



VICTORY INDIA

VOL 1 | ISSUE 2 | August 2020

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The Indian National Leadership Crisis

Colonel Vinay B Dalvi (Retd)

Leading the Millennials

Colonel Harsh Vardhan Singh

FEATURING ARTICLES BY

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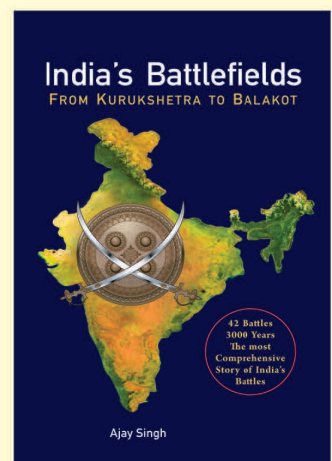
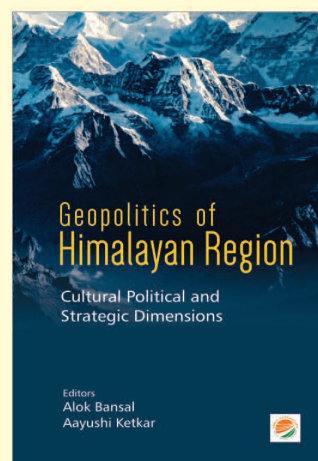
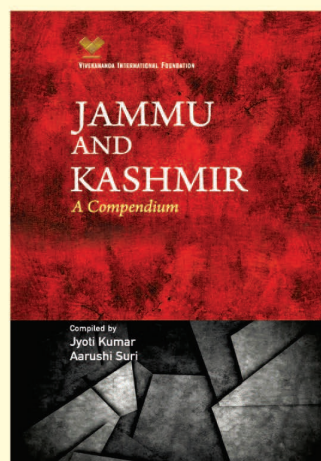
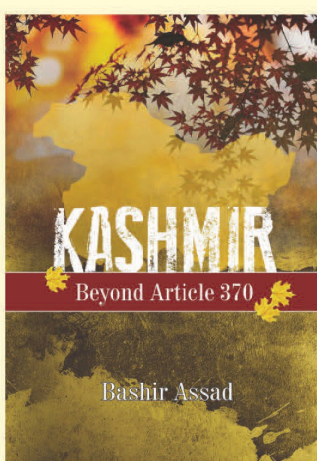
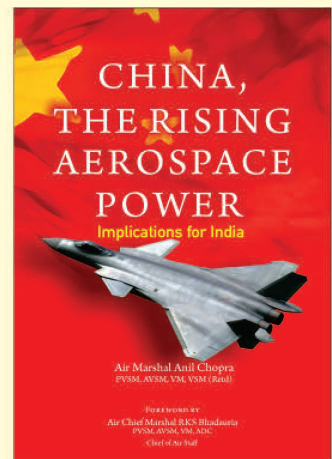
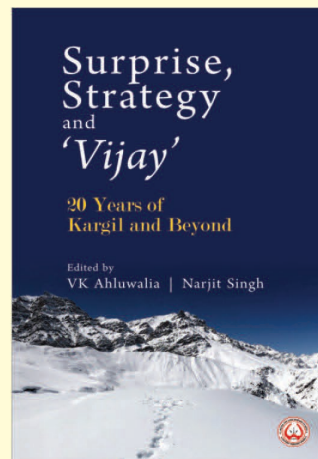
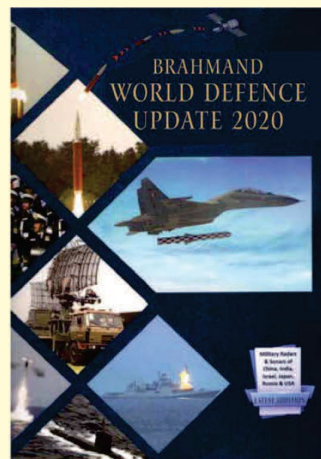
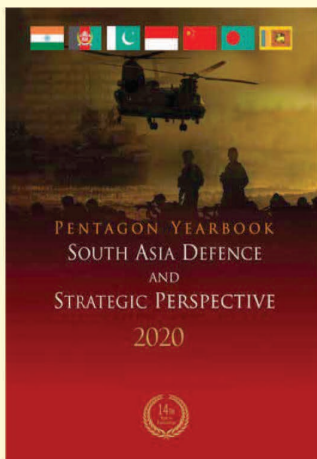
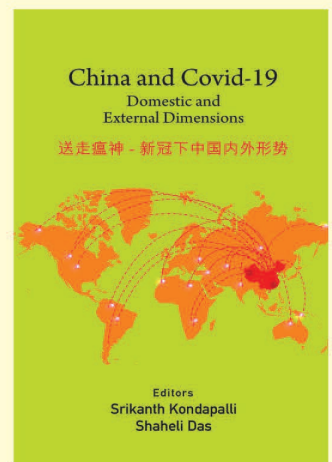
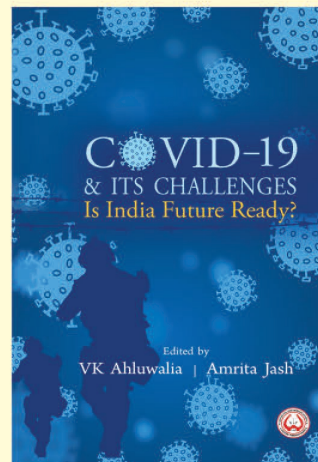
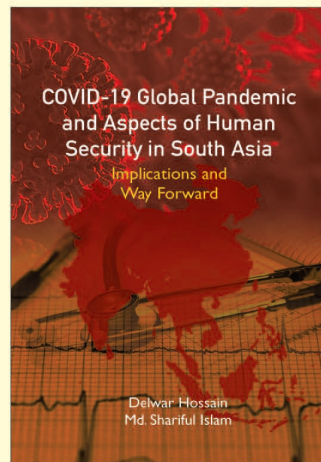
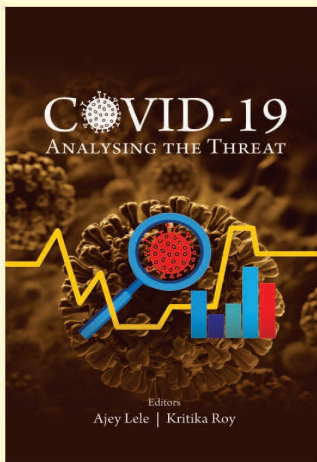
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MISSING IN ACTION

THE PRISONERS WHO NEVER CAME BACK





EDITOR'S NOTE

Colonel Vinay B Dalvi Vol.1 • Issue 2 • August 2020

Dear Readers,

After 74 years of independence, India is once again caught at the crossroads, where it needs to take some hard and harsh decisions to be in contention of becoming a strong and powerful nation in the Asian subcontinent and the world. The present multifarious challenges confronting our country are due to the cumulative effect of decades of low priority accorded by successive governments towards the growth, modernisation and strengthening of our armed forces to effectively deal with and tackle these threats primarily emanating from the soil of our twin adversaries—China and Pakistan—in the realm of 21st century warfare.

