mountain passes that are gateways to Ladakh and onto Kashmir. There are other reasons too why Siachen or Saltoro to be more precise cannot be vacated. For instance:

- It will enable widening of the China-Pakistan handshake (collusive threat) to include Gilgit-Baltistan (reportedly being leased out by Pakistan to China for 50 years), Shaksgam Valley (already ceded by Pakistan to China in 1963), Saltoro-Siachen region (that Pakistan may reoccupy through "Kashmiri Freedom Fighters" or cede to China), own Sub Sector North (SSN) east of Siachen with Chinese sitting on the northern slopes of the Karakoram Pass if not on top of it already, and Aksai Chin already under Chinese occupation.
- SSN and Eastern Ladakh will become focused objectives of Chinese strategic 'acupuncture'. Defence potential of SSN will be totally degraded with

western flank exposed and KK Pass to north, which India stopped patrolling years back for fear of annoying the dragon. We continue to remain thin in Eastern Ladakh against Chinese threat via Aksai Chin – heightened more now with possibility of two front war.

- India's next line of defence will perforce base on Ladakh Range with possibility of Leh coming within enemy artillery range.
- Ladakh and Zaskar Ranges will be targeted for terrorism by ISI nurtured groups while Pakistan will say they are 'out of control'.

Siachen therefore is no longer a disputed point between India and Pakistan but a trilateral issue between India, Pakistan and China. China has now increased its civil and military presence in the northern areas, purportedly to improve infrastructure there. Among the infrastructure reconstruction projects to be given priority are those related to the repair and up-gradation of the Karakoram Highway, which was damaged in 2009. China also plans to construct railway tracks and oil pipelines from Kashgar in

Xinjiang to Gwadar port in Pakistan.

Why has military withdrawal from Siachen become more complicated now?

Whenever India and Pakistan have discussed the Siachen glacier issue, Pakistan has refused to authenticate the AGPL and the existing troops' locations. Pakistan demands Indian troops' withdrawal to the pre-1972 position i.e. to the east of the line joining NJ 9842 and Karakoram Pass.

The strategic consequences of a deal without a formal authentication are obvious. Pakistan army will have comparatively easier access to the Saltoro Ridge and to the Glacier. That will also ensure security of the Shaksgam Valley for China and put a final stamp on its political control.

There are however, a number of 'experts' who argue that it is futile to hold on to the positions on the Saltoro ridgeline because they are important only tactically and have no strategic significance. As one Indian Army officer has written: "They are obviously unaware of the prevailing conditions in

Siachen. If ever there was a tactical gain that was instrumental in providing exponential dividend to a strategic cause, this is the one.”

Through innovation, hard work and sustained effort to improve the situation, the Indian Army has established such strong, controlling position that it enjoys overwhelming operational and psychological superiority in Siachen. It would be a folly to give up the advantage.

Self-proclaimed analysts have put forward arguments in favour of demilitarising Siachen citing the high human and material cost that the Indian military has to pay. Let us examine the costs. Between 1984 and 2007, the Parliament was told that 884 Indian soldiers were killed and 13,022 wounded. That makes it an average of 38 dead in a year and 550 plus wounded. But the figures don't reflect the fact that since the ceasefire agreement between India and Pakistan went into effect in 2003, battle casualties are down to zero. Even the weather casualties are now down to single digit on an average

Self-proclaimed analysts have put forward arguments in favour of demilitarising Siachen citing the high human and material cost that the Indian military has to pay.

in a year. This is a sea change from the first two decades of the conflict when the weather and battle casualties both were high.

Financially, India has reportedly spent over Rs 8,000 crores since 1984 in Operation Meghdoot. The recurring costs today are pegged at about Rs 365 crores. This is no financial burden for a military that has an annual budget of Rs 2, 24,000 crore or about 38 billion dollars (2014).

Infrastructure in the Siachen sector has developed over the years. Pipelines for kerosene and water have been laid and better facilities have been organised in every sphere of activity. Therefore, the expenditure incurred now is more in the form of maintenance and regular improvements. Over the years, the improvement in living conditions, health facilities and communication have reduced the attrition rate significantly. Today, financial and human costs in Operation Meghdoot are sustainable.

So why is there an occasional clamour for demilitarising

Siachen? More importantly, can it be done? Several experts have weighed in on the issue and as in every other issue concerning India and Pakistan the opinion is divided right down the middle.

De-militarisation by itself is a process that consists of several logical steps: ceasefire, authentication, demarcation, withdrawal, re-deployment and verification. This concept, everyone agrees, is the best possible solution. So why is there no forward movement?

