



# Vivek

*Issues & Options*

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Islamic State and its Brutal Ways

NITI Ayog: Energising the Process of Governance

The Geopolitics of Oil and Gas

A Native Indian Military Doctrine

*and many more ....*

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# Editor's Note

Dear Reader,

It gives me a great pleasure to inform you that I have taken over the responsibility of being the Editor of Vivek e-magazine and VIF website from this month. My predecessor, KG Suresh, has moved on to take up a bigger task as Consulting Editor for India's National Channel Doordarshan. He will of course continue to be a Senior Fellow with the VIF. We wish him all the very best in his new assignment.

This issue of Vivek is coming to you later than usual because of the transition mentioned above. It nevertheless has articles that touch upon a number of important issues.

One of our bright young researchers, Alvite has analysed the deliberately brutal approach adopted by the IS in its relentless March in West Asia.

In Defence, Lt Gen Gautam Banerjee has dwelt upon the need to evolve a military doctrine rooted in indigenous culture and tradition while Brig. Gurmeet Kanwal emphasises the importance of battlefield air strike capability for a winning edge.

Our regular contributor Dr MN Buch also gives an insight into challenges of rapid urbanisation that is currently sweeping the country.

As in the past, our endeavour at Vivek is to bring you a wide variety opinions and analyses to generate a meaningful dialogue and discussion.

We welcome well-researched, topical and original contributions both for our website and for this e-magazine.

**Nitin A. Gokhale**  
**Editor**

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# Islamic State and Its Enduring Appetite for Destruction

- *Alvite Singh Ningthoujam*

The recent gruesome activities of the Islamic State (IS) militants in West Asia (WA) and northern African region have once again brought to the fore its desire to remain as the most-organised and dreaded organisation. This is despite the efforts by the coalition forces to destroy the IS. With time however, IS seems to have gained more confidence to fight, and it is doing all it could to expand its influence. Its growing activities, for instance, inside Libya could be seen as an endeavour to reach the European shores. At the same time, the increasing departure of young people, including many women, to countries such as Syria and Turkey, from European countries, namely, France, United Kingdom (UK), Belgium, Germany, etc. is complicating the joint efforts to tackle the menace created by IS. Equally alarming trend is the IS increasingly targeting Christians and other minority communities in Syria, Libya, Iraq and Egypt.

**Islamic State, its Brutalities and the Long-term Vision:**

The efforts of the international coalition led by the United States (US) to bring the IS militants to their knees have not, so far, brought any significant reduction in the outfit's terror activities. Instead, it continues to unleash its brutal onslaught against captives as well minority communities, mainly in Iraq and Syria. Gradually, IS is taking its operations beyond WA. In the last few months, IS had executed two Japanese citizens, one Jordanian air force pilot, and 21 Egyptian Coptic Christians (in Libya), in most inhumane manner. These brutal acts have raised global concerns. Moreover, the IS getting a successful foothold in Libya is adding to the concern.

\* *Alvite Singh Ningthoujam, Research Associate, VIF*

Having gained territory in Libya, IS is likely to use its coastline as a launchpad for its Europe-bound operatives. During the Copts' murder, one of the masked-IS militant who carried out the beheading pointed towards the north and said, "We will conquer Rome, by Allah's permission." This is the same coastline from where several people sail towards Europe. At the same time, a more worrisome factor in Italy is the rising number of refugees from North Africa. Due to the ongoing political unrest that is engulfing Libya, thousands of people have taken the sea route towards Europe. In many cases, the boats used by the illegal migrants remained undetected. There is a fear that IS could send its fighters to Europe along with the refugees. It is in this context the possibility of extremist elements entering Italy or other European countries (via Libyan route) has not been ruled out by the authorities concerned. In short, Libya is likely to be used

During the Copts' murder, one of the masked-IS militant who carried out the beheading pointed towards the north and said, "We will conquer Rome, by Allah's permission." This is the same coastline from where several people sail towards Europe.

as a bridgehead to wage wars against the Christian-dominated European countries.

This is in keeping with the IS' plan to shift its focus towards Europe. The attacks that had taken place in countries such as Belgium and France last year are early pointers towards that trend. For instance, in May 2014, Belgium became the first European country that witnessed an attack by a Syria-

returned fighter called Mehdi Nemmouche, who killed four people at a Jewish museum in Brussels. In

January this year,

Belgium security authorities killed two of its citizens (suspected to be IS fighters) during a raid in a house from where these suspects were plotting an attack. Investigations by the authorities revealed that these people had travelled to Syria and reportedly received instructions from IS militants to carry out terror activities in Europe itself. The situation inside France is somewhat similar at the moment.

Now, this shift in IS' strategy is likely to be boosted further, particularly considering the rising number of young fighters who are willing to take up the path of terror, both within and outside Europe. As a result, keeping a track of several recruits who had already returned to their country of origin would be an arduous task for the counterterrorism agencies.

### **Attacks on the Minorities**

While Iraq's Yazidis were the prime target for the IS during its initial days in 2014, attacks on ancient Christian minority groups is another emerging trend. Even before the horrific images of the Copts' beheadings were forgotten from people's mind, IS kidnapped 200-odd Assyrian Christians from different villages in north-eastern Syria, and threatened with execution. It is worth noting that before the Syrian civil war started, Christians constituted about 10 per cent of the country's total population of 22 million people. There are about 40,000 Assyrian Christians inside Syria, while the same minority group could also be found in countries such as Iran,

Iraq, Turkey, etc. Owing to this development, there is a mounting fear about an exodus of this tribe from the war-torn region. These incidents would only breed hatred amongst different communities and they would widen the sectarian-religious divide in these countries as well as in different corners of the world.

In what could be considered as a major blow to the socio-cultural fabric of West Asia, IS even started to dismantle several priceless artefacts and monuments, particularly in Mosul, dating back to thousands of years. The burning of the library in this city, which housed thousands of rare manuscripts and documents, and destruction of holy shrines (mostly Shiite ones) are a manifestation of its ambitions to destroy whatever the terror outfit considers as heresy. It is also a form of violence meted out by the IS against the modern-era diversities that one could see in Iraq and Syria. Interestingly, the captured artefacts are believed to have been sold in black market in order to finance IS' organisational operations.

Simultaneously, a country like Egypt, is no exception to threats emanating from the IS. As it is, militant organisation such as Ansar Beit al-Maqdis has announced its loyalty to IS. The Egyptian government, under the presidency of Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, now has the herculean task of protecting its citizens, including the minority Christians. In the recent past, similar attacks against the Copts were witnessed inside the Egyptian territory. Apart from vandalising churches, there had been instance of suspected suicide attacks against this minority group. This had created enormous tension between organisations such as Muslim Brotherhood and Christians. The government's inability to safeguard the rights of the minorities would only deepen the level of mistrust between the people and any resultant uncertainty could accentuate IS' inroads into Egypt.

## Conclusion

Clearly therefore, it is going to be a major challenge for countries like Egypt, Libya and Jordan to prevent further attacks on their

citizens and attempts by the IS to gain further influence. The IS' call to foreign jihadists to inflict major damage in their respective countries (particularly in Europe) is one such effort. Close cooperation between the security agencies in Europe and WA and sharing intelligence about the activities of the IS terrorists is now must if its spread and influence is to be limited.

Moreover, it is time to start thinking of a solution that goes beyond military action. Serious considerations should now be given by the regional actors and their Western partners to solving problems in Syria as well as overcome ongoing factional political differences in Libya. Egypt and for that matter cannot afford to remain idle. Amman is already feeling the heat that spreads out from the Syrian crisis. The capabilities of the IS would continue to grow as long as the turmoil in the West Asian region remains unresolved. A strong political will is required to douse these flames.

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# Syria: In the Eye of the Hydrocarbon Storm

*The Geopolitics of Oil and Gas in West Asia over the Decades*

- *Prabhat P Shukla*

The narrative begins in late 1943. The tide of the Second World War had turned after the German surrender at the Battle of Stalingrad in February of the same year. The Teheran Conference of the three United Nations leaders – Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill – had been held in November-December, and had taken important decisions regarding the future prosecution of the War and of the world that was to be shaped once Germany had been defeated.

It was at this stage that some of the US oil companies that has acquired concessions in the Arab lands in the late 1920's began to apply their own minds to the dispensation that was to follow the end of the War. The President of the California Arabian Standard Oil Company – to be re-named, just

a few weeks later, on 31 January 1944, the Arabian-American Oil Company, ARAMCO, the name that in later years became a by-word for Arab oil power – wrote to the State Department in late December 1943 indicating that the Company was thinking of using its control of Saudi oil to re-direct the pattern of sales from that country away from areas east of the Suez, as had been the linkage before the War. Their plan was to re-direct oil sales to countries in the west, that is, in Europe. The idea was to lay a pipeline across Saudi Arabia, and on to the Mediterranean coast, either through Transjordan [as the Hashemite Kingdom was then called] and Palestine or even Egypt, so as to deliver oil to the desired terminal, and on to “the western world”. The British were using the Suez Canal for

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\* Prabhat P Shukla, Distinguished Fellow, VIF

transporting their oil supplies from Kuwait and Iran in the main, but the Canal was an Anglo-French asset, and the Americans wanted their own lines of communication.

This project, the oilman recognised, had strategic implications, and therefore sought the US Government's support for the proposal, including in overcoming political objections that might be raised by the transit countries involved. The idea was to obtain the rights and safeguards that such a project would require, and only the Government of the US could provide these assurances.

The State Department replied in short order, on 7 January 1944, that the Government looked upon the project with favour and added:

You may be assured that the Government will assist you in every appropriate way with other governments concerned in regard to your endeavors to secure such rights and safeguards as may be

necessary in connection with the construction of the pipeline.

[This, and the above reference, are from State Department, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1944, vol. V]

A formal agreement was signed by Interior Secretary Ickes in February with the oil company, which, among other things, would guarantee the US Armed Forces stationed in the region a billion barrels of oil. It was also stipulated that the oil would

A formal agreement was signed by Interior Secretary Ickes in February with the oil company, which, among other things, would guarantee the US Armed Forces stationed in the region a billion barrels of oil.

not be sold to countries that the US determined was not conducive to its interests. With these stipulations, the project was approved and financed, to be repaid over 25 years. This was the birth of the Trans-Arabian Pipeline or Tapline.

The initial plan was for the pipeline to end up in Haifa, in modern-day Israel, but once the State of Israel was established in 1948 [the vote establishing the

state through the partition of and ratified it by a legislative Palestine was held in the UN decree on 16 May 1949. An General Assembly in November internal memo of the State 1947] the idea of using Haifa was Department noted that this ruled out, because the Saudis “removes the last major barrier to would have none of it. It was then the building of the long pending decided that the best route would Trans-Arabian pipeline...”. There be to lay the pipeline to a terminus were several coups following the in Sidon in Lebanon. However, first one for the next year or so, but there was a problem: the pipeline the approval of the pipeline project had then to run through Syria, and remained undisturbed, and the then proceed to the Lebanese coast. project was completed by 1950.

The Government of Syria was approached in 1948 for the necessary permission.

The newly-independent state of Syria and its President, Shukri al-Kuwatly, were in favour of the project, and gave approval to the project in February 1949, but asked for Parliamentary ratification. And that was where the trouble began. Along with some resistance in Parliament, there were also pro- and anti-Tapline demonstrations in Damascus, and President al-Kuwatly decided on 8 March to postpone discussion of the project.

A military coup followed on 30 March, and the new leader, Col Husni Zaim, approved the project,

What makes this episode instructive is the obvious implication for Syria of the need to accommodate the major players in the energy rivalry. It was important enough in the late 1940's to bring about what today would be called “regime change”. Now the stakes are possibly higher, and the struggle more intense. In the earlier period, ownership of the oil, the means of transport, and the lines of communication were all under western domination. Today, much has changed, and ownership no longer vests in the western companies. Equally, the means of transport, especially tankers, are more widely held under diverse ownership. It has therefore become

vitaly important for major powers to control the communication lines, so as to control the trade.

[ibid]

Before leaving the history of the early oil trade, it would be useful to record two important elements of the US policy that became the bedrock of the early decades after the War, as expressed on 11 April 1944 in the “Objectives of United States Foreign Petroleum Policy”:

Facilitation, by international agreement and otherwise, of substantial and orderly expansion of

Marshall Aid provided the underpinning for the “international agreement” part of the policy statement; Syria, as described above; Iran and the confrontation with Mossadegh, 1951 - 53; and Suez during 1956 demonstrated the “otherwise”.

production in Eastern Hemisphere sources of supply, principally in the Middle East, to meet increasing requirements of post-war markets.

Removal, by international agreement and otherwise, of impediments to the exploitation of Middle Eastern concessions held by United States nationals.

In short, there would be every means employed, agreed or otherwise, to ensure the growing linkages between the West Asian producers and the growing European economies and their consumers. Marshall Aid provided the underpinning for the “international agreement” part of the policy statement; Syria, as described above; Iran and the

confrontation with Mossadegh, 1951 - 53; and Suez during 1956 demonstrated the “otherwise”.

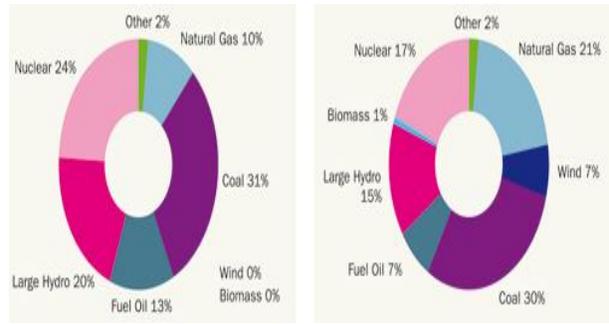
### The Contemporary Setting

The foregoing sets out the stakes in the transportation of hydrocarbons, and establishes that Governments that get in the way of strategies of the great powers come under pressure to fall in line – or else.

The contemporary situation is more brittle for the high stakes and the vastly increased volumes of trade, and hence money, that are involved. To set the parameters: Europe consumes some 520 billion

cubic meters of natural gas annually. Of this, Russia supplies about 30%, and of this amount, about half transits through Ukraine, the balance nearly all through the Russian-German under-sea pipeline, Nordstream. These are huge amounts of natural gas, and none of the Central Asian or the newly-found gas fields in Syria itself, or in Israel or Cyprus can even begin to match these quantities. There are only two contenders for alternative supplies – Iran and Qatar.

The second important feature is that the EU is progressively moving away from dependence on oil as its primary fuel for electricity, and relying more and more on natural gas. It is a cleaner fuel, and was relatively cheaper, especially when oil prices were above \$100 a barrel of oil. The diagram below shows that gas has doubled as a source of electricity in the EU between 1995 and 2007, while oil has nearly halved in importance.