Our close and friendly neighbours of the past like Myanmar, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka cannot be taken for granted due to adverse and negative influence on them by our adversaries.

Even after seven decades of independence and 58 years post the 'Himalayan Blunder', we are without a Strategic Defence Review and National Security Strategy. Without a clear and unambiguous national aim or policy, how can our Defence Strategy and Military Doctrine be formulated? We have depended far too much on our 'diplomacy' and policies of non-alignment, trust, co-operation, and friendly relations with all neighbours including our adversaries.

This has invariably resulted in numerous wars; conflicts being thrust on us besides being confronted with decades of proxy war and CI/CT operations. Our last bastion, the armed forces have steadfastly and unfailingly been standing up to all these challenges and paying heavily for these lapses with their lives and limbs.

When and how is this 74-year-old narrative going to change? What should we as a nation do to change this dismal situation? We are presently confronted with the COVID-19 pandemic that has engulfed the world and become difficult to contain. Taking advantage of our vulnerable internal position and consequent defensive posture on the borders, the Chinese troops, after crossing the mutually accepted LAC, has occupied some of the tactically advantageous positions in the Ladakh sector and compelled us to heavily mobilize and deploy our forces to counter the grave threat to our territorial integrity and sovereignty.

This is not the first time that we have been caught unaware and off-guard by our adversary. It has often happened to us in the past but unfortunately, we failed to learn from our mistakes or lapses and continue to take our known enemies for granted. After 74 years of independence, time has come to move from our defensive posture of 'Himalayan Blunder' to the offensive posture of 'Victory India'.

It is a decision that India must now take without any further delay. The country must promote bold, professional, and effective leadership at all levels and in all fields and domains; political, military, and civil. Our troops and citizens are extremely resilient, persevering and will never be found wanting.

This Independence Special Issue of Victory India through its 22 well-researched and -articulated articles by renowned defence analysts, reputed military thinkers and experienced professionals have explained and elaborated the technicalities and complexities of various issues and subjects concerning our position from the national and defence perspective. Collectively these pieces orchestrate in the most simplistic manner, the way to deal with some of our tricky and precarious situations that we are often confronted with.

If those responsible leaders—both military and political—dealing with the fate and destiny of India believe in their analysis and recommendations and act on them, the armed forces and nation would gain much and be on the offensive posture of 'Victory India'.

Col. Vinay B Dalvi, ex-Maratha LI, ex-APTC,

Editor-in-Chief Victory India.

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The Indian National Leadership Crisis

A nation gets the Armed Forces it deserves. If the people of India want a strong, highly capable, professional, and effective Armed Force, then their officers and men need to be of unimpeachable character and noble virtues. The integrated ship of the Armed Forces must steer clear from any bureaucratic hurdles or political interference.

by Colonel Vinay B Dalvi (Retd)

India, today, is in the midst of a critical leadership crisis—Political, Bureaucratic, and Military. This national crisis is similar to that of a ship caught in stormy seas. And the grim picture from there is casting and will continue to cast a very negative implication on the life of the nation including the armed forces and its military leadership.

The critical task at hand in the armed forces is not to enhance our defence potential through state-of-the-art machines and masterly systems; that should be an unsaid routine activity. But rather to realize and act upon the fact that such a journey is not possible without safely steering our national ship—Victory India—out of the troubled waters of the quality leadership crisis. And it will require consistent, persistent, and collective efforts at the national level to pull it out. The nation must tackle the entire chain of military and national leadership together—right from the lowest level to the

highest, to navigate the ship safely through turbulent times, and secure victory over all our foes.

The Armed Forces is the only 'Role Model' of a secular, integrated, efficient, and effective national organisation that the nation falls back upon in times of crisis. This great national institution must be protected, strengthened, and operationally integrated for optimum efficiency. It must be fighting fit to take on all adversaries, both, in peace and at war.

Similarly, the men in uniform are always expected to be 'Role Models' to the outside world. This calls for excellence in its elite leadership. But excellence needs to be nurtured.

India, now more than ever before, needs to be reminded that the Armed Forces are its strongest bastion and the last line of defence. As history has repeatedly



74 years of independence is a sufficiently long period to holistically review our entire leadership chain of command, its efficacy at all levels particularly its military dimensions. The nation needs to critically and extensively debate the related issues based on inputs from active minds that have deeply dwelt on them



taught us, the man behind the gun and his leader are the most important battle-winning factors.

And who is responsible for nurturing this elite class of leadership which the nation can proudly look up to? Should we hold the political rulers responsible or the bureaucrats or military commanders or the citizens of India themselves? The answer is that all its citizens must be concerned in this noble endeavour and should take their share of responsibility and do all they possibly can.

Are we, as a nation, collectively geared up to face and confront the challenges imposed on us, both, externally and internally? Why do we always react to our irresponsible, aggressive, and muscle flexing neighbours with soft diplomacy, and limited and restrained military reactions? Apparently, we are either militarily unprepared or lack political will or do not have the bureaucratic support to be more powerful and proactive.

A nation gets the Armed Forces it deserves. If the people of India want a strong, highly capable, professional, and effective Armed Force, then their officers and men need to be of unimpeachable character and noble virtues.

The integrated ship of the Armed Forces must steer clear from any bureaucratic hurdles or political interference. A free hand should be given to its military leadership with measurable accountability for professionalism, fairness, transparency, and objectivity in its functioning. The scare that an Indian armed force will violate the constitution and take over the political process is unnecessary from two perspectives: firstly, there are other instances of democracies around the world that have excellent solutions for the military being able to exert its professionalism and simultaneously, be answerable to the civilian leadership and secondly, it is the basic character of the Indian soldier to fight for righteousness and 'Dharma' (Rule of law). He will not permit some despot to take things in his own hands and ruin a hard-won freedom.

Moreover, there are too many counter forces and the nation is too large to fall for something of that nature. The diversity is too large for it to succumb to chauvinism. And most of all, the legacy of our national leaders

and our nationalism is hinged on the belief in our successful system and the armed forces will stand up to it.

History is proof of the fact that a senapati reported directly to the king and not to bureaucrats in between. That is the position of greatest strength for the nation. And it is rare that a senapati has been accepted by his men and by citizens as the sovereign, if he has violated dharma, however bad a political leadership may be, if it is democratically elected, the armed forces will stay disciplined. The need is for national leaders with that kind of vision and faith that they are able to allow for the armed forces to be at their professional best—for the sake of the nation.