The primary cause of disconnect is the sequence of the process of demilitarisation. India insists on authentication of current troops' position as the first step. The Pakistanis want the Indian troops to withdraw to pre-1972 positions before any further discussions can take place.

Then there is the question of trust.

What if the agreement is flouted and the positions are occupied by the Pakistan Army? The level of mistrust between India and Pakistan in general and the Indian and Pakistani Security Forces in particular is deep-rooted and cannot be overturned so easily.

Yet there are many 'peaceniks' who propose a unilateral withdrawal from Siachen, among them military officers who professed to be hawks while in service but who turned doves when out of it.

Several diplomats and analysts have said India must recognise Pakistan's compulsions and offer a face-saving formula so that the agreement on Siachen does not look like a defeat for the Pakistani Army. This is utter nonsense. If Pakistan wants demilitarisation of Saltoro-Siachen, it must first accept the fact that Pakistani Army troops are NOWHERE NEAR THE SIACHEN GLACIER.

Officially too, India and Pakistan continue to hold dialogue over Siachen. Between 1986 and 2012, 13 rounds of talks have been held. Twice, past reports suggest, both countries came close to an agreement but political considerations rather than military compulsions prevented any final breakthrough. As Gen Raghavan said a decade ago: "The assumption that demilitarisation is being hampered by military obduracy is, of course a misplaced one. The record of negotiations (between 1986 and 2003) on

Siachen is evidence enough of the political problems in bringing about demilitarisation.”

Not much has changed since then.

The civilian leadership in India has so far backed the military’s stand. So, giving up a dominant military position on Siachen

without iron-clad guarantees would be a fool’s errand especially

in view of the enormous sacrifices and hardships that the Indian soldiers have braved in these past three decades to defend Siachen and keep the Indian flag flying.

[Back to Contents](#)

The Reasons behind ISIS Picking up Pace Again

- *SK Chatterji*

The ISIS flag flies from a few more masts across the Syrian - Iraqi landscape. Quite an achievement for an organization that a few months back was considered to be losing steam. In the last few weeks ISIS forces have notched up victories in both Syria and Iraq. There have been some success for the other parties too; but the scales have tipped in favour of ISIS.

The story at the beginning of 2015 was one of major reversals faced by the ISIS. In January, 2015, after protracted fighting, Kurdish forces drove them out of the strategically important town of Kobani, on the Syrian - Turkey borders. In April, another success story had followed at Tikrit, this time with Iraqi forces, Shiite and Sunni militias, Iranian assistance, US and UK air power coming together to deliver the blow. There

was hope at that stage of ISIS having been effectively checkmated? In fact, the world was looking at retaking of Mosul as the next big Iraqi operation to initiate the grand rollback of the ISIS saga.

Notwithstanding the reverses, the ISIS is back in reckoning. The first of its recent successes was at Ramadi in mid-May, which brought them within 70 miles of Baghdad and gave them a better control over the Anwar province. The next victory was at the other end of the battlefield, Palmyra, an ancient Syrian town famous for its sculptures and monuments. Palmyra also gives the ISIS control of road networks in the region. It's also in close proximity to gas fields that could further swell its coffers.

The reasons for ISIS successes can

* *Brig (Retd.) SK Chatterji, Former Deputy Director General, Public Information at the Army HQ*

perhaps be traced back to the stance taken by some major players during the period after the loss of Mosul almost a year back, to that preceding the defeat at Ramadi. The Iraqi government failed to coalesce the strengths of the various groups that could have defended Ramadi. The Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMF), primarily Shia militias, was not acceptable to some Sunni tribes given the reputation of the group's violations post the victory at Tikrit. However, notwithstanding the fact files of Tikrit, the PMF had already operated jointly with Sunni militias in Anbar without displaying even a trace of the Tikrit legacy.

With the Shia militias out of the fight and Sunni tribes not having adequate political support at Baghdad to be armed there was in effect neither a synthesized strategy nor enough resources for the defence of Ramadi. ISIS launched its offensive hours after

the PLF had withdrawn from Ramadi and captured the city.

At Palmyra it was a battle between Assad's forces and the ISIS. Perhaps the bigger reason for the defeat was the dearth of air support. Palmyra is also Sunni majority; a fact that has again and again decisively influenced the resolve of Iraqi forces to hold out. Perhaps, the defeat also reflects the fatigue that the Iraqi Army experiences after years of combat.