EU energy mix in 1995 [left] and 2007 [right]

The two countries, Iran and Qatar, share the super-large off-shore South Pars – North Dome field, which holds the largest amount of natural gas of any single field in the world. This single field holds reserves of 50 trillion cubic meters [tcm], with Qatar holding about 60%, and Iran the rest. For purposes of comparison, India as a whole has so far been proven to hold about 1.5 tcm, the Eastern Mediterranean even less. Either of the two, Iran or Qatar, could match the Russian long-term supply capacity. Iran, of course, is under sanctions, and hence out of play for the nonce; but it is also cautious about getting into the fray because of the obvious negative reaction that it can expect from the Russians should it seek to supplant Russian supplies to Europe. And

Russia at present is among its few strategic supporters in the world.

In the current round of blood-letting in Syria, the issue of hydrocarbons is once again the central issue. The starting point is the drive for Europe to reduce its dependence on Russian gas supplies. This has been one of the prime objectives of the west since the end of the Cold War, if not earlier, but it acquired greater salience after the Georgia war in 2008.

As mentioned, there are only two sources that can match the Russians for reserves of

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natural gas, Iran and Qatar. The South Pars/North Dome field has already made Qatar the largest exporter in the world of Liquefied Natural Gas [LNG]. Iran is not being able to do much with its share of the gas because of the sanctions imposed on it by the UN and the US, in tandem with the EU.

As far as the US and [some of the members of the] EU are concerned then, the only source for gas that is

both capable [endowed], and politically acceptable is Qatar. The Russians are not acceptable, neither is Iran. However, the Qatar option runs into the problem of the pipeline route. It must go either through Iraq to Turkey, or through Syria to Lebanon, in essence replicating the Tapline, or some combination of the two, such as Syria to Turkey. The latter is very keen to position itself as the hydrocarbon trading hub for the western markets. In 2009, it was

reported that the Syrian President was approached by the Qataris for permission to lay the pipeline, and

he refused, citing his unwillingness to hurt Russian interests by allowing a rival supplier to supplant its position in the European market.

This has been confirmed by former French Foreign Minister, Roland Dumas, who said that he was told by the British that they were planning something in Syria in the aftermath of this refusal. By 2011, on the other hand, negotiations between Syria, Iran and Iraq were

under way for the alternative fighting against one or other of the routing through Syria to Lebanon. above groups, and against each It was then that the upheavals other. Unravelling these is an un- began and have continued on an exact science, and yet there are escalatory path, making all such some leads that are worth projects impossible to implement. following.

There is now a bewildering number Turkey and Qatar have been of actors in the field. There are the linked by several sources, and they traditional nation-states, most do seem to have a common interest notably Qatar and Turkey, which in transporting natural gas from are seeking to over-ride the the Persian Gulf to a Turkish objections of some of the other outlet. The problem is that Iraq is countries and to force the unlikely to allow transit across its implementation of their plans. territory, especially in the south, They are being backed by some of which is predominantly Shia. The the western countries, although northern and north-western areas there remain internal differences are Kurdish and Sunni, and while among them; this is most notably the Sunni areas could conceivably true of the US. Syria, in turn, be workable for them, the Kurdish enjoys the strong backing of Russia and the Shia hurdles remain. In and Iran, with some limited fact, the Turks have shown diplomatic support from China. unusual flexibility in dealing with Countries like Saudi Arabia and the Kurds, especially the Iraqi most of the GCC members have Kurds, by allowing them to export their reservations regarding both their own oil through Turkey, sides. against the opposition of the Government in Baghdad.

Then there are the sub-nationalist forces, most notably the Kurds, But the real force working for the who seem to have their own Qatar-Turkey link-up is the ISIL. approach to the issue of In a way, they are reminiscent of hydrocarbon trade. Finally, there the Taliban in Afghanistan in the are the Islamic forces, which are 1990's, when they tried to establish

a viable transport link between Central Asia [Turkmenistan] and Pakistan. Just as Pakistan sponsored the Taliban, the Turks are trying to use ISIL for the same purpose. They already have a degree of contiguity from Turkey to Iraq, but have not been able to go south towards Baghdad and further – and without that there will be no territorial linkage. The Kurds are also proving to be a determined foe in the belt of territory along the Turkish border.

Meanwhile, the hard opposition to the ISIL is coming from the Kurds. In northern Iraq and in Syria, it is the different Kurdish groups that are fighting, and winning, against the ISIL. In the process, the Kurds of the region, from Turkey to Iraq and Iran, are coming together in a way that must cause concern to both Turkey and Iran. And yet, there is no other effective opposition to the Sunni extremist forces represented by ISIL. Into this, the Russians have also made their moves. President Putin's recent visit to Turkey saw

They already have a degree of contiguity from Turkey to Iraq, but have not been able to go south towards Baghdad and further – and without that there will be no territorial linkage.

him offering replacement of the long-delayed South Stream with another pipeline through Turkey. The EU Commission had long been holding up the South Stream project, and had the willing cooperation of the Bulgarian Government in this. The reason was obvious: it would only enhance European dependence on Russian gas. Putin's offer to Turkey undercuts both the Iranian and the Qatari strategies. It also plays upon the present Turkish leaders' disenchantment with the EU and their long-held strategy of establishing the country's role as a major energy hub. From all accounts, the Russian proposal evidently holds some attraction for President Erdogan, though this will not play well with the Americans.

With this offer, Putin has certainly put Erdogan in a difficult position. He must either reject the proposal, which will make it clear to the neighbouring states, Syria first of all, that he is not interested in cooperation in hydrocarbon trade,

but in geo-politics. On the contrary, if he accepts the proposal, it will surely antagonise the US, but also probably some key EU members as well. Given the current mood in the ruling AK Party, the Turks may well be tempted, after the elections due this year, to go with the Russian option, as many in the media are urging their President to do. However, this will mark a very major shift in the geo-politics of the region, and will involve a re-positioning of Turkey that will change the alignments it has adhered to since the late 1940's. For all his talk invoking the Ottoman legacy, it is not clear that Erdogan is ready to make the change.

It may be worth exploring the geo-political aspect a little further. The Turks are taking great pains to deny any sympathy for ISIL. Their actions tell a different story. It is well-documented that they have allowed easy transit for *jihadis* to cross into Syria to join ISIL. Equally, they have been reluctant to allow the Kurds to do the same – finally, it was only under pressure that they allowed the Iraqi Kurds – but the Turkish Kurds – to defend

their fellow-Kurds in Syria, under siege in Kobane. They also disallowed the US to use Incirlik base for aerial attacks on ISIL, arguing that Assad should also be targeted. And finally, the Turks have been buying oil from ISIL, and this gave the latter a source of funds in the early months, when they swept through parts of Syria and Iraq.

There is another important angle: the supply of arms to ISIL is reported to be taking place through the Balkan states, particularly Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. More recent reports have also added that Ukraine is also supplying them with weapons. These relationships establish the link between Europe – or at least some European countries – and West Asia. The common thread tying up all of these disparate strategies is the shared opposition to Russia and the Serbs, and to link up with the heart of the Middle East. This is why some European politicians and historians are drawing parallels between the current situation and the early pre-war years of the first

decade-and-a-half of the twentieth century.

The Qatar end is equally revealing. That country has been dealing with the most extreme Islamist elements in the region. It was home to the leader of Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood. This led some of the other members of the GCC to withdraw their Ambassadors from Doha, though this issue has been papered over for now. They are also home to the

Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, which led to former Afghan President Karzai calling off the talks scheduled with the Taliban in

Doha. And, to the point here, there are authentic reports that persons linked to the Qatar establishment have been funding ISIL as well. Just as it does for Turkey, it also makes sense for Qatar to be following this course as far as ISIL is concerned.

Both from the economic strategy angle, and from the geo-political, it appears that the situation is fraught with the serious risk of

escalation. The stakes are high, and cover some of the most sensitive Eurasian areas. This may be where India could play a stabilising role – the idea would be to widen the market for gas, and to explore the possibility of shipping LNG, rather than seeking to lay pipelines. A four-way swap would see Russia sell more gas to Japan and South Korea, rather than seeking to expand its sales to Europe. At present, Japan and

It was home to the leader of Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood. This led some of the other members of the GCC to withdraw their Ambassadors from Doha, though this issue has been papered over for now.

Korea, as well as Taiwan, import large amounts of LNG from Qatar – this LNG could be diverted to India, whose own

demands are also large, and growing. That would remove the supply push that is responsible for much of the militant confrontation in West Asia.

This would spell the end of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India [TAPI] gas pipeline – and a good thing that would be too. There is no firm indication of the amount of gas deposits Turkmenistan has, and it is unwilling to permit any

international assessments to be made. This is the main reason that this project is not getting off the ground, even though the first summit-level agreement was signed twenty years back, in Ashgabat. In other words, the four-way swap arrangement would replace a will-o'-the-wisp project, which is unlikely ever to get off the ground.

The important geo-political implication of this would also be to end the search for a strategic linkage between South and Central Asia, much beloved of the US. But this linkage, especially the TAPI, is going the same way as the earlier schemes, involving the Taliban in Afghanistan, went. All of this would involve active re-strategising the engagement with West Asia on the part of India; happily, there seems to be the energy and will in the new Government to develop new linkages and patterns of trade.

There is, finally, also the real danger that the countries of the region may not be able to stand the pressure of the geo-politics described above: many of the states

are fragile in the extreme. Iraq, Syria and Libya are no longer functioning nation-states. History is also witness that few territorial arrangements last longer than a century. This territorial dispensation emerged out of the First World War, almost exactly a hundred years ago.

At that time, the geo-strategic design of the British, the main architect of the territorial arrangement, was to place the Sunni Arab in charge of the hydrocarbon wealth in the region. Thus it was that they took over Mosul and Kirkuk from the French, in violation of the Sykes-Picot agreement, and placed the region under another Hashemite ruler; thus it was that King ibn Saud and the minor Sheikhs and Emirs were put in control of the western coast of the Persian Gulf, where the oil is located. In point of fact, the north of Iraq is Kurdish; the south is Shia; the Saudi Eastern Province is also Shia-majority. This explains the current Saudi phobia with regard to the rise of Shia power in its neighbourhood. The Arab popular movements since 2011 have

shaken the region, and with it, the exporters that are more important comfortable assumptions about today for the west, with Qatar the stability. most important for the

Additionally, the pattern of oil movements has undergone a major geo= strategic reasons described above.

change since the days of the Cold Putting all these factors together, War. Today, India, China, and it is hard to escape the conclusion Japan, each singly imports more than the territorial arrangement is than the EU combined from West under unprecedented strain, since Asia. The oil exporters, with Saudi its inception a hundred years ago. Arabia in the lead, no longer have Perhaps wisdom lies in preparing the same salience in the strategic for the coming ineluctable changes. economics of the region from the western standpoint. It is the gas

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# India's Afghanistan Policy: Unlimited Flux, Limited Options for Now

- *Sushant Sareen*

Afghanistan has often been described as a place where History takes a turn. Today, once again History is on the verge of taking a turn in Afghanistan. The direction of this turn will determine the future of not just Afghanistan, but also the region and perhaps the world. The political, military and strategic situation in and around Afghanistan is in a state of high flux. There are just too many moving parts which give rise to more questions than provide any answers about how the situation will settle, if at all.

The botched political transition and the resulting shotgun marriage between the two main contenders in the Presidential elections has only added to the already existing complexity in the state of affairs. Despite serious questions about his legitimacy, the new Afghanistan President, Ashraf Ghani, has gone all out to completely revamp both the foreign and security policy of his country. The new policy is predicated on making Pakistan the lynchpin of Afghanistan's stability. In other words, Ashraf Ghani is following the dictum: while there can be war even without Pakistan, there can never be peace without Pakistan. How much this dictum will hold in the face of new dimensions that the Islamist insurgency is acquiring – the entry of the abominable Islamic State and the possible split in the Taliban ranks being just some of the new factors coming into play – is another matter.

India, of course, is watching developments in Afghanistan with interest as well as concern. Both the main Presidential candidates, Ashraf Ghani and Dr Abdullah were equally acceptable to India and there was no favourite that India was backing. If anything,

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India would have been ready to cooperate with whoever won the election. But as things have turned out, it appears that Ashraf Ghani doesn't have any use for India and has decided to cast his lot with Pakistan, the country that is responsible for much of the mess in Afghanistan today. We now have it on the authority of the former Pakistani military dictator, Pervez Musharraf, that his regime nurtured and supported the money to pump into Afghanistan.

Taliban as a proxy to counter Indian influence in Afghanistan. To term Pakistan's perfidy as a proxy war between India and Pakistan is to

We now have it on the authority of the former Pakistani military dictator, Pervez Musharraf, that his regime nurtured and supported the Taliban as a proxy to counter Indian influence in Afghanistan.

Ashraf Ghani's game plan seems to be that he will make his play with Pakistan and see how it goes. If it goes well then he will consign India

miss the point. If there was a proxy war, it was a one-sided war and was being waged only by Pakistan, not by India. This is precisely the reason why only Indians were targeted and killed. If India had been participating in this so called proxy war, then surely there would have been Pakistani casualties as well, something that has just not happened.

to the rubbish bin. If on the other hand Pakistan continues to play the games it has been playing in the past, then Ghani, like his predecessor, will once again reach out to India for some succour. But the problem is that Ghani doesn't really have the time and space to play this game. He has basically one hand to play, which he has played. If this falls flat, then his game is over. This also means that

with Ghani having consigned India to the sidelines, there isn't very much India can do to help Afghanistan.

India's interest in Afghanistan is rooted in the fact that instability in Afghanistan inevitably destabilises the entire region. In other words, all the talk of historical and cultural links with Afghanistan aside, India primarily has an abiding interest in a stable Afghanistan which is at peace within and without and doesn't descend into a hub of jihadists and other terror groups. India has however a serious limitation as far as its role in Afghanistan is concerned: while India can certainly play a role in helping Afghanistan stabilise, there isn't very much India can do to prevent Afghanistan's destabilisation. This is not so much because of a lack of willingness but more because of obvious geographical, logistic, financial and capability issues. To put it differently, India isn't America and therefore cannot play the role that the US played. Since the ouster of the Taliban, India's entire focus has been on assisting Afghanistan by building its

capacity, helping through infrastructure and other projects that improve the lives of ordinary Afghans and helps them in standing on their own feet, and providing security related cooperation. For Afghanistan to be stable, it is imperative that apart from security, that country must have political and economic stability and these were precisely the areas that India was focussed on.