The military leadership cannot realize its full potential without the full support of all the government executives. Not to forget the people of the country who do it through the ones who wield power. It is they who can effectively rescue our 'Victory India' by strengthening the national leadership (at all levels), including the military leadership—the real strength of the nation.

Given that the armed forces must also look inward and ensure that its professionalism and values are well reflected in its leaders, the nation too should facilitate and enable the induction of the most suitable manpower from the vast available human resource. It should support and provide the most advanced and scientific professional training and grant promotions in ranks and appointments to the most deserving and finest officers purely on merit without any apparent bias, manipulation or foul play. And none of this can be achieved without first reforming the intake and training of the elite cadre of military leadership.

74 years of independence is a sufficiently long period to holistically review our entire leadership chain of command, its efficacy at all levels particularly its military dimensions. The nation needs to critically and extensively debate the related issues based on inputs from active minds that have deeply dwelt on them. As we have noted earlier, the aim is to help steer our country out of the troubled waters of the quality leadership crisis, enable it to power through any turbulence or storms, and achieve resounding victories over all its formidable foes.

Let this piece be a pointer to what leaders in other domains of the nation can do. Let all of us take stock in our own fields. Let us see how we can ensure that true leaders emerge from our respective professions. Let the debate on leadership be pushed up to the highest levels in all fields. Let us stop lamenting about deficiency of leadership in our nation. Let each of us ensure that true leaders are pitchforked into the public sphere in our own areas of work by initiating processes that will achieve that. Until this happens, we as a nation cannot and will not progress. Let's work together towards Victory India! 🇮🇳



Leading The Millennials

“Leading Millennials will require a shift from a style of top-down command to collaborative inspiration. Commanding Officers today are leading a millennial force, should be able to visualize what engages them and use that to lead them.”

by Colonel Harsh Vardhan Singh

Modern times hold much challenge to leadership in the military context. To adapt to environmental dynamics, commanders need to foster competing demands. They must seek to encourage autonomy and control, support individuality and teamwork, ensure flexibility and efficiency, balance creativity and discipline, energize novelty and utility, and enable soldiers to reach their limit and at the same time show social responsibility and attend to their well-being.

The paradox of above-mentioned tasks of a Commanding Officer today has another unique demographic challenge and that is leading the ‘millennials’.

Leading Millennials will require a shift from a style of top-down command to collaborative inspiration. Commanding Officers today are leading a millennial force, should be able to visualize what engages them and use that to lead them. While the ends may be the same the ways and means may have to be adapted to suit the present.

While it’s impossible to paint an entire generation with one broad brush stroke and find a one size fits all method,

one thing is clear: leading Millennials is much more effective than commanding them. “Focus more on people and you’ll demonstrate leadership, more on results and you’ll perform management”, writes O’Leary.

Nothing new for the armed forces most of us would say but then a miniscule pause for introspection would germinate a contrarian thought, are we focusing enough on leadership or are we more concerned with day to day management or more colloquially put ‘fire fighting’ from one crisis to another, after all who said command of a battalion was going to be a cake walk.

Context of Military Leadership

The aim of this little treatise is to contextualize command in the present times by personal experience and it would be prudent to put a disclaimer at this stage that while this is based on personal experience it may not work for all, all the time and thus just an attempt to contextualize the travails of command as a reference point for anyone willing to use it. Following paragraphs are covering a few key issues of leadership today with a phrase or a theory of mine.



We have grown up with stories that CO's were not to be seen but they were there doing something vitally important and therefore not available, well the Rapunzel better get out of the stone tower and get hands dirty, troops and officers alike want to grow, they frantically seek feedback and guidance from their leaders.



HEP Family

HEP is an acronym coined; Happy Efficient and Professional. The unit is characterized by its “totality,” controlling almost every aspect of the life of its individuals and by logical extension their family members. Subsequently, the dependency on the leader is greater than that at any level. This results in a system of expectations of leadership that is the broadest and most comprehensive one possible and leads to a core expectation that the leaders address their subordinates from both a task and personal perspective.

Happiness as an idea is difficult to quantify and qualify but the basic feel of Joie de vivre is an absolute must; life in the unit must not be a hurdle. With happiness arrives efficiency where an individual is willing to extend his mandate to be able to efficiently finish his task and be assured that he has nothing to dread and conservation of effort and resource is not epiphany but routine.

A logical flow of happiness and efficiency would be professionalism when as CO there would be availability of time and resource and an upbeat atmosphere to improve and learn. The definition of Gross National Happiness by Bhutan would be an apt indicator to what is the ever elusive happiness.

Rapunzel in Stone Tower

We have grown up with stories that Commanding Officers were not to be seen but they were there doing something vitally important and therefore not available, well the Rapunzel better get out of the stone tower and get hands dirty, Troops and officers alike want to grow, they frantically seek feedback and guidance from their leaders.

Take time to check in with your troops; while the lure of tasks in Brigade HQ and higher HQs may be there, staying connected and being present have two different meanings, amongst other leadership style the latest is ‘command by mobile’ while it may be convenient it surely is not productive in the long run. Troops today need to see their leader’s energy going towards a goal before they’ll invest their own. A leader’s mood can influence the entire team.

Everyone loves to feel needed and part of something greater than them. Making time for mundane events like your presence during ‘Shramdan’, presence in Cook house

at night not to check but to be there can engage your unit and align their efforts towards a shared vision. Acting in isolation is lonely and ineffective. By including others within your space and vice versa, you have a ready source of feedback, new ideas, challenges to your way of thinking, and alerts to new opportunities.

Collective Responsibility

You’re not the only person who has great ideas and works hard. Neither are you the only custodian of unit ‘izzat’, as leaders know this and know the importance of conveying the contributions of each member of the team as a stakeholder. It’s up to the CO to create a sense of community and of being part of something important, something that matters.

If you show no passion, why should your troops? If you believe that your job ends with making decisions and providing resources, you are in for a hard time. It’s possible to learn how to be more inspirational and enthusiastic, even if it drains your energy. We must be ready to hold people



A trio of three high achievers from the NDA looking forward to becoming officers

accountable, set high expectations for quality, efficiency and the bottom line.

New COs struggle with holding others accountable because they believe that it is only them and them alone who have a stake in progression, well the responsibility of the unit’s gravitas is every one’s while the buck may stop at the CO it is not for others to walk away scot free.

Carry Your Own Mill Stone

Another paradox which has the propensity to flummox a CO is to be better than the rest in every job he expects his soldiers, subordinates to do but still not do it for them. A CO may have been an absolutely fantastic company commander but he doesn’t have to be one or act as one while he is the CO, let the company commander carry his own mill stone even if you are very good at it.

He will never ever learn, and you are not helping the cause, mentoring and grooming is what the leader is expected to do. As CO you need to carry the mill stone that belongs to you, evolve, grow and improve as a CO rather than exulting in being an immaculate company commander because that is the comfort zone. A malice which ails the forces today of all leaders dropping into their comfort zone and doing someone else's job.