Beyond the issues discussed above is the fact or fiction of ISIS leader Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi

being seriously injured in March, 2015. There were reports of his death and jockeying for leadership with Abu Ala Afri ultimately taking over. Whether he is dead or alive, or for that matter a new leader has been anointed or not, in each of these circumstances a degree of confusion may have prevailed contributing to the reverses at Kobani and Tikrit. That phase, seemingly, is history now.

The other factor is the deep distrust with which Iran's rise is viewed by Sunni Arab leadership of Gulf States. The issue was evident in the recent Camp David meet of Arab Gulf countries with President Obama. Some Arab leaders went to the extent of sending their deputies, viewing current American moves, especially the nuclear deal, as empowering Iran. Obama was able to make some progress in the all but impossible strategic balancing of American relations astride the Sunni States - Iran divide. His assurance that Bashar al Assad will have no role in Syria's future also eased the other major apprehension of the Gulf States.

The cascading effects of Camp David were felt at the operational level in Ramadi, a week later. The Popular Mobilization Front, with its Shia identity and Iranian linkages, was not allowed to take to the field for Ramadi's defence. At Palmyra too, it can be

hypothetically argued, that if the Americans had pitched in, however impossible the suggestion may seem to be, the results could have been different.

Even with the best of resources, taming ISIS is quite a challenge. In Iraq, the Army is not up to the task. Kurds haven't the resources. They have made some additional successes recently, however, beyond a point Baghdad would be apprehensive about their growing prowess. If the battle is to be won, the militias, both Sunni and Shia need to be used extensively just as a role for Iran requires acknowledgement. It's a truth that Gulf states will need to come terms with.

In Syria, if the tide is to be turned, the singular focus needs to be the ISIS at this stage. The current chaos with every group inimical to almost every other makes it a lot easier for ISIS. A fundamental principle of war - Concentration of Forces - is in the bargain, clearly violated.

Kurds haven't the resources. They have made some additional successes recently, however, beyond a point Baghdad would be apprehensive about their growing prowess.

In both Iraq and Syria, considerable air effort and special operations will also need to be leveraged. As such, Americans and the rest of the countries that have deployed their resources will have to be ready for the long haul and accretions in force levels committed.

[Back to Contents](#)

Middle Class Boost to Baloch Struggle

- *Ahmar Mustikhan*

For over six decades, the people in Balochistan have been fighting against the Pakistani military. The periodic uprisings in the province-- first one in 1948, second one in 1958, third one in 1962, fourth in 1973-- have generally petered out quickly because of the overwhelming force applied by the Pakistani state. However the current phase, running in its 10th year now, has even survived former dictator General Pervez Musharraf's decision to eliminate an inspirational leader, former governor and chief minister Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti.

The present struggle is qualitatively different from the past four insurgencies in the sense as it is witnessing larger participation of the intelligentsia-- students, lawyers, doctors, engineers, journalists, teachers and professors—and people from urban areas. Even Senator Hasil Bizenjo, widely regarded as close to the establishment (read the ISI) admits that if a referendum was held on Balochistan's future today,

the Baloch majority will likely opt for independence. He has frankly admitted that the Baloch educated class supports an independent Balochistan and unlike in the past when the uprisings were limited to the mountains led by tribal heavyweights, the desire for independence has now spread to towns and villages all over Balochistan, with the minuscule but vibrant middle class playing a key role. "Successive governments made huge blunders in Balochistan, which led to the present crisis," Hasil Bizenjo, president of the National Party, told *Dawn* newspaper during a visit to the US in April. "The militancy, he said, was popular among the educated youths of Balochistan but 'we do not have a large, educated middle class, so it will always remain an insurgency.'"

This class is unwilling to surrender their conscience for economic, financial and personal gains, but appear determined to play their role as a stakeholder in the liberation politics. Moreover,

* *Ahmar Mustikhan is a Senior Balochistan journalist, who now lives in the Washington DC area*

the Baloch middle class does not wish to allow the tribal personalities to decide the political future of Balochistan, which was a practice in the past. “This is the beauty of the present insurgency,” says Kachkol Ali, former fisheries minister Kackol Ali, leader of the middle class-dominated Baloch National Movement. He now lives in exile on Oslo. Because of this middle class participation, the nature of Baloch nationalism is witnessing a big shift from traditional patriarchal politics into some forms of established institutional politics.