Despite India's positive image among all Afghans, who see it as a country that has only helped and nor harmed Afghans, India has made it share of mistakes, not the least of which was over reliance on its soft power and complete neglect of all elements of hard power. This manifested itself in the form of the previous dispensation in India dithering on the issue of supplying the weapon systems requested by the Karzai government. By the time the Modi government offered to fulfil the Afghan wish-list, it was too late because the new President Ashraf Ghani had decided to throw in his lot with the Pakistanis. The point is that India under Manmohan Singh was more

concerned with Pakistani anything more than a glorified sensitivities regarding arms supply para-military. Therefore, for the to Afghanistan than with Afghan foreseeable future or at least till needs. The message that this sent the time it doesn't become clear as was two-fold: One, it showed up to what direction the situation in India as not just an unreliable Afghanistan will move, India has partner but also as a country which little option but to watch was reluctant to play hard-ball developments in Afghanistan and with a country like Pakistan which wait for the next opportunity – did not let go of any opportunity to which won't be long in coming damage India or Afghanistan; two, given Pakistan's penchant for it conveyed clear signal to the doing the wrong thing always – Afghans that if even a country like when it can once again play a role India was willing in that country.

to keep on the right side of Pakistan, then it made more sense for them to make a deal with the devil himself

For India to now lament at Afghan treachery is somewhat disingenuous. What is more, India also gave in to American reservations on supplying weapons to the Afghan government.

rather than trying to keep the devil at bay. For India to now lament at Afghan treachery is somewhat disingenuous. What is more, India also gave in to American reservations on supplying weapons to the Afghan government. For the Americans to seek deeper Indian involvement at this late stage meant going in to Afghanistan to clean the mess that the Americans created by not allowing the Afghanistan army to become economic interests but more because it will serve Afghanistan's economic interests by providing it access to the huge Indian market as also giving a fillip to the Afghan economy by making it a transit route between South and Central Asia. It is however important not to overstate the economic aspects of Afghanistan. Quite frankly, India stands to gain very little from Afghanistan. All the tall talk of Afghanistan's mineral wealth is

a bit of a pie in the sky, as is the talk of the fabled riches of Central Asia. With the withdrawal of foreign troops looming large, and uncertainties dogging the future financial and aid commitments made by the US and its allies to Afghanistan, the bottom is falling off the Afghan economy. The post 9/11 boom is clearly over and even if the US and its allies live up to their commitments, this money will barely be enough to keep the Afghan state afloat, if even that.

For millennia, Afghanistan has been a war economy. It has thrived when it carried out marauding raids, mostly into India. In more peaceful times, Afghanistan survived in a low level economic equilibrium. With the US-led war winding down, the money flowing into the economy is going to dry up. In the event a civil war breaks out, the economy will mutate into a different kind of war economy where international forces will pump in money to prop up their favorites. This will of course mean that the economy will be sustained through the destructive rather than productive activity. If however some sort of peace is ensured, Afghanistan will still need foreign assistance to keep going. This is also a sort of war economy, only this time money will be pumped in to prevent war not prolong it.

For the Afghan economy to become sustainable, it must be able to leverage its geographical location of being the cross roads between South, Central and West Asia. This is possible only if India is one end of this cross-roads. But for this to happen, Pakistan must play ball, something that is just not on the cards. There is of course the China factor and the proposed Economic Corridor that will link Western China to the Arabian Sea through Pakistan. One part of this corridor is to be linked with Afghanistan. But the only utility of this branch will be to provide an outlet for minerals extracted from Afghanistan. As a market, Afghanistan just doesn't have the attraction for any country, except perhaps Pakistan which will treat it as a sort of colonial outpost for its products. And as a transit route to Central Asia, China doesn't need Afghanistan because it can access

far more secure routes through its own territory.

Given the current state of play, India will probably fall back on variants of the old British colonial policy which alternated between a 'forward' policy and 'masterly inactivity'. Since a 'forward' policy is not practicable, and perhaps not even desirable, at this point in time, India might well have to assume a stance of 'masterly inactivity'. This doesn't mean abandoning Afghanistan, but only

that India will need to reduce its development and political footprint even as it continues to maintain and build its links with important players and communities inside Afghanistan. This in order to prepare for a time when things once again come full circle in Afghanistan and India is required to increase its involvement, not just in its own interest but also in the interest of Afghanistan.

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# India-ASEAN relations: Look East to Act East

- *Ramanand Garge*

The recent Delhi dialogue VII on ASEAN-India: Shaping the Post-2015 Agenda has witnessed a significant depth of India-ASEAN relations (Ministry of External Affairs, 2015). The Delhi Dialogue has emerged as India's pre-eminent ASEAN-centric Track 1.5 forum, where policy makers along with stalwarts from academia and think tanks, from India and ASEAN member states contribute their ideas and views to strengthen and develop a robust partnership between India and ASEAN. This will also contribute to stabilize the regional environment in the region and also strengthen the regional integration against the unprecedented changes in global dynamics. In this direction India sought cooperation in the fields of maritime security, freedom of navigation and peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the international law along with humanitarian and disaster relief, anti-piracy and counter-terrorism vis-à-vis ASEAN is seeking India's support in establishing the secure cyber space in the region.

ASEAN vision 2020, adopted by ASEAN Leaders have agreed a shared vision of ASEAN as a concern of Southeast Asian countries uniting for stability and prosperity and dynamic development for community oriented societies.

The ASEAN leadership has signed Cebu Declaration and also has affirmed their strong commitment to the Acceleration of the Establishment of ASEAN Community. At the 9th ASEAN Summit in 2003; the ASEAN Leaders resolved that an ASEAN Community shall be established. The Community is comprised of

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\* *Ramanand Garge, Senior Research Associate*

major three pillars;

- 1) ASEAN Political-Security Community,
- 2) ASEAN Economic Community
- 3) ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (Secretariat, ASEAN, 2015)

With the creation of such community ASEAN hopes to generate an organisation which is politically cohesive, economically dynamic and socially and culturally harmonious.

It is significant that India-ASEAN partnership has evolved from the significant dialogue of 23 years and is destined to play a crucial role in shaping ASEAN's post 2015 agenda. It will also strengthen this mutually beneficial partnership in many ways. The 'Look East Policy' of India of the 1990s began its interaction with the ASEAN and India became a sectoral dialogue partner of ASEAN in 1992 and further in 1996 became the full

The 'Look East Policy' of India of the 1990s began its interaction with the ASEAN and India became a sectoral dialogue partner of ASEAN in 1992 and further in 1996 became the full dialogue partner.

dialogue partner. The collaboration has developed the cooperation in the political and security areas. The partnership has seen a significant pace in 21<sup>st</sup> century from annual summits began from 2002. This ASEAN-India cooperation encompasses a range of sectors from trade, science and technology, space, agriculture, energy, ICT, tourism, culture etc.. The cooperation is being intensified in cultural, educational and academic fields with a clear objective of people-to-people contacts. In economic sector, the ASEAN-India trade in Goods Agreement gave an encouraging pace for trade, resulted in a significant increase of trade by 37percent (**Government of India, 2013**). It further sets the tone for the development of ASEAN-India FTA in services and investment sector in the near future.

### **The ASEAN post 2015 agenda and its regional, global impact**

Southeast Asia has witnessed **ACT East**

various ups and downs in its political, economic and socio-cultural segments. While addressing the traditional security priorities and non-traditional security requirements, the rise of regional powers have restrained its steady growth. These commonalities of interests bring India and ASEAN on one platform. This evolution of cooperation will also generate inclusive Asian security architecture leading to the common goal of shared prosperity. The credible resolution of security challenges will lead to stable region crafting a stable economic architecture.

For achieving the goal and synergizing the bilateral relationship both India and ASEAN need to cooperate and intensify their cooperation in the field of education and skill development, enhancing greater connectivity by removing bottlenecks. It is also essential to create a regional production base attracting quality investment and improving socio-cultural links among the people of the region.

India's continuous comprehensive engagement with ASEAN has strengthened the relationship. The declaration of India's Act East Policy at the 12<sup>th</sup> ASEAN summit held in Nay Pyi Taw on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2014 followed by high level visits accelerated the pace of multilateral interaction, and it testifies the mutual commitment of regional stability and comprehensive development. India is also engaged with the ASEAN countries in various track one and track two fora. The unique characteristic about India-ASEAN relationship is that India is engaged with these member states through ASEAN-led mechanism such as East Asia Summit, ASEAN Regional Forum, etc and also joins hand in hand cooperation in the field of counter terrorism in the form of Joint declaration for Cooperation in Combating International terrorism.

The ASEAN-India vision statement at the Commemorative Summit at New Delhi in September, 2012 gives prominently a strategic aspect to the India-ASEAN

partnership. It is also an operational success of India's Look East Policy (Secretariat, ASEAN, 2012). India is eighth largest trading partner of ASEAN.

### The Direction

The ASEAN-India Action plan for Peace, Progress and Shared Prosperity (2010-2015) has made a significant credible progress (Press Information Bureau, 2015). This inspires for setting up more intense dialogue amongst India and ASEAN states. This can be in the form of Trade and Investment Centre, revival of ASEAN-India Business Council, Food security, Renewable Energy, intense people to people physical connectivity are some of the prominent areas highlighted in the third ASEAN-India Plan of Action (2016-2021) (12th India-ASEAN Summit, 2014). The evolving strong bilateral relationship with the Indonesia, Australia, Vietnam and Malaysia stands testimony to India's strategic partnership with ASEAN making ASEAN as India's fourth largest trading partner and

The changes occurring in the security, socio-cultural and economic environment of the region provide unique opportunity for strengthening the linkages through ASEAN centric institutions like East Asia Summit etc.

The fast evolving regional developments bring forward series of new challenges which need to be responded in proactive manner. The changes occurring in the security, socio-cultural and economic environment of the region provide unique opportunity for strengthening the linkages through ASEAN centric institutions like East Asia Summit etc. which will be mutually beneficial.

The India-ASEAN relations have evolved upon common developmental and strategic interests along with emerging security challenges of mutual concerns. The development of the relation is observed in three significant aspects;

- 1) Geo-political
- 2) Socio-Cultural
- 3) Economic

While focusing on these three bilateral trade and building aspects, the brief about the business partnerships. emerging trends in the region at the backdrop would be of a great benefit. The evolved strategic partnership between India and ASEAN is one of the cornerstones of India's foreign policy and became the foundation of recent Act East policy directive. In the rapidly changing political, economic and security structural calculus of the region, this relationship is proved to be a defining one, addressing the common requirements of economic growth and prosperity of the region. This also acknowledges ASEAN's capabilities and its key role in regional architecture. The similar success is also observed in economic cooperation between India and ASEAN. The recent India-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement in services and investments has strengthened the relations multifold. The upcoming formation of ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) by this year is expected to generate tremendous growth potential and will provide new opportunities for promoting

**The Commonalities**

While Progressing further both the entities have commonalities, in this direction ASEAN and India reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen and advance the strategic partnership and agreed to step-up cooperation at the recent 17th ASEAN-India Senior Officials' Meeting (17th AISOM) held in New Delhi, India, on 14 March. India also clearly defined its intention through 'Act East' approach which is designed to be a more proactive Indian engagement with ASEAN.

**Maritime Security** – The homogenization of two theatres Indian Ocean Region and Pacific has broadened the strategic space. This has provided greater opportunity for co-operation in the area of maritime security. This evolving environment calls for synergizing maritime operations with political pronouncement and while doing so India must ensure strategic pressure by multiplying logistical MoU's with the key states

of the region. This mutually beneficial approach will have a collective approach while dealing with protection of individual maritime countries (Singh, 2015).

**Cyber Security** – with the creation of more apps<sup>1</sup> the cyber space is expanding and making it more vulnerable. The command and control is passing from human to internet and is more sensor based. Making it more offense dominant where attribution is very difficult in such kind of matters. It is one of the decisive factors for the growth of the economy. Its contribution for the development of GDP is very considerable. Likewise, the navigation through seas is governed by laws of sea protecting sea commerce. There is intense need felt for safe navigation through cyber space. It will also secure the transactions and provide a safe growth of economy through the means of technology (Bajaj, 2015).

contribute heavily not only for the betterment of the world but for a secure and sustainable cyber space of the region also. Many scholars and technical experts also emphasised that India and ASEAN can have regional internet grid which will give the duo a strong representation in Internet governance system in the backdrop of ethnic diversity (Mohamed, 2015).

In the socio-economic sector India-ASEAN partnership can initiate the relationship in the field of education and skilled labour. To have such knowledge based economy there is a need of connectivity amongst the actors of the domain, irrespective of its geographical orientation and R and D. India, with its technologically proven might, can provide a credible cyber mechanism [data centres and servers] which will be mutually beneficial.

Specifically in the field of cyber security India and ASEAN can

## Future

While strengthening India-ASEAN relationship, through Act East India must not only focus on the potential of the North East Region but also consider the reach and potential power of the Southern Indian regions as well. The India-ASEAN relationship is moving ahead steadily and above discussed key factors will define the future of their relationship. The Act East Policy of India and the rise of ASEAN community will set the momentum of the shared progress and prosperity truly meaningful.

## End Notes

1. *App - a self-contained program or piece of software designed to fulfil a particular purpose; an application, especially as downloaded by a user to a mobile device.*

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# Call for A Native Indian Military Doctrine

“Organisations created to fight the last war better are not going to win the next,”

- Gen James M Gavin

- Lt Gen Gautam Banerjee

## Native Military Theology

In the emerging equation of regional and global power-politics, it is incumbent upon India's defence planners to frame the nation's security concerns and orient its military power accordingly. That orientation is best achieved through promulgation of appropriate *political mandate* for the military establishment to devise a competent *doctrine* of war-fighting, which in turn would influence cost-efficient military force-structuring.

Propositions over the cause of evolution of independent India's native military theology and the parameters that must guide that complex venture is therefore a call of the day.

## Political Mandate for the Military

In any nation-state, structuring of military power, and maintaining it thereafter with regular course-

corrections, is a solemn *commission* assigned to its military leadership. This assignment is conveyed through promulgation of a formal *political mandate* which is a key responsibility of a nation's political leadership. Such formal political orientation is necessary on two counts. One, it protects the focus of military organisation from getting diffused over every conceivable strategic contingencies and threats considered in isolation, many of which could actually be discarded in the interplay of other factors of the national grand strategy, thus preventing wasteful investments in defence build up. Two, it prepares the national leadership to girdle up to intervene by the exercise of political and diplomatic *Chanakya Niti*, when certain expected adversities cannot be tackled through affordable military options; and concurrently, it triggers innovations in native military theology to tackle the

\* Lt Gen Gautam Banerjee, Member Executive Council, VIF

adversary's advantages. These are but hoary lessons of political and military history.

In contrast, the attitude of the Indian state towards its military institution has been wavering between exclusion from political articulation and grudging tolerance to ward off existential threats emanating from inimical neighbours. Nothing substantiates this attitude more than the fact

that: One, the Indian state's mandate to its military is confined to what is known as the 'Raksha Mantri's Directive', which reportedly is but a brief

statement over preparation for a war undefined; and two, resources allocated to that purpose remain inadequate to conform to that very 'Directive'. In effect therefore, political mandate for the Indian military is neither serious in intent nor practical in content. It fails to provide the right orientation for astute structuring of her military organisation with the resources viable, and thus uphold the

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political purpose of possession of military power.

### **Military Strategies**

If the nation's political leadership is unable to set its military goals, professionals cannot leave the matter in limbo – wars, even if they breakout due to political and diplomatic failings, have to fought by them after all. It was so that from time to time the Indian

military leadership has been devising - in-house and bereft of serious political participation – contemporary-relevant concepts of structuring and applying its forces.