Command by SOP

Another challenge for CO exists between actions in light of clear and defined organizational arrangements i.e. SOPs and the needed flexibility of action. This tension is built into the assignment and creates two paradoxical needs. On the one hand, one needs a regimen, the creation of standards and strict procedures. On the other hand, initiative, breaking boundaries, creativity and even guile are required.



Young Officers posing with their 'Royal Enfield' bikes

An action that complies with organizational arrangements can be interpreted as conformity, rigidity, or alternatively as conservative and disciplined. Flexibility can be interpreted as adaptability, creativity, innovation, action adapted to the situation or, in contrast, lack of organizational discipline and lack of professionalism, a Hobson's choice.

The distinction between routine situations and crisis or emergencies is not dichotomous and the two situations closely interact. The premise, then, is that there is constant overlap between the patterns of action that are suitable for routine periods and those that are not.

Hence, the formation of a paradox between the two ends of the spectrum of flexibility and order, it would be prudent to be able to make the decision of when to throw the rule book out and there would be many occasions to do that. The words "can't" and "should" can hold a CO back if they aren't examined critically. Can you change the rules? Are you interpreting them too narrowly? Leaders who see themselves as powerful are willing to shift things as they see fit.

Ride the Information Wave

As digital natives, this demographic portion of troops is used to finding just-in-time information from Google and YouTube rather than sitting around a fire and waiting for divine intervention of the CO. Information for them is both situational awareness and also knowledge, don't be fooled, troops today are more inquisitive and want to

learn from peers just as much as they want to learn from the so called 'ustads'. Troops today are more likely than previous generations to want to do purposeful work, but they do want to know that the specific work they're doing makes a difference.

As Eisenhower had said, "Leadership is the art of getting someone else to do something you want to be done because he wants to do it". Assigning tasks "because you or some senior said so" may not work; get them on board by being transparent about why each little task matters.

When leading troops today it may be good to remember that even though you lead the team, you're also one of the key players. Is your communication only one-directional? Are you talking to troops or talking with them. It is key for the CO to listen to those around them, even those in much lower in the food chain.

Leaders must take the time to elicit communication from others. Good CO knows they have as much to learn from their troops as they have to teach. As you develop your team, keep the lines of communication open. You may be surprised at what you learn as well. Plus valuable information would reach you that wouldn't surface otherwise. You would then not be the last to know that trouble is brewing somewhere.

Banyan Tree Complex

As CO the spotlight is always on you, it slowly grows on you and feeds you with this inexplicable sense of being the ONE, while it may be right there is always space to give five minutes of fame to deserving or even un-deserving team members.

CO can't afford to be the Banyan Tree which hogs all the sunlight and everything under him withers for want of sunshine. COs must be as comfortable out of the spotlight as much as they are in it. One must give others credit or acknowledge one's own mistakes.

They must empower others by showing that they and their opinions and contributions are valued. Acting as a leader means helping the troops develop skills in a way that's consistent with their aspirations and in a way that builds your organization's talent pipeline.

Impatience a Virtue

While all rule books will lead you down the path of patience and stoic behaviour. Impatience can be a tool to create urgency, to inspire others to achieve more quickly or

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The paradox of above-mentioned tasks of a Commanding Officer today has another unique demographic challenge and that is leading the ‘millennials’

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more effectively than they thought they could. It gets us past doing just what’s comfortable. Impatience in a leader gets projects initiated and maintains their momentum. CO must

use their impatience to support their vision of a better future. Their own sense of urgency and excitement adjust the expectations of those around them and enlist others for support and investment. Troops today are competitive, they want their leaders to do more and find new opportunities.

They want to be successful and be recognized as a force to reckon with in the formations. Leaders who put unnecessary restrictions can keep themselves from finding new opportunities or from having the courage to act on them. Humans intrinsically respond well to confidence and conviction.

You can’t make decisions people will believe in without showing confidence. Confidence shows a commitment to—and confidence in—one’s self and one’s team. Want someone to follow you into the unknown? Then show confidence in being able to blaze (or stay on) the trail. Confidence allows you to make the tough decisions and it’s also reassuring for your team.

Missing the Woods for the Trees

What would a minimalist approach to leadership look like? How could we refashion leadership in a way that is intentional and focused on what’s important and is about making a measurable difference? Here in emerges another paradox of leadership, the devil is in the detail but are we missing the woods for the trees. A tough ask to declutter and focus on bare essentials.

Detail is different for everyone and every appointment, what may be detail for a section commander is not required to be detail for a company commander and surely not for the CO. The intrinsic idea of teamwork is the trust that each link in the chain would do its assigned task and to the best of their ability.

Most COs are struggling to find a way to best leadership tools and techniques to use, after all everyone is looking for a success story, everything is a priority; the end result is you-can’t-see-the-forest-for-the-trees. Events and situations sometimes cannot be seen as simple situations as they really are while we are in the midst of them.

In short, we lose our perspective when we are too heavily invested. It may be prudent to once in a while do a reality check of why we are heading in a certain direction, how we are heading to it and are we on the right route.

Conclusion

The exposition above reveals that despite the clear and necessary advantages of a paradoxical and hybrid leadership in the army, the ability to experience, cope and lead in a manner that will always address the paradoxes is complex and a burden for each CO who has to carry his own grind stone.

However, in order to allow COs to lead in a dignified manner, which would allow room for paradoxical thinking to exist, leadership training is critical as is commander oversight in the field and spheres of action. The training and oversight that support this manner of thinking will allow commanders to learn, gain experience, and study its advantages and disadvantages, including development of expertise in transitions between the ends of the paradox, as well as simultaneous hold on to both ends.

Finally and most importantly messages conveyed by senior levels are highly important, as is forming an organizational culture that respects, facilitates, and rewards paradoxical leadership as the optimal mode of action. Without this type of support COs and the system will always lean toward overlooking the complexity and turning to clearer and simpler channels of leadership that do not facilitate strong coping with the challenges currently being faced by COs who command the millennial generation. 🇮🇳



Colonel Harsh Vardhan Singh

Col. Harsh Vardhan Singh is an ex NDA, commissioned into the Indian Army in June 1995 and commanded a battalion along Western Theatre. He has had operational experience both in CI/CT operations in J&K and on the LAC in the Eastern Ladakh. He has done instructional tenures in the IMA, DSSC and served as Chief Instructor at the Regimental Centre. The Officer has attended various important courses in foreign countries and has served on a UN Peacekeeping Mission. The author is a prolific writer and his articles have been published in various journals. Views expressed are the authors own, and do not reflect the editorial policy of ‘MVI.’