It is perhaps because of this paradigm shift that an icon of the Baloch nationalist movement, Nawab Khair Bakhsh Marri, before his death one year ago, reposed his trust in the leadership Dr Allah Nazar, chief of the Baloch Liberation Front. Alarmed by this 'institutionalization' of politics, which has seen the BLF and its allied Baloch National Movement and Baloch Students Organization Azad emerge as key players, the Pakistani security forces have cracked down heavily on these organizations, subjecting

“This is the beauty of the present insurgency,” says Kachkol Ali, former fisheries minister Kackol Ali, leader of the middle class-dominated Baloch National Movement. He now lives in exile on Oslo.

their cadres to most humiliating forms of torture. “Thousands of Baloch youths have been killed,” says Rafique Khoso, a former general secretary of the Baloch Students Organization, who now belongs to the ruling National Party. It’s far more difficult for the army GHQ to pressurize or bribe the middle class cadres unlike the past when the Pakistan establishment opened its coffers-- like the late general Ziaul Haq did in 1977-- to buy out some of Balochistani leaders. The middle classes have in fact exposed the corrupt and inefficient federalist parties such as the National Party, which had earlier claimed to represent Baloch people, for being in league with the security establishment.

The current situation in Balochistan has been correctly described as “conscience-shocking” by “Bloodshed and suffering temporarily wreck national aspirations but the movement can’t be eradicated,” the former minister, whose son Nabil Ahmed is among thousands of victims of enforced disappearances in Balochistan, emphasized. To me,

the Baloch have the spirit of a Phoenix as a nation due to which day by day our movement is getting stronger. The atrocities and barbarism of security forces and the boasts of the army chief (General Raheel Sharif) cannot damage the capacity and capability of the Baloch people to resist,” Ali has said.

Apart from resilience of the people, there is no doubt the lay of the Baloch land, its physical geography, also plays a vital role in this phase of the struggle. The imposing mountains help the Baloch people in surviving against the Pakistani forces. In this backdrop, the administrative, military and legal machinations of Islamabad have fallen flat on the bedrock of Baloch political stubbornness. Follies of the Pakistani generals sitting at the army GHQ and ISI's Aabpara headquarters have also helped the Baloch resistance. In some cultures, use of force may successfully intimidate a population and beat them into complete submission, but not in Balochistan. The army operations have accelerated since the visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping in April. While Xi was inking MoUs in Islamabad to connect Gwadar with Kasghar, on April 21,

Pakistani security forces raided the home of a relative of Baloch resistance leader Waja Akhtar Nadeem from in Mashkay, and abducted seven of his relatives. They then killed four of them in cold blood but announced they died in an armed encounter. At least three of the victims were newlywed grooms. On Tuesday Pakistani security forces in a scorched earth raid on Mehi village in Mashkay, in which gunship helicopters were used. At least 13 people were killed and scores of women and children injured. The dead included Dr Allah Nazar's brother Safar Khan and his two nephews Suleman Baloch and Zakir Baloch. The security forces also burned down homes. The BLF resisted the attack from the adjoining mountains leaving at least two dozen of the security men dead or injured, according to the BLF spokesman Gohram Baloch,

On April 15, just five days before Xi's visit, a doctor of the provincial government Dr Amir Bakhsh was abducted by the intelligence services while he was on his way to his office in provincial capital Quetta. Then on June 2, a famous Baloch poet Anwar Sahib Khan home was raided in Pasni and he was abducted along with his son

Waseem Anwar. The whereabouts of the abducted doctor was unknown but the poet surfaced after 10 days and at a Press conference in Gwadar apologized for his nationalist poems, according to Humgaam news.

The development has not gone unnoticed elsewhere in the world. Marc Tarabella, member of the European Parliament, observed in an article in *The Parliament*, "The recent visit of Chinese president Xi Jinping to Pakistan and his promise to pump 40 billion dollars into projects in the Gwadar-Kashgar energy corridor could, according to the local population, endanger the lives of the people of Balochistan and the protection of their fundamental freedoms. To ensure absolute control over natural resources, the authorities have been cracking down on all dissent in this region." The way Pakistan and China want to proceed in Gwadar violates UN principles according to which development has to benefit the local and indigenous population." Former chief minister Sardar Akhtar Mengal dismissed the China

Earlier this month, with Chinese backing Islamabad succeeded in getting the UN consultative status of two NGOs, African Technology Development Link and the African Technical Association, withdrawn.

Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as being irrelevant to the interests of the people of Balochistan. In Europe, Baloch activists, most notably the Baloch Republican Party of Nawab Brahumdagh Bugti, have been actively protesting Pakistan's injustices with a focus on the CPEC and Chinese intervention.