Thus 'defensive war, no territorial loss, achievement of favourable military stalemate and denial of enemy's objectives' had been the concept during the period 1963-71. Then, between 1972 and 1987, the concept of application of military power graduated to 'defence-offence', which emphasised on blunting the enemy's initiative before switching to selective offensive(s) to destroy his forces

and capture territory, thus making him pay for his venture – ‘K-Day’ Scenario in short.

By the end 1980’s, in tentative hope of state-support, the military establishment graduated to what was referred to as the ‘D’-Day Scenario - an operational concept that called for ‘pro-active, deep offensive along selected thrust-lines and resort to offensive-defence elsewhere’. However, the following decade of the 1990’s brought such economic debilities upon the nation that translated into crippling starvation of its military capability. No doubt, all nations go through such periods when the sword has to be sheathed, but that compulsion is managed by taking the military hierarchy on board for them to go dormant without undermining the institutional competencies. In this instance however, a dismissive attitude within the Government prevented the military establishment from cushioning the impact. Effects of that apathy continues to fester till date. It would be an uphill task to recover from the ‘hollowness’ that ate into the military structure during that period.

In the mid 2000’s, after the experiences of nuclearisation, Kargil Conflict and Operation Parakram, the military hierarchy found confidence in articulating its war-fighting doctrines. That was so when the doctrine of ‘Cold Start’ operations came to be spoken of; notwithstanding its excellence, it stands officially repudiated. This doctrine, however, could be workable only if a good part of the defence forces is maintained at a state of ever-readiness, continuous flow of actionable intelligence is perfected, transportation plans stand sanctified, surge-production of consumables of war are practicable, ‘mobilisation units’ are ready, and above all, the political ‘end-state’ is spelt-out – all in a matter of just few days. Similarly, an effective doctrine on ‘Sub-Conventional Warfare’ would be contingent upon Army’s primacy in unified command, integrated intelligence, good governance and genuineness of political process. Obviously, such doctrines are difficult to articulate when state-policies remain exclusive of the military’s preview.

A later effort in cobbling up a conjoined 'Indian Military Doctrine' remained superficial yet in providing a platform for build up of tri-service war-strategies. Not having the benefits of wider confabulation, experimentation, debate and tests, this initiative too could not break free of rhetoric; each service continuing to propagate its central role in isolation and the political authority, confused and apprehensive as ever, remaining aloof of the proceedings. Apparently therefore, the world's third

Apparently therefore, the world's third largest military force stands geared up to fight three distinct service-specific wars - with noble intent of assisting each other in situations found conducive.

largest military force stands geared up to fight three distinct service-specific wars - with noble intent of assisting each other in situations found conducive. Further, it intends to fight by the same methods as it has done in the past even when its adversaries have changed their strategies, and while pinned down by hollowing deficiencies in basic equipment and training standards, seeks panacea in 'modernisation' based on

imported weaponry. The result is that today much of the force remains below par compared to the designated operational capabilities, while much of these capabilities have by themselves gone obsolescent and unproductive against the investments made on these.

The muddle is massive indeed - the nation is the loser. Only the promulgation of a genuine *political mandate* would trigger *native doctrinal propositions* to cover that chasm.

### The Cause of Military Modernisation

Doctrinal deficiencies have led to diffused, if not conflicting, perceptions in intra as well as inter-service thoughts, and that has affected the much overdue call for 'Revolution in Military Affairs' (RMA) induced 'modernisation' of the military forces. Each service thus devised its self-centric modernisation schemes, none of which enjoyed political or fiscal commitment. In any case, the scope of those modernisation schemes

were confined to procurement, mainly through import, of specific high-technology weaponry of capital nature. Compatible modernisation of combat support and logistic force-elements was left relegated, while there was practically no thought for innovative ideas in prosecution of a native brand of warfare. In other words, the military hierarchy was intent on engaging in past practices, under past settings, and relying just on new cutting edges to deliver. More disconcertingly, the 'hollowness' in basic weaponry and equipment – shortage of small arms, accessories, ammunitions, spares, instruments, sensors, transport, ancillaries, etc. without which capital weaponry is left useless in war, and which had accumulated over the years to costs amounting to most of the annual revenue budget - was left to be filled up through promises tentative and hopes uncertain.

The suggestion here is that even if India did not wish to factor military power in her peace-loving image, ordination of a visionary *political mandate*, and as a corollary, formulation of a formal *military*

*doctrine*, had been an imperative that was glossed over. Truly, apart from certain exceptions, most world powers subscribe to a peaceful order just as India does, but even then they do not fail to spell out a political mandate to guide shaping of appropriate military doctrine and so preserve their core military assets for contingencies. That has not been the case with the Indian political and military system, and that could have been the source of the disorientations in our defence planning.

The result is that India's native theology of prosecution of military operations had at best been confined just to certain 'concepts', but never could it assume the status of a true 'doctrine' that motivates build up of a cost-efficient force and turns it into a victorious one within the means at disposal.

### **Military Doctrine**

A doctrine is a statement of intent to achieve specified goals. It therefore must proceed beyond text-book definitions, and rooted in actionable possibilities, indicate the strategy to harness the resources at

hand in moving towards such goals. However, decision parameters being hazy and outcomes dictated by intangible factors, doctrinal inquisition and related military force-structuring is an exercise intellectually challenging and procedurally excruciating. Unpredictability of future equations of global as well as regional power adds to that complexity. Most politically mature nations therefore beacon their military leadership by promulgation of what actually are *defence white papers*; Russians describing theirs as ‘Draft Military Doctrine’, French as ‘Defence Programme Laws’, Germans as “Defence White Paper’, British as ‘Strategic Defence Review”, Americans as ‘Quadrennial Defence Review’ and China as ‘National Military Strategy Guidelines’. These policy promulgations are preceded by a host of studies, experimentations, confabulations and debate which foster the qualities of foresight, prudence, practicability and pioneering – and

even then, wisdom of statesmanship makes it incumbent to revisit such promulgations at regular intervals and make due course corrections. A native military doctrine is thus rooted in such formal political mandate, and revised according to the strategic dynamics.

Of course, it must be acknowledged that military mandate cannot be formalised when the nation’s defence oriented technological, industrial and fiscal capitals are way below par. That is the cost to be paid for the Indian state’s past naivety when it found comfort in tying its politics of peace with anti-military demeanour, isolating military hierarchy from apex level decision making, strangulating defence industry under notions of disarmament and divesting defence research from military lien. Indeed, all nations negotiate through similar ambivalence in promulgating their military mandate. Really therefore, Indian defence planners too could make an effort in that direction -

Of course, it must be acknowledged that military mandate cannot be formalised when the nation’s defence oriented technological, industrial and fiscal capitals are way below par.

particularly since our threats are well identified - for the military leadership to pick up the cue and proceed to devise a native military theology. The Russians, Germans and Australians, amongst others, have done just that, much to the optimisation of their defence resource-allocation. But because that has not happened in the Indian dispensation, each service and their different arms, all of them remain partisan in defining factional roles and resources around their self-centrality.

As India finds its space in the contemporary world order and gears up to deal with its challenges and adversities, the idea of a truly meaningful military doctrine may not be stifled any more. The cause is ripened by the recent measures to energise the defence research, technology and industrial sectors because convergence of these aspects with appropriate military doctrine would integrate the nation's entire defence system into one whole and leave out redundancies. Such an optimally focused, truly deterrent and cost-efficient military security is a national call, no less.

## **Fostering Military Security**

Indian citizens know that the purpose of maintaining military forces is to exercise sovereign authority to protect our interests in a predatory world where, in the ultimate analysis, might is right. Notably, unlike many other powers, India is not obsessed with controlling others' business and use of military power to impose on others. Conversely, she is hemmed-in from two sides by obsessively inimical neighbours - the lesser one, Pakistan, going to the extent of subsuming its existential goals to hostility against all that India stands for, and the lead player, a giant, China of course, ascribing to India the role of a challenger to its power and hegemony. It would therefore be perfectly justified for the Indian citizens to ask as what *goals* may the state set for our military institution and what may the military *doctrine* be to achieve that end. The question, as to how practically *implementable* that doctrine might be, should also be a valid concern - you do not want to commit national resources for chimera, after all.

Over the past decade, the state has been intent on streamlining its defence policies, and *inter alia*, define the prospects that its military establishment must seek in preservation of the nation's military security. Towards that end, the government had a series of studies and committees constituted. However, pinned down by political indifference and bureaucratic wrangling – both, civil and military - efforts made in that direction have not made sufficient headway. Besides, the three services too had constituted their thinking groups to vitalise military strategic theologies and to identify the ways and means of achieving that end. Unfortunately, these confabulations could never surpass the affliction of resource-accretion, thus remaining short of delving into ingenuous deployment of these in warfare. In the overall analysis, political disorientation, partisan rivalries, corrupt practices and unaccountability of defence research and industrial sectors have paid put to those efforts, so

Besides, the three services too had constituted their thinking groups to vitalise military strategic theologies and to identify the ways and means of achieving that end.

much so that the state of military preparedness remains no better than what it had been at the time of Kargil Conflict.

There is now a new government, apparently intent on overcoming our systemic debilities and free the military establishment to reach its potential. Obviously, the way to begin that noble quest would be to: One, spelling out of a political mandate; two, prodding the defence establishments to streamline their structures and deliver designated outputs; and three, enjoin the military to transform in tune with relevant military theology. For the second listed course to proceed, articulation of a military doctrine is imperative.

### **Strategic Inquisition**

It would be perfectly justified for the Indian citizens to ask as what *goals* may the state set for our military institution and what may the military *doctrine* be to achieve that end. The question, as to how practically *implementable* that doctrine might be, should also be a

valid concern – one does not want to commit national resources for chimera, after all. It is therefore difficult to turn away from such fundamental queries as :

- Why, even while maintaining the world's third largest military force, are we unable to deter adversarial military impositions – territorial encroachment, proxy war, terror attacks, and the ever looming prospect of military aggression?
- How might the chasm between the force level and the capacity to maintain these with full compliment of war wherewithal - military hardware, ammunitions, transportation and logistic infrastructure, and appropriate funding for these – be covered, for the entire military force to be in full operational fettle?
- How may we defend India with our main weaponry having to be purchased from abroad? How long may the world's third largest military force remain at the mercy of foreign military industry?

- Within the means feasible to garner, how best can the Indian military deter the alliance of two powerful enemies – with the kind of unbridled hostility they indulge, it would be foolish to consider them as mere 'adversaries' – from stream-rolling over our Indian nationhood?

There is not much to twirl our moustache when we tread upon honest answers to the above listed queries. Indeed, strict evaluation indicates that: One, our enemies are only partially deterred from military aggression but yet find ways to strike at us militarily; two, we have a strong force-structure of which we maintain in operational readiness only a part; and three, for political expediency, we have allowed strangulation of military technology. No doubt, even with the resources committed over the five decades after the lesson of 1962 debacle, we could have nurtured a more powerful military force had our political management of that institution been astute.

There are two courses open to seek answers to the above listed queries. The simplistic one is to prod along, as we have done so far, to exploit imported weaponry around a fixated war doctrine and marshal both our political restraint and soldierly valour to buy military stalemate. The other, more rewarding but intellectually pioneering course is to devise such a war-fighting doctrine that assimilates our assets and limitations to deter intransigence, and punish the rogue if that deterrence fails.

It may be a combined political and military endeavour to break free of the mundane and, given the Indian dispensation, proceed to make her defence investment count better returns.

### Setting the Stage

It is beyond the scope of this discussion to home on to the likely contours of an appropriate military doctrine for the Indian military. In any case, doctrinal inquisition is not a one stop affair, it evolves over time alongside operational

practices adopted to deal with military challenges, and is regulated by the nation's defence architecture, industrial capacity and fiscal viability. It would therefore be in order to discuss the parameters and considerations that might facilitate the process and so streamline the diffused military thinking to order.

The first key consideration is that the nation's political demeanour makes it apparent that articulation

In military preparedness, she is bound to by consensus amongst internal institutions most of which, patriotic rhetoric apart, are either inert or chary of matters military.

of military power is not on her agenda. In military preparedness, she is bound to by consensus amongst

internal institutions most of which, patriotic rhetoric apart, are either inert or chary of matters military. Further, the Indian political establishment depends upon civilian institutions in managing national security concerns and even if uninitiated in military institutional complexities, to set the level of defence preparedness. Therefore, the time when the political leadership is able to spell out a sensible mandate is yet far away. The military leadership will

meanwhile have to proceed with evolving a truly beaconing military doctrine based on informed and practical assumptions. Wisdom therefore dictates that the drafters of the doctrine evaluate the environment under which it may have to be implemented. Thus might emerge the best options, within the resources available, to devise an *implementable doctrine* - in consultation with the policy makers, with their endorsement and intent of marshalling the state institutions to purpose.

Next, the doctrine would have to set *conventional military goals* in dealing with the aggressive impositions of China and an ever antagonistic Pakistan. To dissuade China from attempting to secure her territorial claims by her powerful military means, the politico-diplomatic cost of such a venture on China has to be rendered unprofitable – just the military cost may not deter her. One way to do so may be to bank upon defensive strategy executed with extreme aggressiveness, including special and behind-the-lines operations, in conformity to the advantageous features of

terrain, Tibetan dissent and continuation of long drawn war of varying tempo, thus denying her the satisfaction of proclaiming victory. In dealing with Pakistan, the current concept of launching strong manoeuvre forces to conduct deliberate, sharp, short and yet debilitating operations would remain relevant, though perfecting of balanced force-composition, and calling Pakistan's nuclear bombast may be thought of.

The third consideration would have to be aimed at dealing with the current trends of *politico-military subversion*, like China's building up of Pakistan's conventional, nuclear and logistic capabilities, Pakistan's unrelenting export of terrorism, and various forms of internally instigated and externally promoted *sub-conventional wars*, prospects of which loom ominously over India's future security.

To be counted in the global politics, the Indian military will have to gear up to participate in *UN assignments* and various *allied military manoeuvres*. To meet this end, highly capable special forces, backed up with modern

conventional battle formations would be necessary. That would be another consideration in evolution of the doctrine.

A military doctrine has to be customised to *exploit national strengths* while covering for its limitations, it may be another consideration in making of the doctrine. Even if dependent on import of major weaponry and equipment, India is competent in construction, transportation and IT engineering.

Therefore, while imports and indigenous development of sophisticated military hardware may continue, force-multiplication of such hardware through *technological and logistic enhancements* that are within our capabilities may be another key consideration. Exploiting our capacity to produce modest designs in large numbers, we could hedge sophistication with numbers, covering quality with quantity till our military industry comes of age. Finally, ingenious, fearless and hardy soldier being our best asset, we could invest

more on his training and morale to compensate for our technological and fiscal limitations.

### How will the Doctrine Help?

Having already discussed the necessity of devising formal military doctrine to guide the nation's military preparedness, we may now briefly outline some of the answers that such a doctrine may provide.