Demand For Fact-Finding Grossly Premature

To demand a 'fact-finding body' when the situation is still volatile belays good judgement. Besides finding facts 'the body' will find faults with individuals who are currently handling a volatile and critical situation. It places a gun to the commanders' heads at all levels. It is not fair.

by Lieutenant General PR Shankar (Retd)

144 veterans have addressed a joint statement to the President, PM, RM, CDS and Chiefs of Services drawing attention to the failure in the political, civil, and military establishments, especially in intelligence acquisition in the ongoing Sino-Indian military situation in eastern Ladakh. They have demanded, that a 'fact-finding body' be constituted to go into various issues raised by them.

To demand a 'fact-finding body' when the situation is still volatile belays good judgement. Besides finding facts 'the body' will find faults with individuals who are currently handling a volatile and critical situation. It places a gun to the commanders' heads at all levels. It's not fair.

Those officers and men who are up there at 16,500 feet are putting their

lives at stake for the safety and security of the nation. Do not demoralize them. Sure, there will be shortcomings and lessons in this entire episode. Some individuals and systems will be found short. They can wait. What is the hurry to have an inquiry when the event is not yet over? When the time comes, I will be the first one to cry hoarse from the Karakorams. Not now! We will attend to them later. Till then, well done boys! Continue to hold the flag high.

On the issue of 'failure in the political, civil, and military establishments especially in intelligence acquisition'. Sure, there are gaps in capability and structure of our intelligence, acquisition, and operations. However, have they failed like they did at Kargil? No. Let us get the broader perspective right. China has been itching to

put India down militarily ever since we surprised and stymied them at Doklam in 2017. As it has evolved, this operation has been elaborately planned by China at the highest level in minute detail. It is perfidy of the highest order after all the friendship display at Mamallapuram.

The People's Liberation Army attempted multiple incursions from Naku La in Sikkim to DBO, Demchok, Fingers Area, Hot Springs, Galwan, Gogra, Depsang, Y-junction and maybe elsewhere in Sikkim. All these have been contested. At each of these places, the incursions are nix or negligible except at Pangong Tso. Even here there was a clash at the Fingers Area early in May. So where is the failure? If anything, India has thwarted China twice.

Unchecked incursion at Naku La and Galwan could have resulted in our troops in the Giagong Plateau or the DSDBO road being cut off, respectively. If any of these attempts were successful it would surely have been a national disaster. If the ambush at Galwan had been successful and had the Chinese suffered lesser casualties, China would have declared victory all the way back to the Middle Kingdom and would have painted the town red of having taught India a lesson. Full credit to our boys for giving China a bloody nose. The Indian armed forces have not only averted a major national embarrassment but have made China look small and stupid. If China has been able to come up to Finger-4 in Pangong Tso area, it is only due to the terrain advantage of a relatively better and faster approach to the area.

Presently there is a dialogue and disengagement process on. Some disengagement has taken place. It is a long haul.

The Pangong Tso incursion should be evacuated eventually. If not, China stands to face some serious strategic repercussions which have started unfolding already. Let us exhibit strategic patience and not political or emotional impatience. In the same breath, I would like to add that some of our worthy senior veterans have been making a bee line to TV studios. Most talk sheer nonsense. One stooped low to utter profanities. Forgotten to be officers or gentlemen?

India is in a dangerous neighbourhood with two nuclear adversaries in active collusion. To expect any government to conclude implementable boundary agreements with them is wishful thinking. To expect wonders to happen in defence procurements, counter-insurgency deployments and so on at this stage is premature.

While all these veterans state that they have no political affiliations, the content of their statement says otherwise. For over half a century, successive governments have not declassified the Henderson Brooks Report. There must be a good reason. I was a battery commander in the Hathungla Battalion during 1991-92. Our boys used to often come across unidentifiable remains

Those officers and men who are up there at 16,500 feet are putting their lives at stake for the safety and security of the nation. Do not demoralize them. Sure, there will be shortcomings and lessons in this entire episode. Some individuals and systems will be found short. They can wait.



Veterans of the Indian Armed Forces

of the men who fought and died unsung at Namka Chu in 1962. We did our best to honour those brave men by a prayer and an in situ decent disposal of those remains—bones, mess tins, helmets, shoes et al, as possible. It was sorrowful. We let them rest there in peace.

Similarly, let that Henderson Brooks Report lie in its grave. India has moved past it. Opening that Pandora's box might singe those very parties which are probably backing these venerated veterans.

The 144 veterans have stated that each of them has only the best interest of India and the Armed Forces at heart in raising issues. I have no doubt about it. After all, some of them have held apex positions and were once instrumental in shaping the destiny of this country. If I were Mark Anthony, I would say, 'Brutus was an honourable man'. If I were one of the Caesars in the battlefields of Ladakh, I would say 'Et Tu Brutus'. India is a great democracy and I will only say 'This too Shall Pass'. I continue to honour my fellow 144 veterans despite their ideas. 🇮🇳



Lieutenant General PR Shankar

Lt Gen PR Shankar was India's Director General (DG) Artillery. He is highly decorated and qualified with vast operational experience. He is now a Professor in the Aerospace Dept of Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras. You can reach him on Twitter: @palepurshankar, Email ID: pravishankar3@gmail.com.

Views expressed are the authors own, and do not reflect the editorial policy of 'MVI.'



Gagging The Army Is The Easiest Way!

“Learning from the lessons gained in the recent situations, the need of the hour is a Public Interface system of high integrity that can give out true and factual information. Such a system does exist in the form of the office of ADGPI.”

by Pankaj Bhagwati

The Army hierarchy, inundated with videos of operational areas floating on social media groups, dissenting views and irksome questions being asked about the manner in which they have handled situations has passed sweeping orders to its personnel to terminate their social media accounts from the likes of Facebook, Instagram, Twitter etc.

This follows an earlier order on restricting intermingling between Serving soldiers and veterans in WhatsApp groups as this was perceived to have been the reason for the spread of rumours and leading to low morale in the organization.

Even if such orders may seem ridiculous to an outsider, the Army hierarchy groomed and moulded

in an environment where orders are sacrosanct and inviolate, this is the easiest way to stem apparent dissension to their authority. However, in passing these orders, the hierarchy seems to have forgotten certain fundamentals. Firstly, for orders to be followed there exists a fine sentiment of ‘trust’ between the originator and the followers.

This ‘Trust’ is based on the fundamentals of loyalty, credibility and faith. It is no secret that these sentiments have majorly been eroded over these recent years; the reasons for this are enumerated further on in this article. Secondly, orders passed should not only be verifiable, but should also stand scrutiny in the ‘Court of Law’. Is the Army hierarchy justified in

gagging its personnel? Is the order beneficial to the organization?