"China's intervention in Balochistan is unacceptable. The investment in Balochistan is a tactic to plunder its resources," Bugti told a conference in Geneva last week.

Indeed suppression of Baloch by Pakistan with Chinese help is also taking place at international forums. Earlier this month, with Chinese backing Islamabad succeeded in getting the UN consultative status of two NGOs, African Technology Development Link and the African Technical Association, withdrawn. It's noteworthy that Army chief general Raheel Sharif named Maleeha Lodhi, much despised by Premier Sharif for her role in supporting his ouster twice in the past, to head the UN mission in New York. It is evident Lodhi's

brief includes countering the Baloch. Additionally, just four days before Xi's visit the army launched a cyber attack to bring down the pro-independence Radio Sangar, while the government blocked the Daily Sangar web site one month earlier. Another pro-liberation web site Humgaam was also blocked,

Clearly, such draconian measures and Rawalpindi's unrelenting military operations has not dimmed the struggle of the Baloch against the Pakistani state.

[Back to Contents](#)

Vimarsha: Northeast as the Backbone of India's Act East Policy

Vimarsha - VIF's monthly series of talks on issues of contemporary strategic relevance - was held on 13 May 2015 with then Governor of Arunachal Pradesh His Excellency Lt Gen (retd) Nirbhay Sharma sharing his perspective on the development of the Northeast in the light of India's 'Act East' policy. Lt Gen S K Sinha, former Governor Assam and J&K, chaired the session, while several prominent experts among the audience interacted with the speaker.

General NC Vij, Director, VIF, presented an illuminating overview of the developmental imperatives of the Northeast from a strategic perspective. He underlined that the Northeast, sharing borders with a number of South Asian countries, is also India's gateway to Southeast Asia and beyond. He further laid emphasis on improving connectivity not only between the northeast and the rest of India but also within the region itself. The Director opined that the lack of easy access to the northeast, coupled with political neglect by

the federal government over long years, has led the Northeast to being one of the least developed regions in the country. He stressed that the centre needs to accord development of the Northeast a high priority, keeping in view its growing geo-strategic significance, especially the 'Act East' policy, and a whole set of security related risks, among others, insurgent movements, illegal migration, gun running and drug peddling. Gen Vij also maintained that the policy, per se, is directed towards achieving strategic balance in the region.

H.E. Lt Gen Nirbhay Sharma's incisive presentation sought to address a broad gamut of issues including, the reasons for over six decades of developmental lag of the northeast, the imperatives of development of the Northeast and the adjoining region, challenges in developing connectivity, issues related to governance, ecological issues, and India's China policy, among others. Combining the perspectives of both a strategist and an administrator, Governor Lt Gen Nirbhay Sharma said the Northeast is an important land

bridge to India's immediate and extended neighbourhood – a natural partner. It therefore holds the potential to become an engine of growth for the entire region. Differentiating between India's old 'Look East' policy and the present 'Act East' policy, the Governor said whereas the 'Look East' policy sought to engage only the ASEAN countries, the 'Act East' policy is much wider in scope especially as it encompasses the entire Asia-pacific region. Also, while the 'Look East' policy focused on India's economic integration with the Southeast Asian countries, under the 'Act East' policy India is seeking deeper political and strategic engagements with countries in the region. Relying more on soft power – socio-cultural dialogues, diasporas, food security, space security etc, the 'Act East' policy is more action-driven and result-oriented as compared to the policy in its earlier avatar.

While the present efforts towards connectivity were discussed by the Governor in quite some detail, he also deliberated upon the challenges in developing connectivity through the region. Strategic mistrust among major powers, exorbitant costs in developing infrastructure and lack of effective implementation of the projects were cited among prominent challenges towards

connectivity. He, however, added that integration within northeast is a prerequisite before the region integrates with other countries. While underscoring the need for functional synergy between planning and execution, H.E. Nirbhay Sharma also dwelt on the need to develop local capacities and remove the sense of alienation from people's minds. A substantial part of the talk was also devoted towards discussing India's China policy wherein the Governor said how to deal with undefined and contested borders, yet economically engage with China is a real challenge before the government.

He further advised that a balanced approach would best serve India's interests vis-à-vis China. Lt. Gen. S K Sinha, former Governor of Assam and Jammu & Kashmir, who presided over the session, also shared his perspective on a broad range of issues, including the perceived threat from China and the subtle changes that are gradually seeping into India's approach to its foreign policy. Following the observations by the Chair, members of the audience actively participated in a lively Q&A session with the speaker.