The doctrine would bring to focus a new era military *force-structuring* in terms of types of battle formations, their roles and organisation, and their numbers that may be maintained at full, partial and sequestered state. It would optimise joint-service assignment of forces and the level of acceptable redundancies. More importantly, it would be cognisant of the trend of sub-conventional conflicts reigning before, during and after a conventional war has shaped the situation, and thus promote comprehensive *integration of war-plans*.

In the current dispensation, with combat, support and logistic elements held in irreconcilable states of incompatibility, battle formations are handicapped in terms of '*balance in composition*'. Indeed, the current scaling of fire power, mobility, electronic warfare, communications and logistic back-ups fall well short of what is needed to fight a modern war on land, sea and air. Ad hoc attachments to reconcile this mismatch may work in exercises, not so in war. A doctrine would help overcome that anomaly. It would also re-tune the practice of incremental 'arm-modernisation' into *force-modernisation* that is focused to the kind of war propounded, allocation of funds and priorities being dictated accordingly.

Revamp of strategic and tactical *intelligence* setup may be facilitated by the guidelines enunciated by the doctrine. Further, with the emergence of 'dual-purpose' capabilities like money-trafficking, cyber-subversion, media-manipulation, economic arm-twisting and technology denial, the scope of

military intelligence can no more be confined to the traditional force and terrain information; societal, fiscal and political input are very much part of it, particularly in sub-conventional operations. The doctrine would facilitate cover that void through linkages with national intelligence agencies in a formally structured manner.

Conduct of modern warfare requires support of the latest in *deception, cyber* and *psychological warfare*, and *CAI2* technologies. Whereas these are still treated in peripheral terms, we need to institute measures to institutionalise these capabilities into every level of the force-structure. Expansion of the charter of the Territorial Army to marshal complimentary effort from expert *soldier-citizens* operating in the banking, excise, engineering, cyber, financial, industrial, transportation, media and policing sectors may also be proposed.

We could build upon our *national competencies* in transportation, communications, storage, material handling, earthwork and bridging capability and so provide to our

commanders more tactical freedom to deploy their resources in succession. Besides, we could exploit IT to disorient the adversary and corrupt his command and control set up, and so make up to some extent for our limitations in sophisticated weaponry.

Whereas global military technology does not cater to the kinds of land, air, and to some extent, sea terrain the Indian military forces have to operate upon, scarce effort has been made in past six decades to develop *terrain-customised military hardware* that could accord distinct advantages to own forces in war. A native military doctrine would see to amelioration of that oversight.

Pakistan's presumed nuclear rational-irrational paradox seems to deter India's exercise of conventional military power. It is a case of the weak deterring the strong, where-in the paranoia of anti-India afflictions on one end

and the call of jehadi 'noble death' on the other contrasts the fundamentals of deterrence. Similarly, India's 'minimum nuclear deterrence' may not really matter to China that could, under the garb of cultural revolution, exterminate 36 million people, and sink 15 cities to construct one 'great dam'. A doctrine free of such self-condescending impositions may get us out of that jam.

Similarly, India's 'minimum nuclear deterrence' may not really matter to China that could, under the garb of cultural revolution, exterminate 36 million people, and sink 15 cities to construct one 'great dam'.

Finally, we could choose our best time and terrain to act as it may suit us. Every situation need not be restored 'pronto', with high casualties like Kargil, in exchange for deliberate build up – and engage in psychological and diplomatic game to bridge the time.

### **The Doctrinal Dream**

Majority of our military leadership, defence ministry bureaucrats, politicians responsible of national security and strategic think-tanks, though competent, remain shackled in thought and deed to a placid and obfuscating system. Yet, there comes a time when such people

breakout of that system and realign the state-apparatus towards a better destiny. In that context, for the doctrinal initiatives to be implementable, we have to address those who would actually implement the change – that is, the *executive functionaries*, both within the military as well as in the defence bureaucracy.

It is historically recognised that *conduct of war has much to do with intellect, creativity and initiative*. From this angle, it is imperative to devote attention towards conceptual inquisition of the strategic complexions of warfare

that may confront the Indian defence forces in the coming years. There are fundamental disputes in the neighbourhood, and even if it takes two to fight, just one is enough to start it. India, therefore, has no choice but to be ready to secure herself *within the resources affordable*.

A new-look Doctrine may just do that.

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# Effectiveness of Battlefield Air Strikes needs to be Enhanced

A specialised aircraft is needed to destroy targets on land on the future battlefield

- *Brig Gurmeet Kanwal*

Attention of the participants in the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of Aero-India at Bengaluru was focused on big-ticket deals like the long-pending multi-billion dollar acquisition of the MMRCA by the Indian Air Force (IAF). Discussion also centred on whether or not the government is having second thoughts about buying the Rafale fighter from France vis-à-vis adding to the existing fleet of Su-30 MKI aircraft acquired from Russia.

What did not find mention is the fact that both these aircraft are very expensive multi-mission fighters that the IAF will not like to risk while striking ground targets in the tactical battle area (TBA) teeming with air defence weapons. A future war on the Indian sub-continent will in all likelihood result from the unresolved territorial disputes

with China and Pakistan. It will be predominantly a conflict on land. The technological ability and the skill to acquire and accurately hit targets on the ground will be key capabilities that the IAF must have.

During the Kargil conflict in the summer of 1999, air-to-ground strikes by fighter ground attack (FGA) aircraft of the IAF had played an important role in neutralising Pakistan army defences. The destruction of a logistics camp at Muntho Dhalo was shown repeatedly on national television. In conflicts in Afghanistan, the Balkans, Chechnya, Iraq, Libya and, more recently, the ongoing fight against the Islamic State, FGA aircraft have achieved laudable results, especially while using precision guided munitions (PGMs).

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\* *Brig Gurmeet Kanwal, Visiting Fellow, VIF*

Employed in a synergistic manner in conjunction with ground forces, air power is a substantive force multiplier that can pave the way for victory. Interdiction of targets in depth and the provision of sustained 'close air support' to the ground forces, is now part and parcel of the tactics, techniques and procedures of conventional combat on land.

Joint operations are enhanced by the capability of the air force to quickly deliver a wide range of weapons and massed firepower at decisive points. In Gulf War II, the US armed forces had raised close air support to the level of a fine art. Air-to-ground strikes were whistled in more frequently than in any other war and were delivered with alacrity in an unbelievable response time of 15 to 20 minutes.

Hence, the importance of battlefield air strikes in modern wars must not be underrated. A few missions of FGA aircraft and attack helicopters can deliver more ordnance by way of 1,000 lb.

bombs in a few minutes on an objective selected for capture than the 18 guns of a 155 mm Bofors medium artillery regiment can deliver in 20 to 30 minutes.

During critical situations, particularly in fast flowing mechanised operations in the plains, accurate air strikes can save the day. The battle of Longewala during the 1971 war with Pakistan is a good example. Also, it is a truism that in-your-face air strikes against the enemy in contact with own troops that can be seen by them provide a major psychological boost to the morale of ground troops.

The destruction of the adversary's war machinery will be a major military aim during future wars. IAF aircraft that are earmarked for ground strikes need to be armed with PGMs in large numbers to achieve the desired effect. Free flight 1000 lb. and 500 lb. bombs cannot be dropped with the precision necessary to destroy individual bunkers, pillboxes and

armoured fighting vehicles (AFVs).

Modern fighter aircraft flying at supersonic speeds and constrained by the threat posed by air defence weapons in the TBA, such as hand-held, shoulder-fired SAMs like the Stinger and the Unza, cannot be expected to achieve precision with rockets and Gatling guns as they tend to avoid closing in and prefer to release their weapons from stand-off ranges. Only terminally homing laser- or TV-guided bombs and air-to-surface missiles with autonomously homing warheads can provide the necessary reach and accuracy. These are, naturally, more expensive than 'dumb' ammunition.

During the Kargil conflict, sustained, accurate and high-volume concentrated artillery firepower and air-to-ground strikes by the IAF eventually turned the tide for India by completely decimating enemy *sangars* (temporary bunkers) and enabling the infantry to assault virtually unopposed. Tiger Hill and many other enemy held

mountain ridges were finally recaptured with very few casualties. The battle winning efficacy of ground and aerial firepower in limited wars was established beyond doubt.

In view of the firepower capabilities that will be necessary to fight and win India's future wars, the IAF needs to re-assess the suitability of its weapons platforms and ammunition holdings to support operations on land. A dispassionate analysis will reveal that its ground strike capability needs a major fillip. It must launch a concerted drive to acquire the required means and upgrade its capability by an order of magnitude.

Ideally, the IAF should raise some squadrons that are equipped with a specialised, dedicated ground strike aircraft. Suitable aircraft include the US A-10 Thunderbolt/Warhog or the Russian SU-25 or SU-39. These aircraft are relatively slower moving, enable greater precision to be achieved in aiming, can carry several tons of payload per sortie, including air-to-ground precision

strike missiles and bombs, and can absorb a lot of damage from the enemy's air defence weapons.

Writing about the role played by US air power during Gulf War-I, General Robert H. Scales Jr. has stated, "The A-10 was devastating once the ground war began and once the aircraft dropped low enough to provide effective 30 mm cannon support."

Dedicated ground strike aircraft cost only a fraction of the cost of multi-role fighter aircraft such as Mirage-2000 and the future MMRCA. It is certain that in the

coming decades, the IAF will continue to be called upon to launch ground strikes with precision munitions in support of the army.

Quite obviously, the IAF cannot afford to acquire new, dedicated ground strike aircraft from its present meagre budget. Once the need for such aircraft has been adequately debated and is established beyond dispute, additional funds will have to be provided to the IAF for their early induction.

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# The National Commission on Urbanisation and Its Present Day Relevance

- *Dr M N Buch*

In 1986 the then Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi constituted the National Commission On Urbanisation with Charles Correa as Chairman and Ashish Bose, Nilay Chaudhary, Xerxes Desai, B.G. Fernandez, Cyrus Guzder, V.K.Pathak, Amit Sen and Kirti Shah as members and Naresh Nared as Member Secretary. I had the honour of being appointed as Vice Chairman of the Commission. The Commission had an eclectic mix of architects, planners, industrialists, economists, environmental engineering experts and administrators. We submitted our final reports to the Prime Minister on 12<sup>th</sup> August 1988.

The reason why the Commission was set up was that whereas India's population had been growing steadily so that between 1947 and 1987 it grew from about

35 crores to about 80 crores, the rate of growth of the urban population was twice as fast as the growth of rural population and the urban population quadrupled from about five crores in 1947 over twenty years in 1988. In fact the Census of India tells us that between 1901 and 2011 the total population of India grew five-fold, whereas the urban population increased seventeen times. However, in these 110 years the urban population as a proportion of the total population grew three-fold. Despite the great differential between the rate of growth of rural and urban population, as a proportion of the total population urban growth did not achieve a dimension where the equilibrium between the urban and rural population became totally biased in favour of the urban. In 110 years between 1901 and 2011 the urban population grew from 10.8

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percent of the total to 31.2 percent, which means that overwhelmingly India continues to be a rural country. In fact when one looks at the small towns of census classification VI to IV, that is, 3,000 to 30,000 population, 7.5 percent of the urban population lives in these towns, which accounts for about 2.5 percent of the total population. These towns have employment characteristics which are so intimately linked with agriculture that at best they can be defined as semi urban and if their population is deducted from the total urban population, then the real urban population of India would be about 28.7 percent of the total and the rural population would be in excess of 71 percent. However, let us not indulge in what Prof. Ashish Bose, arguably India's greatest demographer, called decimal point demography.

To return to the reasons for setting up the National Commission On Urbanisation government recognised that in

absolute numbers urban India's dimensions are such that our urban population alone was more than the entire population of the United States. Were our cities heroic engines of growth which created wealth for the nation, or were they settlements in which large sections of the citizens live in squatter colonies under the most brutal and human living conditions imaginable?

Undoubtedly there was a bit of both in our urban settlements, but there is no doubt that the economic potential of urban India, which could act not only as generator of wealth

but as a pool for providing gainful employment to the surplus of rural population, was not being achieved because of the sheer degradation of the urban environment. Decaying urban infrastructure, defective planning, administrative inefficiencies and inadequate resource mobilisation and allocation are all part of the urban malaise. Therefore, it was decided by government to set up a

In fact when one looks at the small towns of census classification VI to IV, that is, 3,000 to 30,000 population, 7.5 percent of the urban population lives in these towns, which accounts for about 2.5 percent of the total population.

Commission to examine the whole gamut of urbanisation and facilitate the formulation of policy which could set matters right.

In this behalf the National Commission On Urbanisation in Volume I of its report commented, "Obviously the urban situation in India is one of deep crisis and calls for measures analogous to those used when a house is on fire, or there is a city wide epidemic". The Commission formed a view, which can best be illustrated by a quotation from the same volume of the Commission's report "Having examined the crucial issues (from resource mobilisation and land supply policies to water and shelter for the poor) this Commission has identified ... viable programmes ... We must acknowledge the positive aspects of cities and the opportunities which they represent. Urbanisation is a necessary concomitant of the development path we have chosen". In other words, the National Commission On Urbanisation, after a deep examination of all the issues relating to urbanisation and the urban rural nexus, has stated,

"Urbanisation involves two closely related factors. The first is the people-work relationship in rural areas, in which land is the essential medium and which is right now so critically balanced that any addition to the population must inevitably push people out of agriculture into non agricultural operations. The second is the fact that only urban settlements can offer substantial non agricultural employment and absorb the migrants who are moving out of an agricultural economy". Great credit, however, must be given to the Commission for stating and I quote "In fact in States where irrigation and the extension of appropriate technology to agriculture has led to massive surpluses in production, the urban rural nexus has actually been strengthened, largely because of the operation of market forces. Thus while migration from rural to urban areas is a process which seemingly holds out the greatest danger to our urban settlements, it is in fact one of vital importance for the development of rural areas and thus for the nation as a whole. It

is from this perspective that the Commission has examined the crucial issues and conceptualised the strategic thrusts needed for the next few decades without, in any way, questioning or preempting the development and reform which must be carried out with the greatest urgency within rural India itself”.

The present strategy of government seems to be to encourage the secondary sector so that manufacture becomes the main source of employment in India. Because manufacture needs a certain critical size of settlements this automatically requires the growth of urban centres in which industry could be located and which could provide employment for persons siphoned away from the rural areas and from their traditional agricultural operations. How does this policy synchronise with the view of the Commission that the settlement pattern India is largely in equilibrium from the smallest

village to the largest metropolitan centre? In fact India has no primate cities, such as Mexico City which accounts for more than twenty percent of the entire population of Mexico and Bangkok which has about fifteen percent of the entire population of Thailand. Compared to that our metropolitan centres are only pimples on the face of India if we view them in the context of our total population. Even today whereas 53 million plus cities which are categorized as metropolitan by the Census of India contain 19.24 percent of the total urban population so far as the total population of India is concerned they account for only six percent. The Commission was opposed to disturbance of this equilibrium, which is why it emphasised that development and reform must be carried out with the greatest urgency within rural India.