Rumour mongering is a punishable offence under the Army Act. This stresses the impact of rumours on morale and the gravity of addressing the cause. The oxford dictionary defines rumour as ‘unconfirmed’ and ‘false’ information. But, at an individual level, can an information be a rumour if it is from a credible source and backed by irrefutable evidence?

Today, the term rumour is better defined as ‘differing from the official version’, even if the official version may be a story-line woven to hide damaging truths or lapses in planning or execution. The main reason rumours arise is because

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Today, the term rumour is better defined as ‘differing from the official version’, even if the official version may be a story-line woven to hide damaging truths or lapses in planning or execution. The main reason rumours arise is because there are huge unaddressed information gaps in the story-line.

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there are huge unaddressed information gaps in the story-line.

For example, when the Army issued the statement that 20 Soldiers were killed in action in Galwan without filling in ‘Why’, ‘How’ and ‘Where’ (Indian or Chinese controlled territory) it happened, it left a huge gap which was bound to be filled up by all versions of information/disinformation. Naturally, the media was abuzz with all kinds or versions, half-truths and speculations.

A similar sequence of events also happened post Uri incident, the Balakot Strikes and the riposte by Pakistan. Why did the Army hierarchy leave glaring informational voids? Was it unaware of its ramifications?

It is not that the Army is unaware of it. The first thing that is taught in the Information Warfare Course of the Army is never to leave gaps in information that can lead to rumours. Nothing damages the morale of the Army soldier more than rumours. When rumour proves to be truer than the official version, the first thing that suffers is the credibility and faith in the senior hierarchy within the organisation.

While on one side, gaps in dissemination are left out in operational information, it has now become routine to view administrative actions such as curbs on Canteen stores for defence personnel, availing hotel facilities on temporary duties to prevent corruption, taxing of disability pensions etc appearing in national media even before official correspondences. How does one explain this dichotomous use of media space? What is being covered up in the operational side

and what is being demonstrated elsewhere?

Outbursts in social media are symptoms indicative of resentment within the organisation. The reason for the resentment must be identified and addressed. Shutting out the symptoms is not the correct form of approach. The orders restricting interactions with the



Media-Military relations in India is a major stumbling block (Graphical Representation)

veterans on whatsapp groups is evidence of an estranged idea in the senior military hierarchy.

Instead of understanding and addressing the genuine concerns of veterans (and siding by them in times of duress), the community was ostracised against. We may be the only Defence Service in the world which DOES NOT view the veterans as ambassadors of our organisation and preaches segregation.

Somehow the discourses on Social Media by the uniformed fraternity is being viewed as an organisation and security threat. But is it so? Is

not the deliberate holding-back of critical information for public consumption (not sensitive information) that lends itself to rumours more of a threat? A childhood saying encapsulates today's media usage, 'to prevent exposing one lie, you need to say a thousand others'.

The NATO nations are more in operations than our own. They too are democracies, but have not issued any gag orders. Opinions and dissenting voices must be encouraged if they are logical and not vitriolic. It needs to be understood that voicing of dissent on social media platforms is a fallout of the failure of a sounding & redressal mechanism within the Army.

This mechanism is now defunct and is unable to address genuine concerns or provide feedback. Therefore, the first step is to create such a platform or overhaul existing ones giving them more clout and teeth to address issues. Here is where we can leverage the manpower and expertise vested in our veteran community.

Is managing the media such a challenge for our Defence Forces? How can we exploit it better? To answer these questions, we must outline the ground realities.

Is the Army hierarchy justified in gagging its personnel? Is the order beneficial to the organization?



ADGPI Twitter Handle

- No Officer, soldier in the Army or Veteran is Anti-Organisation or Anti-National.
- Everybody understands his/her commitment to the cause and will never knowingly give away operational details.
- Every person is thus an information operative working towards the greater National Goal.
- There will be some who will be acerbic and malicious in intent. But these will be exceptions and there are penal rules to take care of such elements.

Far from shying away from the media domain, the Army should be exploiting it to its benefit. But the underlying requisite to that is the dissemination of accurate, credible information which forms the base for any further build-up of narratives. Here is where we need to create the second empowered institution.

Learning from the lessons gained in the recent situations, the need of

the hour is a Public Interface system of high integrity that can give out true and factual information (without compromising operational secrecy). Such a system does exist in the form of the office of ADGPI.

However, as the body is not independent and reports to the Army Headquarters, the information it disseminates is subject to alterations. In order to institutionalise the ADGPI it must undergo certain radical reforms.



Pankaj Bhagwati

During his service in the Indian Army Pankaj Bhagwati has served in Counter Insurgency Operations both in Jammu & Kashmir & North East India. Highlights of his service include participation in Operation Vijay in 1999, rendering service as an aviator for eight years, as a Staff Officer in UNIFIL during the Israeli Hezbollah Conflict of 2006, commanding a battalion in Kargil, a tenure in Information Warfare & as an instructor in Army War College.

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- Within it must be vested the powers of a singular agency entitled to provide all military related information to the public.
- It must be made completely independent in the reporting channel and must be populated with both uniformed personnel & veterans.
- The PROs (Public Relation Officers) of various commands must operate within its organisation.
- The ADGPI must be empowered to investigate first-hand through its representatives facts of an incident to formulate its story-line.
- In order to be completely independent, the institution must be headed by a veteran of repute selected by Ex-Chiefs of the Army, Air Force and Navy.

The strength of democracy lies in the creation of strong independent institutions that act as checks and balances. Within the larger organisation of the Armed Forces which function on rigid hierarchy and orders, the need for creating smaller independent institutions is even greater. These institutions & processes will only help the Army evolve by identifying lacuna's and rectifying them.

"Without the help of a mirror, even the best dressed man can never be too sure about his turnout."



COVID-19

ANALYSING THE THREAT

Editors

Ajey Lele | Kritika Roy

The current pandemic has caused a cataclysmic disruption in the 'daily routine' across the nations and sectors. The damage this crisis has brought to lives and economies is unimaginable. This pandemic is a wake-up call to bring about systematic and structural changes to deal with such unanticipated menaces that can bring the world to a sudden halt. This book attempts to contextualise and examine the nature of the ongoing pandemic. The experts who have contributed to the book analyse key geopolitical and technological aspects of the COVID-19 crisis. Besides, the book presents views from a few important States concerning their role in combating the ongoing crisis. The book also explores the issues of biosecurity and bioethics.

Price: ₹ 1995 /-

Binding: Hardback

Subject: Social Science/ COVID-19

Territory: World

ISBN: 978-93-90095-07-0

PENTAGON PRESS LLP



www.pentagonpress.in

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The Indian Army's Paralympic Node: A Soldier's Second Shot At Life

“The journey of a disabled soldier into the gruelling world of Paralympic sports first begins by breaking the mental barrier of disability and turning this perceived weakness into a strength.”

by Aritra Banerjee

Blood, guts, sweat, and tears are just a fraction of what it takes to forge a young civilian recruit into a gallant and upright soldier—one who will be tasked to attend to the nation's call at a moment's notice. Military service does not give a lot in return except instil an unparalleled sense of purpose and an otherworldly devotion to duty. But what happens when a young soldier loses his life's purpose? When he is side-lined from his commitment to duty for no fault of his own?