[Back to Contents](#)

Round Table Discussion on India's Energy Security

The VIF held a Round Table Discussion (RTD) on 'Energy Security for India', on 14 & 15 May 2015. An astute panel of policy experts and stakeholders, comprising, among others, Shri GB Pradhan, Chairman, Central Electricity Regulatory Commission, Shri B.K.Chaturvedi, former Cabinet Secretary and Member Planning Commission, Shri R.V.Shahi, former Secretary (Power), and Dr. Ajay Mathur, Director General, Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), along with a select group of officials representing the Ministry of Power, discussed a broad range of policy options and strategies to ramp up India's energy security. The discussions were held largely against the backdrop of the ambitious target set by the Ministry of Power to generate 1, 75,000 MW green power by 2022 and bring last mile connectivity across India within the stipulated timeframe. An energy deficient country, India faces the twin challenge of maintaining a moderate to high growth rate while reducing its over dependence on imports to meet its energy requirements. However, it is imperative that India not only has

uninterrupted access to energy resources and relevant technologies at affordable prices, but it also need to have access to cleaner sources of energy. Underlining the growing need the world over to homogenize energy with environment, Piyush Goyal, the honourable Minister of State (I/C), Power, Coal, New & Renewable Energy said in his keynote address, 'India needs to dovetail its energy security, with our consciousness for the environment'.

The deliberations by experts over four sessions helped to a large extent identify gaps and bring out a number of workable solutions towards India's energy security. It was decided by consensus that instead of compiling the proceedings into a large report, only four or five recommendations from a list of priorities be sent to the ministry for its consideration. It was also agreed by the house to have a follow up session after a gap of five to six months to review progress on the recommendations.

[Back to Contents](#)

Interaction with Mr. Stewart Beck

Mr. Stewart Beck, former High Commissioner of Canada to India and currently President of the Vancouver based Asia-Pacific Foundation of Canada, visited the VIF on 25 May 2015 for a round table discussion on the future course of India-Canada relations. In his welcome remarks, Director VIF, Gen. NC Vij, mentioned that while bilateral business and commercial linkages are the key drivers of the wide ranging India-Canada partnership, other important areas for expanding bilateral cooperation are civil nuclear energy, renewable energy, education and skills development, agriculture, security, science, technology, innovation and space, regional and global issues.

The discussion centered around three main themes: nuclear energy co-operation; Canada-India co-operation on Afghanistan, and developing a Track-II mechanism to further strengthen Indo-Canadian bilateral relations to develop upon the positives that have emerged from the Indian Prime Minister's visit to Canada in April 2015. There was consensus around the table that while India and Canada have a

longstanding bilateral relationship based on shared democratic values, pluralistic societies and strong people-to-people contacts, a lot more can be done to further strengthen relations between India and Canada.

For an energy hungry India, energy security naturally ranks high in its list of priorities. Canada has surplus energy resources that India could tap and this can be mutually beneficial for both countries. Being amongst the top two Uranium exporting countries in the world, Canada's potential to be a partner in India's economic transformation and to meet Indian quest for clean energy is undisputable. The recent agreement on uranium sale by Canada for India's civilian nuclear power plants heralds a new era of bilateral nuclear cooperation.

Similarly, as India looks to extend its global foot print and move beyond the Indian Ocean to engage more actively in the Pacific region, both India and Canada can pool resources to build a stable security framework in the Asia-Pacific. Maritime security cooperation can therefore be an important driver of the India-

Canada friendship. This, along with strong cultural and people to people ties, and the contribution of the Indian Diaspora to both societies, creates a positive synergy in India-Canada relations. The emergence of global terrorist threats, the conflicts in Syria and Iraq, the efforts to stabilize Afghanistan through reconciliation and economic recovery, are all areas of convergence between India and Canada and offer the opportunity to enhance dialogue and cooperation between our two countries.

Participants at the round table discussion included Lt. Gen. Ravi

Sawhney, Mr. CD Sahay, Ambassadors Dinkar Khullar, Sheelkant Sharma, TCA Rangachari, Vice Admiral Raman Puri, Mr. Jess Dutton, Deputy High Commissioner of Canada, Ms. Theresa de Haan, Political Counselor at the Canadian High Commission, Commodore Mukesh Bhargava (retd), Vice President Larson and Toubro, Mr. Rajesh Menon, Deputy Director General, CII, Mr. Shreekumar Nair, Regional Director, CII, Brig. Vinod Anand, Mr. Sushant Sareen and Dr. Harinder Sekhon.