While recognising the role of the mega metropolitan cities, Calcutta, Bombay, Delhi and

Even today whereas 53 million plus cities which are categorized as metropolitan by the Census of India contain 19.24 percent of the total urban population so far as the total population of India is concerned they account for only six percent.

Madras, to which we can add Bangalore, Ahmedabad and Pune, as generators of wealth at the national level, the Commission has not been unmindful of the fact that between 1971 and 1981 six hundred urban centres lower in size and population scale have exhibited the maximum demographic growth. The Commission recognised that the mega metropolitan centres had a huge financial, business and industrial establishment, their infrastructure, whether physical or social, was under immense pressure and unless national priority was given to their revival it would have massive implication for the Indian economy. However, the Commission has also recognised that whereas a mega metropolitan city hardly has a definable hinterland, the smaller towns and cities do have a definable localised hinterland which ensures a rural urban continuum. Therefore, the development of the intermediate level urban centres would have strong regional ramifications and would assist in strengthening the economy at regional levels. That

still leaves us with those towns and cities which were largely static, whose slow growth would still not stop them from becoming the centres of local migration, with the migrants not having gainful employment and thus merely transferring rural poverty to a larger population centre which was semi urban at best. This would constitute a tragedy of the first magnitude. To this could be added another dimension, which is that forty percent of the growth of urban India is due to natural birth within the city, which means that even without migration our towns and cities would continue to grow. This factor by itself is justification for upgrading the infrastructure of our urban centres.

If we look at the Commission's report in depth it clearly emerges that the Commission strongly favours an active urbanisation policy in order that there can be positive growth of our economy. In other words, urban India would transform from merely being a concentration of population in towns into one which is capable of generating economic growth in a sustained manner. To quote the

Commission “Instead of remaining isolated centres of economic activity, with weak linkages with the rural hinterland, the cities must become vibrant centres, making the best use of the natural and human resources in the region where they are located and, over time, expand their economic base to enable them to assume economic functions which transcend their regional boundaries”.

To further reinforce the argument that the Commission advocated continuum rather than just urbanisation, in

If intervention takes place at district level, if there is vocational skill development at that level and employment can be generated at district level itself, this would open up the rural hinterland and avoid blind migration to cities.

Volume II, Part 1 of the Commission’s report, in paragraph 2.2.7 the Commission states “In a country like India, where over two-third of the work force is engaged in agriculture, urbanisation should be visualised as a major instrument of agricultural and rural development... Our urbanisation strategy should aim at promoting both agriculture and industrial development and thus play a role

in the challenging task of generating rapid economic growth”. On this basis the Commission recommended intervention strategies in the field of urbanisation which would give adequate attention to agricultural development and the rural poor. If intervention takes place at district level, if there is vocational skill development at that level and employment can be generated at district level itself, this would

open up the rural hinterland and avoid blind migration to cities.

If agriculture prospers and the rural demand for consumer goods

increases it would certainly benefit industry. All this calls for a highly efficient system of planning, both economic and social, at district level so that there can be integration of spatial, economic and social development.

One of the major contributions of the Commission was that it viewed economic growth as a major factor in settlement planning in India. The

Commission was able to identify 329 urban centres which had high promise of both demographic and economic growth. 109 of these towns are located in districts where more than ninety percent of the population is still rural and from which there is the highest potential of migration to urban areas. This was a major break from the British system of accumulating wealth in only a few large cities which had strategic importance for the empire. Instead it would decentralise and widely spread urbanisation, improve the infrastructure of small and medium towns, attract investment which would take advantage of the huge pool of surplus labour available in rural India and, by providing vital urban rural links, would enable an entire region to develop. To quote from the Commission in paragraph 2.3.6 “If this investment is integrated with a massive training programme which prepares the rural folk for urban employment, the whole of the middle and lower Gangetic Valley, for example, could become a throbbing dynamo generating

economic power”. This is precisely what the Prime Minister said when he talked of the clean Ganga campaign. He stated that 40 percent of India’s population lives in the Ganga basin and if the river could be cleaned it would generate great economic development. Cleaning the Ganga then becomes a means of unleashing an economic revolution.

The present government has advocated the setting up of a hundred smart cities. Compare this with the National Commission On Urbanisation’s recommendation that 109 towns in districts which are largely rural should be developed as creators of non agricultural jobs and generating economic momentum. There is a ring of similarity to both suggestions. However, whereas what constitutes a smart town is still a matter for discussion, the National Commission On Urbanisation’s recommendation is both simple and absolutely focused. What is being suggested is investment in small towns which have a potential for growth, but developing them in a manner in

which they provide a market for the product of the rural hinterland and by pumping money into the hinterland the urban settlement would actually fund the improvement of agriculture so that urban-rural growth is in tandem. Smart cities might become highly modern implants in a region where poverty would continue because the activities of smart cities would not relate to the rural environment. These would be entirely new towns, akin to Bhilai, Durgapur and Rourkela which were created to serve the new steel plants that were built in the middle of nowhere. In context they were smart cities because they were designed to serve a particular industrial technology. In every single case of such a city in India they became centres of relative prosperity in an impoverished hinterland and they attracted the rural poor who hoped to get some employment in the informal sector which would service the newly established cities. Every one of our new towns has degenerated

Smart cities might become highly modern implants in a region where poverty would continue because the activities of smart cities would not relate to the rural environment.

into the duality of the planned township of the industry and the totally unplanned non city of slums which have grown around them to house the informal sector. Will not the new smart cities of Narendra Modi become another Bhilai or Durgapur?

The investment planned in supporting the generators of economic momentum by the National Commission On Urbanisation would be of a moderate scale in which the town infrastructure would be improved and conditions gradually created whereby sustainable non agricultural economic activity could be generated, even if it be at the small or medium scale. Here the differential between poverty and wealth would not be such that vast numbers of people would be attracted in search of jobs. In fact the suggestion here is to strengthen the hierarchy of settlements so that village agriculture improves, the selected towns service the rural hinterland, create a demand for rural product

whilst developing an industrial base at a scale to which the villagers could relate and in which, with proper skill development inputs, they could find employment. The Commission's proposal is based on strengthening a continuum, whereas the hundred smart cities proposal is aimed at superimposing on a wobbly urban infrastructure a completely new implant which may not be in tune with the rest of India. The Commission's proposal is anchored in the belief that "... policy intervention must consciously seek to bring about a balanced development of all regions in a phased manner, keeping in mind the overriding resource constraint and the need for raising productivity and generating economic growth with equity". The present government's policy completely overlooks resource constraints and the competing demands on resources of the highly capital intensive smart cities and the need to invest in maintaining and upgrading the existing urban infrastructure. Concern for equity is not

mentioned at all, which means that the new smart cities would corner all the resources and the Devil take the hindmost! Is this fair?

What the Commission found about the condition of cities in India and the decay of infrastructure is still valid today. The Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission was aimed at investment in improving the existing infrastructure of our urban centre. The smart city concept, which is highly capital intensive, as already stated would cut into these funds and it is almost certain that the condition of our existing urban centres will degrade even further because of lack of resources. To that extent there is a complete mismatch between what the National Commission On Urbanisation recommended and what the present government is planning. It is time that administrators, planners, politicians and scholars take a good, hard look at what the National Commission had recommended because unfortunately between 1988 and 2015, apart from gathering dust,

the Commission's report has remained largely unread. Not because I was Vice Chairman of the Commission but rather because as an administrator who had actually managed the cities of Ujjain, Bhopal and Delhi, I do feel that what the Commission recommended makes sound commonsense and what is being

suggested now is not rooted in reality. We must dream, but we must not fantasise and my major fear is that somewhere down the line the dreams do not match reality and this can be dangerous.

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# NITI Aayog

- *Priyang Pandey*

In an effort to restructure the growth vehicle of the nation, Sh. Narendra Modi has announced a paradigm shift from the erstwhile Planning Commission to a new institution named 'NITI Aayog' or the **National Institute of Transforming India**. NITI Aayog, in a departure from the working methodology of the Planning Commission, will serve as a 'Think Tank' of the Government – as a directional and policy dynamo.

NITI Aayog will provide governments at the central and state levels with relevant strategic and technical advice across the spectrum of key elements of policy, including matters of national and international exchange on the economic front, rational distribution of best practices from within the country as well as from other nations, the infusion of new policy ideas and specific issue-based support. <sup>[1]</sup>

On January 1, 2015 the new Government ushered in not only the Gregorian New Year but also a new era in governance. After 65 years of the Planning Commission, Sh. Modi in a bold stroke announced the dismantling of the Yojana or Planning Aayog and setting up of the NITI Aayog, which would infuse new blood into the system till the grassroots. The PM had already given inkling in his maiden speech from the historic Red Fort on August 15, 2014 about his epochal decision.

Civilisationally, we have had a culture of grand strategic thinking which can be proved by the epics like the Chanakya's Arthashastra. In fact, in Mahabharata as well Virata Parva, Bheeshma and Krishna symbolise the strategic thinker. Now, NITI Aayog is the Grand Strategic Think Tank of the government. According to the Shrimad Bhagwad Geeta, "You have the right to work only, but

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\* *Priyang Pandey*

never to its fruits. Let not the fruits of action be your motive. Nor let your attachment be to inaction.” On the path of Karma and Jnana, NITI Aayog is to be the new charioteer to the Government’s chariot. The NITI Aayog will play the role of Shri Krishna, be the guiding force of the Government which is playing Arjuna or the Karmayogi in the battle against the evil of poverty and corruption and for the socio-economic growth and well-being of the people and the Nation. [3]

As laid out in the cabinet resolution on NITI Aayog, it has been established with an idea of ‘good governance’. The resolution clearly states: “Our legacy to future generations must be sustainable progress.” It goes on to spell: “Specific to the planning process, there is a need to separate as well as energize the distinct ‘processes of governance from the ‘strategy’ of governance.” This is important as despite decades of effort, policy solutions

The NITI Aayog will play the role of Shri Krishna, be the guiding force of the Government which is playing Arjuna or the Karmayogi in the battle against the evil of poverty and corruption and for the socio-economic growth and well-being of the people and the Nation. [3]

have always played second fiddle to increasing Plan allocations and expenditures without any “social benefit-cost analysis” or “Macro-economic models” to back the decisions.

### Background to changing course

It’s not the first time that the Indian government has had to make a course correction. In 1991, the Indian economy was ailing with bankruptcy and evils of license-raj, resulting in a huge financial crisis. The then government framed the new policy and decided to open up the market to the world by implementing L.P.G (liberalisation, privatisation & globalisation). Coincidentally, it was also a result of the terms and conditions which was been put in front of the government by International Economic bodies in lieu of the heavy loans sanctioned by these organisations for bailing out the Indian economy.

Post LPG, we have reached at a stage where adherence to the global market is the basic necessity for the progress and sufficiency. To encash the global opportunities in a better way we need to frame policies in an efficient way to reach out the last downtrodden citizen of the country and make him a part of the development journey with a new vision and mission while ensuring upliftment of the people who are living a horrifying life of poverty lacking the basic amenities they are entitled for. [4]

### Why the NITI Aayog

*“From being preoccupied with survival, our aspirations have soared and today we seek elimination, rather than alleviation, of poverty, The role of the government as a “player” in the industrial and service sectors has to be reduced. Instead, government has to focus on enabling legislation, policy making and regulation,”* says the mandate of the NITI Aayog.

Globalisation is now one of the realities which can't be neglected,

where every nation and its economies are inter-connected and inter-dependent,

The international market which is a driving force of the economies worldwide is also playing a crucial role. We are no different, from crude oil to modern technology and sophisticated weapons, from gold and silver to diamond and other precious stones. India is also a big importer which makes us dependent on the global community on many fronts. Nearly 75% of the crude oil requirement is being catered by foreign countries which can't be avoided or nullified. [5][6]

Far from being a revamped Planning Commission, the NITI Aayog has been conceived as a wholly new institution that will function as the **government's friend, philosopher and guide** with State governments as equal partners. The NITI Aayog, as its name suggests, is about adapting governing institutions, policies, strategies and processes in keeping with the changed, and changing, circumstances.

Unlike 1950 when the Planning Commission was set-up based on the presumption that the government should be in the driver's seat for the economy, economic growth in India is now driven primarily by the private sector, the farmer, the pot makers, the tea vendors, the self-employed lower middle class, the small shop owner, and the multi-billionaire factory owner. The economy is driven by their decisions to invest, to borrow, and to hire.

### **Planning Commission and its formation**

There has been a crying need to replace the Planning Commission for some time now. The Planning Commission was formed by a cabinet resolution on 15<sup>th</sup> of March, 1950 and was formulated as per the needs and ways of functioning of the then government.

Formulating the Five Year Plans was the primary task that was

assigned to the Planning Commission. The FYP was inspired by communist ideology. The first FYP was implemented in the Soviet Union by Joseph Stalin in 1920 and even now, many communist led nations like China are still following the pattern of FYP. [7]

India's Planning Commission after its formation started working on the first FYP which was based on the Harold-Domar model with the total outlay of Rs.2378 crore and the target of the growth rate was set as 2.1%. After the end of the first FYP, the achieved growth rate was 3.6%, with the first few FYPs primarily focussing on agriculture, industrialisation, energy generation and infrastructure building. [8]

The second FYP based on Mahalanobis model focussed more on heavy industrialisation by the public sector, After a plan holiday of three years due to wars and

India's Planning Commission after its formation started working on the first FYP which was based on the Harold-Domar model with the total outlay of Rs.2378 crore and the target of the growth rate was set as 2.1%.

famine and also due to BOP crisis at the end, which also led to food crisis in the country and to overcome the urgent scarcity, a new revolution was started in the field of agriculture named 'Green Revolution'.

However, after the Third Five Year Plan (FYP), there has been a steady productivity decline till the ongoing twelfth Five Year Plan in terms of outcome, efficiency and efficacy.

Five Year Plan	Total Outlay (In Cr.)	Focus Areas	Target Growth	Achieved Growth
1 <sup>st</sup> FYP (1951-56)	2,069	Primary Sector	2.1	3.6
2 <sup>nd</sup> FYP (1956-61)	4,800	Public Sector	4.5	4.27
3 <sup>rd</sup> FYP (1961-66)	7,500	Agriculture Primary education	5.6	2.4
4 <sup>th</sup> FYP (1969-74)	15,901.47	Green Revolution Banking reforms	5.6	3.3
5 <sup>th</sup> FYP (1974-79)	38,853	Highway, Electricity generation	4.4	5.0
6 <sup>th</sup> FYP (1980-85)	97,500	Population-control, Liberalisation	5.2	5.4
7 <sup>th</sup> FYP (1985-90)	1,80,000	Agriculture, Economic Development, Employment	5.0	6.01
8 <sup>th</sup> FYP (1992-97)	4,34,100	Liberalisation, free market, Modernisation	5.60	6.78
9 <sup>th</sup> FYP (1997-2002)	8,59,200	Population control	7.1	6.8
10 <sup>th</sup> FYP (2002-2007)	16,12,300	Poverty, Gender gap, Literacy, Agriculture	8.1	7.7
11 <sup>th</sup> FYP (2007-2012)	36,44,718	Poverty, Social Sector, Education, Environment	9	8
12 <sup>th</sup> FYP (2012-2017)	37,16,385	Infrastructure Development, MRTS, Water Supply	8	ongoing
	Total Outlay 99,29,475.47			

Table 1- Five year plans: facts and figures [9][10][11][12]

Till now there have been twelve FYPs with the total outlay of Rs.9929475.47Cr However, despite

funds being allocated, there is not much to show on the ground.