Countless young men have lost their limbs in the unforgiving and brutal nature of combat, rendering them ineffective in battle and subsequently brushed to the side-lines. The loss of a limb takes significant psychological toll on a soldier's self-worth. Still in the prime of his youth, he questions

his self-esteem, his worth in the organisation, and bears the guilt of not being there for his comrades.

An amputee soldier often remembers the times his legs have pushed through the rigorous route marches, the repetition of drills in training, and the cold steel of a rifle—aimed and primed to vanquish the nation's enemies in life-and-death operations. Above all else, a soldier feels the uncertainty of employment and what may become of him if he gets discharged from service—or worse—forced to work in uniform from within the side-lines.

A program, which in its short three years of existence, has given disabled soldiers of the Indian Army a second shot at life, and has blessed the

country with world-class athletes who have earned laurels for the nation at the highest level of para-sports.

Speaking about the purpose of the Army Paralympic Node (APN), Lieutenant Colonel SP Singh, the current officer-in-charge of the node, and an amputee himself (resultant of a mine blast injury during Operation Parakram) said, “The Army Paralympic Node is a sports node established with the intention of serving specially-enabled personnel of the Indian Army. It was raised under the aegis of the Directorate General of Military Training (DGMT) at the Bombay Engineering Group and Centre (BeG & C), Kirkee, Pune in June 2017.”

“The prime objective of the APN is to encourage the participation of serving para-athletes to excel in Paralympic sports. Achievements at the national and international level will boost the morale of our para-athletes, enhance their self-esteem, and rekindle their sense of belonging giving them a visible goal to strive for,” added Singh.

The sports node currently has 30 athletes and have participated in many national and international events. The APN currently offers five sports disciplines: archery, shooting, rowing, athletics, and swimming. When asked about the governing and administrative body of the newly-found node, Lt. Col. Singh said, “The APN is run under the administration of BEG and Centre with the Commandant of the BEG and Centre, Kirkee serving as the patron while the Deputy Commandant serves as the Chairman of the node.”

When asked about where prospective talent is scouted from, Lt. Col. Singh replied saying, “Scouting of talent is done through regular visits to the Artificial Limb Centre (ALC) in Pune along with the Military Hospital Kirkee and maintaining close liaison with their staff. Individuals from army units who have been rehabilitated at other centres are also urged to come to the node for trials following permission from the Army Sports Control Board (ASCB).”

He also touched upon an amputee soldier’s journey, which traverses from fighting a grievous injury to fighting for the Olympic dream as a para-athlete: “The journey of a disabled soldier into the gruelling world of Paralympic sports first begins by breaking the mental barrier of disability and turning this perceived weakness into a strength. The soldier should be in a positive frame of mind and must believe in his abilities.

“After successfully joining the node, the para-athlete is rigged out with the best mobility equipment available in the market based on the level of the soldier’s physical impairment and para-sports discipline. The athlete undergoes rigorous training under the supervision of a qualified coach and an army of support staff. The node’s veteran athletes who have made a



Athletes train under the watchful eye of Lt.Col Singh

name for themselves at the international level and earned laurels for the nation serve as mentors to the nodes newly inductees. The node is highly structured and takes care of every aspect of their training to include diet, nutrient supplements, sports, personnel kit with military efficiency,” the officer-in-charge said.

“It is not just about sports, our node gives our soldiers a new direction, a task, and a purpose. It empowers them with a positive attitude, the much-needed camaraderie, teamwork, and most importantly self-respect. It brings them back to the healthy lifestyle that a life in the services normally bestows upon a soldier. Furthermore, all incentives and benefits entitled to sportsmen of the Indian Army are applicable to the same degree to our para-athletes including fast-tracked promotions prospects for a display of unparalleled excellence in sports,” Singh added.

Lt. Col. Singh’s own experience as the second officer-in-charge (OIC of the APN has been more than ‘enriching and fulfilling.’ “We are a small family and thus take care of one another. Every single one of my boys are close to my heart, and during my time here I can tell without any doubt that seeing these men pick themselves up and push themselves to fight for their dreams has been a soul touching experience! To me every one of my boys is a winner.”

The node has also left an international mark as, while preparing on war-footing for the Olympics, the team performed exceptionally well at other international events like the World Para Athletics Grand Prix and the world Para Athletics Championships. This has brought the Olympic dream “well within reach”.

Currently, the top athletes are attached with the Army Sports Institute (ASI) for highly specialised training in their respective sports, guided by nutritionists, coaches, sports psychologists, and physiotherapists. They now have to clear the qualifying rounds scheduled next year for the Paralympics 2021.

Lt. Col Singh stressed on the need to spread awareness about Paralympic sports in the country, and has appealed to both—the serving fraternity and the veterans community. “Paralympic sports are not popular in India. Regular citizens and Faujis can help create awareness about Paralympic sports by giving them the same importance as any able-bodied sport, and also by actively highlighting the stellar achievements of countries’ para-athletes and supporting them wholeheartedly in their journey.” 🇮🇳



Indian Army: A Nation Builder Through Character, Leadership & Industry

“While the IDF has evolved into a ‘People’s Army & a Nation builder’, the Indian Army finds itself on the back foot as far as ‘Funds, Indigenisation, Modernisation, Equipment & Status’ are concerned. The disparity in weaponry, self-reliance and support from the Govt are starkly different. “

by Brigadier Pradeep Sharma (Retd)

Historically the Armed Forces are looked at with a ‘jaundiced eye’ the world over. Indian Army surely has forever been castigated as being a ‘White Elephant’ and a drain on good taxpayers’ money. Israel perhaps is the only state which has the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) occupying centre stage in National affairs? The only two Nations where ‘Conflict’ was gifted, along with the creation of an Independent State are India & Israel.

Israel came to life in 1948 and India a year before that, both Nations faced immediate aggression from the neighbours, in 60 years Israel came to be recognised as a prosperous economy and made a name for herself, India lagged a little behind but today is considered a growing economy and an opportunity for FDI. How have the two nations fared with reference to

National Security & how have the two armies, IDF & Indian Army (IA) fared?

Israel Defence Forces (IDF)

While Israel is firmly anchored in the Western world in terms of its values, it remains unique from many other Western democracies on account of its geopolitical situation and the central role that its military plays in so many areas of the country’s life.

The founding of the State of Israel on 14 May 1948 was swiftly followed by a combined attack by five Arab armies (Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq). This was to be the first real test of the IDF, officially set up on 26 May of that year, a test from which they ultimately emerged victorious.