[Back to Contents](#)

Seminar on Make in India & DPP 2013

On May 27, 2015, the VIF put together a panel of eminent policy experts on defence, comprising, among others, serving and retired high ranking military officers, senior bureaucrats and representatives from the defence manufacturing industry for a seminar on 'Make in India' and DPP 2013. While the interaction aimed at giving a new thrust to 'Make in India' in the present DPP 2013, efforts were also made during the seminar to seek an institutionalised and integrated policy approach towards making defence acquisitions in India effective, time-bound and transparent as also removing the bottlenecks in the processes. Encompassing the entire spectrum under which the defence procurement in India operates – the civil-military interface, finances, regulations, contracts, offset provisions, military-industrial complex et al, the seminar not only brought out the existing lacunas in the defence acquisition processes but also suggested way forward in terms of policy guidelines.

In his opening remarks, General NC Vij, a former Army Chief and the VIF's current Director, gave

out an overview of the need to reform the defence procurement processes in India. While it has long been felt that defence procurement in India is in crying need for reform, not much headway has been made in this direction despite the Kelkar Committee's recommendations. Not only the country continues to remain overly dependent on foreign arms suppliers to meet the critical requirements of its armed forces, in most cases it has to remain dependent on a single vendor, an unpalatable situation for any military in the world. With Import liabilities being increasingly prohibitive, there is also often a long time gap between the time a particular item is identified for import and the time it is actually procured. The seminar sought to address all these problems and many more against the backdrop of Prime Minister's clarion call to 'Make in India'.

While several useful recommendations were made, it was pretty evident that the long term solution to defence modernization in India can come only when weapons and weapon platforms are designed and

produced at home. While the indigenous production remains the cherished goal, it should not obstruct the military getting the right equipment at the right time. Creating ownership for defence procurements in India, creating especially a permanent body of well qualified people and fixing responsibilities to them, creating infrastructure for education and training in procurement matters, bringing policy planners, research bodies, manufacturers, users and all other stake holders on the same page, creating level playing field for the private industry, a higher intake for indigenous products in offset provisions, and involving the private partners from the planning stages and

sustaining them through the entire life cycle of products were a few amongst the major takeaways from the seminar.

Mr. Shekhar Dutt, former Defence Secretary who later became the Governor of Chhattisgarh, Mr. Dhirendra Singh, former Home Secretary, Jayant D Patil, Executive Vice President - Defence and Aerospace, Larsen & Toubro, Lt Gen JP Singh, former DCOAS and Dr. VK Saraswat, former DRDO Chief and presently a Member of Niti Aayog, were among other key contributors to the seminar.

[Back to Contents](#)

Seminar on ‘Design and Make in India in Electronics’

With a view to evolve the future roadmap towards building comprehensive national capabilities in design and manufacturing in the Electronic Sector, the VIF, in collaboration with the DRDO, CII and the American Chamber of Commerce in India (AmCham India), organised an important seminar ‘Design and Make in India - Electronics Sector’ on 3 & 4 Jun 2015.

While Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar delivered the keynote address at the seminar, a high-powered panel of experts representing the government, the industry and the Diaspora comprehensively discussed, over five highly focused sessions, a broad range of issues relating to the electronics industry in India, including the policy framework and regulations, capabilities in indigenous design and manufacturing, research and development in secured and trusted systems, strategic electronics, commercial systems, developing synergies between different research organizations,

and international cooperation, among others.

Prominent Speakers included Dr Arvind Gupta, Deputy National Security Advisor, Mr. Amitabh Kant, Secretary, Department of Industrial Policy and Promotions (DIPP), Dr. VK Saraswat, formerly Chief of the DRDO and presently Member of the Niti Aayog, Mr. Chandrajeet Banerjee, Director General, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Dr. Kiran Kumar, Chairman, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), and Dr. Gulshan Rai, National Cyber Security Coordinator, NSCS.

The participants at the seminar identified the gaps in the existing framework of policies and actions as also the technologies that need to be targeted in three specific high technology sectors – cyber security, telecom sector, defence and aviation. Several recommendations that emerged during two days of proceedings were collated in the form of policies during the concluding session, chaired by Dr. VK Saraswat.

In what could be considered as the first step towards laying the foundation stone for concrete projects of national importance, the outcome of the seminar is also expected to help the government fine tune its policies relating to L1 clause, strategic support to start ups in high technology sectors and initiate mechanism to attract foreign diaspora by creating a supporting environment to enable

the creation of an Indian domestic industrial base which will generate intellectual property rights, design systems, and manufacture systems in India thus resulting in the creation of an Indian industrial base to achieve the mission of 'Make and Design in India' in the Electronic Sector.