## Planning Commission and its failures

The failures of the Planning Commission are many. The reasons are also differing. Here's a look at some of them.

### Against the Federal structure:

The Planning Commission has been gradually expanding its jurisdiction. As per the Constitution, the Finance Commission shall formulate the principles and policies for tax collection by the government of India as well as its distribution among the state and the centre. The Finance Commission is to be set up every five years to keep in mind the current economic and social scenario while calculating the ratio of centre-state share as well the distribution among the states depending on its population and area. However, the previous government decided to take out the flow of plan funds to states from such fiscal transfers. Gradually a large discretionary

element crept in, particularly when central ministries started developing their own schemes, called **Centrally Sponsored Schemes** (CSS) even in subjects that constitutionally belonged to states.

This reduced the State governments to becoming supplicants with chief ministers having to approach the Planning Commission seeking funds that were legitimately theirs to begin with. In the process, the Planning Commission moved away from its key role in developing policies and sorting out inter-sectoral issues that span beyond a single ministry. It started concentrating on approving not just the overall five-year and annual plans of states, but also their individual schemes as CSS which was a clean attack on the federal structure of the nation. [13]

NITI Aayog however, will focus on building a knowledge base of strategies and policies while giving back the lost importance of a constitutional body, **Finance Commission** in terms of mandate of distributing funds to the states.

### **Against Inclusiveness:**

To treat states of the Union as mere appendages of the Centre is a gross violation of the Federal structure. As the NITI Aayog says: *“States should have a decisive say in determining the architecture of economic growth and development as per their own needs. The one-size-fits-all approach, often inherent in central planning, has the potential of creating needless tensions and undermining the harmony needed for national effort. Dr Ambedkar had said with foresight that it is “unreasonable to centralise powers where central control and uniformity is not clearly essential or is impracticable”.*

The impracticality is apparent from the fact that Sh. Narendra Modi, serving as a Chief Minister of Gujarat, had raised his voice during the Dr. Manmohan Singh led UPA government against the structure and working style of the Planning Commission which led to discrepancies and enmity in fund allocation to the non-UPA ruled states which they were entitled to.

The fallout of not including states in planning process is apparent from the failure of the MNREGA and the PDS like schemes.

*Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA)*

In a field research in Agra, Uttar Pradesh, on terms of not getting quoted, an Engineer from the local civic agency said that there are many flaws in MNREGA. As Planning

Commission decided everything on its own without even taking the states advice into

cognizance, the scheme wage rate per day was decided by the Centre, and the labour rate per day is different in every state and region, the places with rich soil have labour rates more than the backward or remote states. Places with great agriculture production have daily wage rate up to Rs.393 per day as mentioned in the state government's schedule of rates policy on its website, which is much below the wage rate decided

by the centre. The state agencies have been asked to employ MNREGA job card holders into the non-machinery works for rural connectivity.

A minimum employment of 100 days was guaranteed at the statutory minimum wage of Rs.120 (2.63\$) per day in 2009 prices, after six years it has been increased seven times to Rs.174 per day and it differs from state to state but there is a huge rate

In a field research in Agra, Uttar Pradesh, on terms of not getting quoted, an Engineer from the local civic agency said that there are many flaws in MNREGA.

disparity which is evident from the data of Schedule of Rates of respective states, unskilled workers in

Haryana would get the highest daily wage of Rs. 214, up from Rs. 191/day but still its less than the actual market rate of labour per day. [14]

To compensate the difference in the schedule rates of state and daily wage rate of MNREGA, government offices are forced to employ one labour at the cost of two as per NREGA norms to fill the wage difference and to show

the work done they use JCB machines which is against the policy of MNREGA.

Out of the total outlay of Rs. 272945.2 crore <sup>[15]</sup> on MNREGA last year, the rural connectivity area shared the major portion of 36.7% <sup>[16]</sup> where these labours were deployed to aid the civic agencies. If this doubling of the figure to adhere with the existing local wage rate is prevalent throughout then it's an issue to be addressed promptly with consultation of the state government to fix the base wage rate according to the regional rates and prevalent conditions.

Moreover, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (*MGNREGA*) has come under the scrutiny of the Supreme Court which said money was not reaching real beneficiaries and in many cases, going to wrong hands. "There is no uniform policy. The money is not reaching actual beneficiaries," a bench comprising CJI K.G Balakrishnan and Justices Deepak Verma and B .S Chauhan said. The Bench, which

expressed concern over the implementation of MGNREGA said several projects under the scheme are failing as the funds allocated for them either remain unutilised or in many cases money lands up in wrong hands. "There has been distribution of money. But in many cases, it is going to wrong persons and real beneficiaries do not receive the cash," the Bench said. It added money under MGNREGA is not an ex-gratia payment as people in villages are assured that money is guaranteed in lieu of the work performed by them.<sup>[17]</sup>

The CAG (Comptroller and Auditor General) performance audit report of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) has also shown significant decline in per rural household employment generation in the last two years and increasing corruption.<sup>[18]</sup>

NITI Aayog is going to be a boon to solve such issues of corrupt practices which is depriving the needy in getting their entitled

benefits. If the policies are formulated with the state stakeholders as members in the policy formation group then on one hand it will help in curbing corruption and malpractices while on the other hand it will also provide the states their right of having a say in the policy. This will eventually result into a 'healthy democratic federalism'.

### *Public Distribution System (PDS)*

Due to the centralised nature of decisions, successive PDS schemes have been failures. For instance, in many areas, where the population is majorly wheat eating, supplying nearly equal quantity of rice is redundant as it goes undistributed. This is then used by the local vendors to sell in their stores elsewhere. An example is West Bengal which is majorly a rice eating state where according to the PDS data portal,<sup>[19]</sup> wheat which is supplied in the same quantity or more gets into the system of black markets and corruption.

CAG have pointed to the loopholes in public distribution system (PDS) on non-availability of grain to beneficiaries, poor oversight and possibilities of diversion into open market.<sup>[20]</sup>

Under PDS, beneficiaries get rice, wheat, sugar, edible oil, tur dal and kerosene. Under Targeted PDS system 35kg of food grain is issued per month at subsidised rate to BPL families. Functioning of PDS had several deficiencies;

Under Targeted PDS system 35kg of food grain is issued per month at subsidised rate to BPL families.

Identification of BPL families was faulty due to enlisting ineligible families and

leaving out those eligible. Non-lifting of food grains from FCI led to BPL beneficiaries being deprived of benefits, there was avoidable expenditure on purchase of rice from open market, said the CAG report on PDS.

This clearly undermines the intention of launching such centrally sponsored Schemes where the needs of the target group are not getting catered efficiently and honestly, due to

lack of co-ordination between the Centre and the States.

### ***Corruption***

There were many other controversies related to Planning Commission earlier. In 2012, the Planning Commission was accused for spending some Rs. 35 lakh in renovating two office toilets, and then it was questioned for suggesting that people who spent Rs. 27 or more a day were not poor, which in a way ridiculed the poor. The commission had remained powerful over the decades because it had emerged as a sort of parallel cabinet with the Prime Minister at its head. The Commission's power in allocating central funds to states and sanctioning capital spending of the central government was deeply resented by states and various government departments.

### **The Shift**

“The people of India have great expectations for progress and improvement in governance, through their participation. They require institutional reforms in governance and dynamic policy shifts that can seed and nurture

large-scale change (paragraph 3, NITI Aayog Resolution).”

The abolition of the Yojana Aayog and its replacement by Niti Aayog by the new government will help change the emphasis from projects and programmes to policy and institutions, from expenditure inputs to real outcomes through better governance and from political disputation over incremental allocations to new challenges and opportunities in a global environment. The discussion of India in a global context also reminds one of Gandhiji's sayings: “Let the windows of my mind be open to winds from across the world, but let me not be blown away by them.”

### **Benefits of a more inclusive structure**

As the cabinet resolution on NITI Aayog says: “An important evolutionary change from the past will be replacing a centre-to-state one-way flow of policy by a genuine and continuing partnership with the states. We

need to find our own strategy for growth. The new institution has to zero in on what will work in and for India. It will be a **Bharatiya approach** to development.” A case in point is the redressal of inequalities based on gender biases as well as economic disparities. We need to create an environment and support system that encourages women to play their rightful role in nation-building. With this thought in mind, a new scheme was launched by PM Modi on 22<sup>nd</sup>

February, 2015 in Panipat district of Haryana state: ‘Beti Bachao- Beti Padhao’<sup>[20]</sup>.

A case in point is the redressal of inequalities based on gender biases as well as economic disparities.

The scheme is a perfect example of the vision and ideology on which NITI Aayog was formed. In Haryana, the sex ratio is the worst in comparison to the national average, where it stands at just 879 females per 1,000 males. <sup>[21]</sup>

The Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao scheme will be implemented through a national campaign and focussed multi-sectoral action in

100 selected districts, covering all states and UTs. The campaign is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Human Resource Development. The campaign will be aimed at ensuring stricter implementation of existing laws to prevent sex determination tests, ensuring proper education for girls, improving sex ratio and empowering women.

The reason which makes this scheme relevant is because of its future outcome and benefits in the states like Haryana and not in a state like Kerala where the sex ratio stands at 1084 <sup>[22]</sup>.

Again, villages are the shield of our culture and civilisational values. They need to be fully integrated institutionally into the development process so that we draw on their vitality and energy. Broadly focusing upon the development in the villages which includes socio-cultural

development and motivate the village community, “ **Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana**<sup>[23]</sup> was launched by the PM on the birth anniversary of the great socialist leader Jayaprakash Narayan, on 11 October 2014.

Policy making must focus on providing necessary support to villages in terms of skill and knowledge upgrades and access to financial capital and relevant technology. An example would be the possibility of using infrastructure of Railway Stations across India and involvement of the ex-army men as trainers. According to Rajiv Pratap Rudy, the skill development minister (independent charge), there are 65,000 kms of railway network in the country with over 8,000 stations, out of which 2000 have busy transactions and rest 6,000 stations have good infrastructure, electricity as well as 4,300 km of optical fiber cable network. This is to be utilized for the Mission Skill India. The Indian Army in this case, would be a vital partner from where ex-servicemen who have had an average experience of 20

years in skilled service could be facilitated as Master trainers or Entrepreneurs.<sup>[24]</sup>

### In conclusion

Swami Vivekananda said “Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life – think it, dream of it, live on that idea. Let the brain, muscles, nerves, every part of your body, be full of that idea and just leave every other idea alone. This is the way to success.” Through its commitment to a cooperative federalism, promotion of citizen engagement, egalitarian access to opportunity, participative and adaptive governance and increasing use of technology, the NITI Aayog will seek to provide a critical directional and strategic input into the development process. This, along with being the incubator of ideas for development, will be the core mission of NITI Aayog.

India is an emerging market as it encompasses of a major chunk of the world’s working population, especially the middle class. The cabinet resolution on NITI says:

*“Our continuing challenge is to ensure that this economically vibrant group remains engaged and its potential is fully realised.”*

Recognition is also given to *Non resident Indians*. This is a crucial geo-economic and political dividend which can't be ignored. Sh. Modi has realised this and announced lifetime visas and plans for voting rights during his recent visits to USA and Australia. An ordinance amending the citizenship act, 1955 has already been effected. <sup>[25]</sup>

What makes NITI Aayog unique and relevant to today's India is not just the emphasis on developmental planning – versus merely project allocation but also the understanding that development has to be global. Geo-political economics is getting increasingly integrated - ‘*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*’ a term propounded by our sages which literally means the whole mother Earth is our home – is turning into a reality with the increasing globalisation.

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## Seminar on Indo-Israeli Perspective on Regional and Global Security

VIF, in collaboration with the Jerusalem Centre for Public Affairs, held a joint seminar 'Indo-Israeli Perspectives on Regional and Global Security' on 20 Jan 2015. The conference highlighted perspectives of the two countries across a wide spectrum of issues, including situation in the Af-Pak region and West Asia, threats of global terrorism, and security and defence cooperation between India and Israel. The Israeli delegation comprised an impressive array of security experts - Amb Dore Gold, President Jerusalem Centre for Public Affairs, Col. (Dr.) Jacques Neriah, Foreign Policy Advisor to former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Brig. Gen. (Dr.) Shimon Shapira, former Military Attaché to Israel's current Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Amb Alan Baker, Director Institute for Contemporary Affairs, Jerusalem Centre for Public Affairs, and representatives from Embassy of Israel in India. With General NC Vij, former Chief of the Indian Army and current Director VIF, presiding over the event, formal presentations were made among others by C.D.

Sahay, former Secretary RAW, Gen. Ravi Sawhney, former Deputy Army Chief and DGMI, Lt. Gen. Ata Hasnain, former Corps Commander in Kashmir, Lt. Gen. JP Singh, former Deputy Chief of Army Staff, Amb. Sanjay Singh, and Sushant Sareen, Senior Fellow VIF. Besides, Shekhar Dutt, former Governor Chhattisgarh, Amb Kanwal Sibal, former Foreign Secretary of India, Amb Rajiv Sikri, Amb PP Shukla, Amb Sanjay Singh and Amb Arundhati Ghosh were among other prominent attendees who made important contributions and interventions during the conference.

The seminar was essentially aimed at finding ways to broaden the scope for strategic cooperation between India and Israel, two countries sharing common values and common threats, each surrounded by regions of instability. In their opening remarks, all three speakers – Directors of the two think tanks and Israel's deputy chief of mission in India Yahel Vilan, who accompanied the delegation,

expressed their satisfaction at the upward trajectory in bilateral relations since the formalization of diplomatic ties between India and Israel in 1992. Lauding Israel's contributions towards India's defence modernization, Director VIF said Indo-Israeli partnership has stood the test of time, while Yahel Vilan said Indo-Israeli relationship runs deeper than seller-buyer relationship as it is based on shared values. Both agreed that bilateral relationship needs to be more broad-based, scaling into new areas of cooperation - research and development, energy, agriculture, manufacturing, pharmaceutical, cyber defence, and intelligence sharing, among others. Amb Dore Gold, however, said both countries can tremendously benefit by sharing knowledge and perspectives across a much wider domain, including trade,

technology and international order. The political aspect of the relationship was another significant takeaway from the presentations of both the speakers.

The seminar was held over four sessions and each session provided useful insights to the participants. It was evident from the discussions that global and regional imperatives, especially the rise of terrorist networks such as Al Qaeda and ISIS along with changing international order, require closer cooperation between India and Israel. At the end of seminar, the two institutions signed and exchanged a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), expressing intent to carry out joint studies in further bilateral cooperation.

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## Vimarsha on Naxalite Movement in Chhattisgarh

**H**on'ble Shekhar Dutt, former Governor of Chhattisgarh, gave a talk on 'Naxalite Movement in Chhattisgarh & the Challenges of Governance' under the Vimarsha lecture series, held on 21 January 2015 at the VIF. Ahead of his talk, Shri Dutt also released a book 'The India Pakistan War of 1971 - A History', edited by Shri S N Prasad & Shri U P Thapliyal. A project of the Ministry of Defence (GoI), the book provides a detailed account of the 1971 war and is based on official records, personal interviews and reminiscences of the veterans etc. Initiating a discussion on the subject, General NC Vij, former Chief of the Indian Army and VIF's present Director, described the 1971 War as a total war, fought brilliantly across two front by all three wings of India's military, which not only led to the abject surrender of 93,000 Pakistani troops before the Indian Army, but also halved Pakistan, a feat unmatched in world history. The Director also paid accolades to Mrs Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister, for her great strategic thinking in dividing

Pakistan and called her a 'Woman of Steel'.

Drawing on his hands-on experience in dealing with Naxalism, first as Deputy NSA, and subsequently, as Governor of Chhattisgarh, one of India's worst naxal-infested states, Sh Shekhar Dutt gave a detailed account of the problem which has plagued India for over four decades. The Maoists are fighting a protracted people's war with the ultimate objective of seizing political power. The movement is felt in 145 districts out of 600 including all major cities in the country. Chhattisgarh, by far, remains the nerve centre of the movement with large swaths of the state operating almost in security vacuum. The former Governor however, said development of the state is badly affected due to Naxalism, while people in interior areas are forced to live in constant fear of collateral damages. The erudite speaker also apprised the audience as to what has been done so far and what more needs to be done to tackle the problem of left wing extremism in the state. He further stressed there is need to block

funding of the insurgents and upgrade security apparatus of the state.

In his introductory remarks earlier, Director VIF had said that while poverty provides a fertile ground to the Maoists, sheer inefficiency of parts of the

administration and rampant corruption are among factors responsible for the growth of Naxalism in India. The talk was followed by a Q&A session.

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## Quad plus Dialogue

A VIF team led by its Director, General N. C. Vij, accompanied by Lt General Ravi Sawhney and Ambassador Sanjay Singh participated in the Quad-Plus dialogue held at Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia from February 1 to 3, 2015. Other participants were from the Heritage Foundation, USA, Tokyo Foundation (Japan), the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI), Australia, The Habibie Centre, Indonesia and the Albert Rosario Institute, Philippines. The discussion focused on "Regional Challenges to peace and Interstate Security", "Defence Cooperation: Operations and Industry" and "Counter Terrorism / Extremism Cooperation".

There was consensus that the Quad-Plus was an effective platform to discuss issues pertaining to the Indian Ocean and Asia-Pacific regions- the Indo-Pacific. In view of the strategic developments taking place in the region in general and the Quad-Plus countries in particular, with new leadership at the helm in India, Japan, Australia and Indonesia, the time

had come for this grouping. The "Act East" initiative of the new Indian Government and its reaching out to the Quad Plus countries was underlined.

The rise of China was testing the existing balance in the creation of which the US had a large role. The values and norms promoted by the US such as free markets, liberal democracy, and rules of law were being challenged. China was utilising its growing hard and soft power to chip away at the existing structure and seek change in the rules governing both the economic and political architecture of the region. There was nevertheless also the opportunity to leverage efforts of Quad-Plus like-minded countries to integrate China into the current open, inclusive, and rule based structure respecting the freedom of global Commons and stress on dialogue and peaceful resolution of differences. It would be undesirable to follow a traditional balance of power approach through creation of alliances, which may not come about in any case. It was also recognised that the region faces growing non-traditional threats from terrorism, piracy, smuggling

of narcotics, arms and people trafficking, pandemics and natural disasters.

It was recognised that the cooperation in the Defence sector, joint manufacturing, Research and development and exercising together provided a way to signal to an increasingly assertive China that the Quad-Plus countries were ready to stand together to defend their redlines in the maritime domain. Greater neutral awareness and cooperation would also help in meeting non-traditional threats. A presentation was made on India's existing defense cooperation with the Quad-Plus countries and the opportunities that "Make in India" and the opening up of the Defence Industry Sector in India provided for enhancing cooperation.

The participants agreed that terrorism and activities of non-state actors posed a serious challenge to the region's countries. A briefing was made on the activities of Pakistan in providing support to terrorism directed against India. While terrorism could be a product of various factors including ethno-nationalism, the variety which took succour from religious extremism posed the greatest

threat. The rise of IS posed grave danger of new form of terrorism linked with Islam, being communicated to S. E. Asia. There was growing danger from the takeover of mosques by extremists and their influence on young minds. 'A one size fits all' approach was not desirable. It was also imperative that there be greater counter terrorism and intelligence cooperation amongst Quad Plus countries. The utility of highlighting the Indonesian model of moderate Islam was underlined.

There was agreement that Quad Plus countries should promote an open, inclusive, rule based regional architecture, which safeguards, peace and stability and promotes prosperity. It was essential to cooperate towards strengthening of democratic and like minded countries, which would help engendering check and balances and help in burden sharing. Networks' should be created to protect sea-lanes of communications and fight against non-traditional threats especially of terrorism and piracy and also ensuring cyber security and cooperation against natural disasters. In this context, the structures being built under the aegis of the ASEAN and EAS hold considerable promise.

In order to achieve this it would be useful to hold regular interactions at track II level which could be graduated to track 1.5 and track I levels. These could commence informally at the sides of multilateral events. These interactions should cover political, economic and security issues. There should be greater interactions between the security forces of Quad Plus countries especially their Navies. In addition, Defence Industry Cooperation both for manufacturing and in R & D and counter terrorism cooperation

should be promoted. Other areas identified were those of economic and investment cooperation, cyber security, energy security, democracy, counters radicalism. It was agreed, that there should be greater interaction between think tanks of Quad Plus countries. In this manner, the Quad Plus countries can provide the foundation for Indo-Pacific Security. It was also decided that next dialogue would be held in India and coordinated by VIF.

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## Seminar on Indo-US Relations: The Way Forward

VIF and the Heritage Foundation, a Washington-based think tank, jointly organised a seminar 'India-US Relations: the Way Forward' on 05 February 2015. The seminar was a take off from the Quad-plus dialogue held recently in Bali, Indonesia, where security experts from the two institutions participated along with representatives from Japan, Australia, Indonesia and Philippines.

The seminar, third in a series of ongoing interactions between the two institutions, sought to explore potentials for evolving a broader framework of cooperation between India and the United States across the entire bilateral and regional spectrum. The three main themes of the conference were: challenges and opportunities in defence cooperation, developments in Afghanistan and counter terrorism cooperation, and East Asian security architecture and regional power play.

The Heritage Foundation was represented by three eminent experts: James Carafano, Vice

President, Heritage Foundation, Walter Lohman, Director Asia Studies, and Lisa Curtis, Senior Fellow. Participants from the VIF, led by General NC Vij, former Chief of the Indian Army and present Director, included, among others, Lt Gen RK Sawhney, Amb Kanwal Sibal, Amb Satish Chandra, Amb Rajiv Sikri, CD Sahay, former Chief RAW and Dr. VK Saraswat, former Director DRDO.

H.E. Richard Verma, the newly appointed US Ambassador to India, delivered the Keynote address. He was welcomed to the Foundation by General Vij who also congratulated him on his appointment and wished him a successful and defining tenure in India.

Describing the US President Barack Obama's recently concluded visit to India as 'transformative', H.E. Richard Verma said the leaders of the two countries, through a series of official as well as personal engagements in recent months, have not only opened up new possibilities in bilateral

cooperation but also set forth a sweeping vision for partnership that can lead the world to greater peace, prosperity and security. He also spoke of the increasing convergence of interests between the two democracies across a range of issues including security, trade, nuclear energy, climate change, among others. While he said India's 'Act East' policy and US' rebalancing strategy are complimentary in nature, he also pointed to India's rising profile across Asia. The Ambassador complimented India for resolving its maritime dispute with Bangladesh peacefully through international arbitration. H.E. further underscored that US and India together can contribute significantly towards peace and security in the region.

Echoing similar views, General Vij said while the US President's visit to India for the Republic Day celebrations and his series of interactions with the Indian Prime Minister over the past few months have unlocked the potentials for a greater bilateral cooperation, the more serious challenge lies in taking the momentum forward. He mentioned further that the bilateral defence cooperation is set to move beyond seller-buyer relationship to one of joint

production and sharing of technologies. James Carafano, Vice President Heritage Foundation, said the timing for defence cooperation is perfectly right both from business and strategic perspectives.

Various issues such as India's defence industrial complex, especially the defence manufacturing under 'Make in India', defence procurement procedure, defence budgeting and finance, potential for arms export to third countries, maintenance and availability of spare parts through the entire life cycle of imported defence hardware, bilateral cooperation against terrorism, Afghanistan's potential implosion post draw down and Pakistan's persistence with its elusive search for strategic depth in Afghanistan, an ASEAN centric security architecture in East Asia and Trans-pacific partnership were discussed during the course of seminar.

The seminar, interspersed with extensive brainstorming and questions and answers, was structured into three sessions, with equal representation given to both sides in each session. Lt. Gen. JP Singh, Former Deputy Chief of Army Staff, Ajai Sahni, Executive

Director Institute for Conflict Management, New Delhi, and Sanjay Singh, Former Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs, and Dr. VK Saraswat were amongst prominent speakers on the VIF panel. General Vij, Lt Gen RK Sawhney, Distinguished Fellow VIF, and Amb Kanwal Sibal, Dean International

Relations, VIF chaired the respective sessions. Significant contributions were also made by Vice Adm Anup Singh, Vice Adm Raman Puri, Lt Gen Ata Hasnain, and Amb Arundhati Ghose, among others.

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## Conference on the Plight of Kashmiri Pandits

VIF, together with All India Kashmiri Samaj (AIKS), organised a day-long conference 'Revisiting the displaced Kashmiri Pandits issue' on 13 February 2015. 'J&K: the fractured electorate mandate and its implications,' and 'Creation of a legitimate political space for displaced Kashmiri Pandits in Kashmir' were the two prominent themes of the seminar. The conference was attended and addressed by a large panel of eminent Kashmir observers and security experts, many among them owing their ancestry to Kashmir.

With Lt Gen Ata Hasnain, former Corps Commander in Kashmir, chairing the first session, presentations were made by Prof Amitabh Mattoo, Prof Susheela Bhan, and Vijay Aima. The second session was chaired by CD Sahay, former secretary R&AW, and it had four speakers on the panel: AVM (ret'd) Kapil Kak, Brig (Ret'd) Upender Singh, Vivek Katju, a former diplomat, and KM Singh, a former member National Disaster Management Authority, India. General (Ret'd) NC Vij, Director

VIF, who presided over the event, laid down the framework of discussions in his opening remarks. Sharing the dais with General Vij in the preliminary session, Dr Romesh Raina, General Secretary AIKS, highlighted the prominent challenges facing the displaced Kashmiri fraternity across India.

While the seminar remained predominately focused on the post-election scenario in Jammu & Kashmir and the Kashmiri Pandits issues, other issues germane to the prolonged conflict in Kashmir such as Pakistan's continued provocation and interference in India's internal affairs, Article 370 of the Indian Constitution granting special status to the state of J&K, and the continued relevance of Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) also came up for pointed discussions during the conference.

Some of the important conclusions drawn from the conference were: Kashmir is slowly but surely returning to normalcy; the higher voter turn out in the recent election in J&K is indicative of

people's growing faith in the democratic processes; the fractured electorate mandate however is indicative of growing regional and communal polarisation in the state, the fractured electorate mandate should not be viewed as a setback as it provides an opportunity to political parties, adhering to different ideologies, to come together for the common good of the people of Jammu and Kashmir; the agreed common minimum programme will ensure the government, when it is formed, will run its full course; the Kashmiri Pandits provide the much needed ethnic balance to the beleaguered state; the Pandits in Kashmir do have a legitimate

political space in the state; they however need to reclaim it with government backing; violence is not innate to the identity of Kashmir, and; Kashmiriyat i.e. the composite culture of Kashmir will eventually triumph over the political violence in Kashmir.

The passage of Temple and Shrine Bill, the creation of Sharadapeeth University, and the creation of inter-dependence among different ethnic and religious groups in the state, were a few amongst specific recommendations made during the seminar.

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## Seminar on India-Europe Relations

VIF, in collaboration with the Institute for Transnational Studies (ITS), Germany, held a seminar titled 'Contemporary India-Europe Relations: Prospects and Issues' on 16 February 2015. Participants to the conference, a mix of diplomatic, security and academia experts, discussed issues of mutual strategic interests over four intense sessions, and in the process, grappled with a wide gamut of issues, including, among others, economic, sociological and geo-strategic dimensions of the bilateral relationship, aspects of stability in South Asia, the internal dynamics and their implications, and security challenges and possible implications for South Asian-European relations. Within the framework of the seminar, issues such as Af-Pak conundrum, politico-security situation in Myanmar, Beijing's 'Maritime Silk Road', India-China maritime complexity, India's security challenges, the energy security in South Asia, and the nuclear doctrine and deterrence in South Asia were also comprehensively discussed.

While the aim of the seminar was to develop a greater understanding of the common challenges faced by Europe and India, an effort was also made during the seminar to explore areas of potential cooperation between the two entities, especially in areas of energy, trade, security and counter-terrorism. Underlining the need for this seminar, General NC Vij, Director VIF, said while India has had excellent relations with individual European countries, India's bilateral relationship with Europe as an entity is yet to take off in meaningful ways. He reiterated that the 'Make in India' resolve of the new government in India offers an opportunity to both India and Europe to reinvigorate their bilateral relationship, while Dr Klaus Lange, leader of the European delegation, said Europe and India need to join hands to ward off international marginalization. Dr. Klaus Lange was accompanied by two other experts - Come Carpentier De Gourdon, Convener Editorial Advisory Board, World Affairs and Mr. Cesare Onestini, Minister and Deputy Head of Delegation of the European Union to India.

With General NC Vij presiding over the conference, others who represented the VIF panel included, Lt. Gen RK Sahwney (VIF), Lt. Gen. Gautam Banerjee, (VIF), Brig Vinod Anand (VIF), Dr. Jagannath Panda (IDSA), Dr. Monika Chansoria (CLAWS), Lt. Gen. Ata Hasnain, former Corps

Commander in Kashmir, Shakti Sinha, former officer at GoI and WB, UNMA in Afghanistan, Amb R Rajagopalan, and Madhu Nainan, journalist.

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