[Back to Contents](#)

Seminar on Indian Civilization (2000-500 B.C.)

The Vivekananda International foundation (VIF), in association with the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), held a two-day national seminar on the theme of 'Indian Civilization (2000-500 B.C) on 17 & 18 Jun 2015. The seminar was essentially aimed at underlining the need to start a course correction in the study of India's ancient history, especially in light of the new historical research and evidences which have surfaced over the past 70-80 years. Till about the beginning of the 20th century the antiquity of Indian civilization was thought to be about 600 B.C i.e. from the time of Buddha. While the discovery of the Harappan civilization in 1922 took the antiquity of the Indian Civilization to 3000 B.C, the emergence of new archaeological evidences since then in many parts of India, especially in northern, central and southern India, take the antiquity of the Indian civilization as far back as 7000 B.C. Even more significantly, there are archaeological evidences to suggest that agriculture in India began almost 9000 years ago, while the process of

urbanization in India presumably kicked off even before 1000 B.C. In so far as the extent of this civilization is concerned, it covered the whole of India, and possibly even beyond.

Clearly, there is a case to project India as a precursor to human civilization. However, there is also need to connect the missing dots and correlate the existing literature with evidences on the ground. The seminar, spread across five sessions over two days, largely dwelt on this theme and several aspects of India's history during the period 2000-500 B.C. were examined in the process by eminent historians and archaeologists, including Dr. Rakesh Tewari, Director General, Archaeological Survey of India, Dr. B.R. Mani, Addl. Director General, Archaeological Survey of India, Prof. Vibha Tripathi, Department of AIHC Archaeology, Banaras Hindu University, and Prof. Makkhan Lal, Distinguished Fellow, VIF, among others. General NC Vij, Director, VIF, while making the opening remarks, questioned the wisdom of historians who have portrayed

Indian freedom fighters as mutineers in textbooks. He also urged on the historians to explore the potential to make the strategic use of history to promote India's national interests. A large number of research scholars from universities around Delhi also participated in the seminar.

[Back to Contents](#)

Round Table Discussion on Counter Measures against Naxalism

On Jun 19th, 2015, VIF hosted Lt. Gen VK Ahluwalia, formerly Army Commander Central Command, for a talk on 'Counter Measures against Naxalism', followed by a round table discussion. With General NC Vij, Director, VIF, presiding over the session, others who took part in the discussion included Satish Chandra, former Dy NSA, Rajiv Mathur, former IB Chief, AK Verma, former RAW Chief, Adm KK Nayyar, former Vice Chief of Naval Staff, Lt Gen RK Sawhney, former Deputy Chief of the Army Staff & former DGMI, and PK Mishra, former Additional Director General of BSF, among others.

General Ahluwalia's presentation included a long overview of more than six decades' old naxal insurgency in the country, followed by a string of counter naxal measures which he suggested as part of a strategy to contain the naxal violence. Taking a broad view of the extent of naxal insurgency in the country, the general said while the naxal presence is felt in large parts of central and eastern India, it is

concentrated mostly in tribal dominated areas which are abysmally low on human development indicators. While the tribal areas are rich in natural resources, the tribals themselves have never been a part of India's growth story. The exploitation of mining resources by private companies, often with connivance of state officials and willful neglect of governance in these areas, especially the wastage / loot of subsidies on cooking gas, food, and public works programme et al have led the tribals to being further alienated from the national mainstream. With naxalites feeding on this sense of depravation among the tribals, the naxal insurgency in the country gets further compounded with various state governments treating it as a law and order problem.

General Ahluwalia further said that most naxal incidents take place along inter state borders, making hot pursuit by the security forces even more difficult. He called for an institutionalized and integrated policy approach to deal with the problem of naxal

insurgency in the country. General Ahluwalia's prognosis to fight the naxal insurgency encapsulated a broad range of measures, including, among others, raising a specialized armed force at the central level where 80 percent of personnel are recruited from the local areas, providing legal cover to forces fighting the insurgency, grass-root political activities allowing people to voice their grievances, deeper penetration by the state apparatus into naxal

infested areas, raising employment levels and skilling the masses, unity of effort and monitoring mechanism, action plan with short, medium and long term strategy, and raising the cost of insurgency for the naxalites. A lively interaction followed the talk. The discussions were moderated by General Vij who also summed up the proceedings.

[Back to Contents](#)