Ever since its founding, the State of Israel has lived through numerous wars, military operations and other violent conflicts, such as the Arab uprisings in the Palestinian territories (known as the First and Second Intifadas). The IDF have earned for themselves a name for being dedicated, motivated and professional, they have also been a part of Nation building through Defence Industry and world class education provided by the IDF.

IDF & Society

Studies & polls conducted in Israel reflect the strong trust and faith placed by the majority of citizens in the army which is highly appreciated compared to the country’s political affiliation. A recent poll indicated that 91 per cent of the Jewish population trust their

armed forces, which came out top in a poll measuring public trust in Israeli institutions.

This high level of esteem may be attributed to the fact that Israel feels the need of a powerful army for the survival of the community, the important societal role played by the IDF and the fact that they have emerged victorious from every war fought against other nations.

Reflecting the philosophy of David Ben Gurion, the founder of the IDF, the Israeli Army is known as “The People’s Army”, a citizen’s army that transcends social differences. An apolitical, national institution, in which every segment of heterogeneous Jewish immigrant society would be represented. Not just as an instrument of defence, but as an institution with a duty to undertake social tasks and help shape the new Israeli society.

Viewed as a defensive institution with the mission of protecting the Israeli people, the role as an army of defence also confers a certain legitimacy on the IDF. Most Israeli Jews consider the wars fought by the IDF as “wars of necessity”, forced upon the country because of repeated attacks by its Arab neighbours.

Because of the existential importance of the IDF to the very survival of the State of Israel, there is a great willingness on the part of the Jewish Israeli society to contribute to and make personal sacrifices in defence of their country. Military service is seen as one way every individual can contribute to the existence of the state. It is described as a melting pot, a human mosaic, of different cultures and a catalyst for integration and communication, between the various sectors of society. Youth of Israel take great pride in serving the Nations Army.

The Defence industry of Israel is a strategically important sector and a large employer, it is not merely a major supplier for the IDF but the IDF itself has contributed many products. A major exporter of military equipment, three Israeli companies were listed on the 2017 ‘Stockholm International Peace Research Institute’ index of the world’s top 100 arms-producing

and military service companies: Elbit Systems, the Aerospace Industries, & Rafael.

The Defence industry in Israel is a strategically important sector and a large employer within the country. It is also a major player in the global arms market and was the 6th largest arms exporter in the world as of 2014. There are over 150 active defence companies based in the country with combined revenues of more than \$3.5 billion annually. Much of the exports are sold to the United States and Europe. Other major regions that purchase Israeli defence equipment include South East Asia, Latin America and India.

The Indian Army as a Parallel

Policies of the Indian Government/IAS lobby were such that Indian Armed forces faced ‘neglect’ almost immediately post-independence. This could be a result of the legacy of ‘British Indian Army’ being split into IA & Pakistan Army quite unlike the evolution of the IDF which was formed out of a necessity by ‘Volunteers’.

The first war saw our armed forces stop Pakistan’s adventurism soon after partition itself, these operations were halted by our political leadership, before the situation could be entirely restored, thus resulting in POK and Aksai Chin. The second war came in 1962 with the Chinese aggression which ended in a humiliating defeat attributable squarely to the Political leadership of the time.

On the heels of ’62 came the next conflict with Pakistan in 1965, the IA acquitted itself well and then in the ’71 war it won laurels like never before, 1999 brought the Kargil war fought to regain our own territory, however, the Government failed to recognise the fact that the Indian Subcontinent was an area of conflicting interests which made a ‘Strong Military Force’ a necessity.

Over the years the IA has evolved to become the second largest army in the world, however the chequered history due to the lack of support it deserves from the Politicians and Bureaucrats

continues to plague this dedicated organisation.

While the IDF has evolved into a ‘People’s Army & a Nation builder’, the IA finds itself on the back foot as far as ‘Funds, Indigenisation, Modernisation/Equipment & Status’ are concerned. The disparity in weaponry, self-reliance and support from the Government are starkly different.

Potential capability of contribution by the Indian Army towards Nation Building

Across the board the IA is a large employer in every field, be it engineering, armament, aviation, medical, logistics, electronics & communication, catering, education and others, deployed in remote areas, development of infrastructure (Border Areas) has been a primary contribution, connecting communities and inculcating pride of character in a secular army has perhaps been a distinctive achievement where all ‘Indians’ stand shoulder to shoulder for the defence of India.

If the IDF contributes through education, so does the IA with over 37 Army Public Schools, 249 Army Pre-primary schools across India and 12 professional institutions of higher education, apart from the 142 defence training centres/academies in the country.

Individuals from across all states, communities and religions join the organisation at early years and the support cadre retires at a young age while regulars form the backbone.

The IDF gets to enrol the best students in a mix of conscription & volunteers, 24 months for females and 36 for male members at the age of 18, the short tenure has begun to hurt the IDF. The IA being voluntary gets a percentage of youth from those who qualify an exam, not necessarily the best and certainly a little older.

Once the compulsory military service is over, having served with IDF is looked upon favourably by corporates, the support cadre from IA on the other hand find themselves on the street looking for jobs!

Manpower in the IA/IDF gets leadership roles at various levels in challenging situations which demand improvisation/out of box thinking and innovation. These young men and women get to experience an India which is not seen by the Bureaucrats, Politicians, and Industrialists. They are aware of the needs in these areas. In India, absorption in Corporates is difficult and in Government Organisations virtually nil due to lack of support from the Government.

The IDF on the contrary is a certificate for jobs! While the senior leadership of IDF is actively involved in National Decision making, in India they are marginalised, political alignments gain ascendancy.

The Indian Army & Society

Like the IDF in Israel, the IA enjoys the trust of 77% of citizens in India as per a 2018 study conducted in 22 assembly constituencies with 16,680 respondents by Azim Premji University (APU) and Lokniti (Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) (post Galwan, the trust levels for the Armed Forces would have shot to much higher levels), followed by 54.8% in the SC and 48% in the HCs.

On average, elected offices and institutions such as the president, prime minister, chief minister, parliament, vidhan sabha (state legislature) and panchayat/municipal corporation (MC) enjoyed an "effective trust" of 40%. Political parties garnered low trust, at -1.75% and polled the lowest in the list of 16. Corruption and apathy being the major cause of low trust in Governments and other establishments.

India's defence Industry exports as compared to that of Israel reflect a dismal figure! INR 4,682 cr (US\$0.66 billion) in 2017–2018 and INR10,500 cr (US\$1.47billion) in 2018–2019, of which 8 Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSU) and 41 Ordnance Factories (OF) contributed INR 800 cr (7.6% of total defence exports).

Whilst Israel became self-reliant in 1967, India has only recently pushed for greater indigenisation of military

hardware it imports around 70 percent (by value) of its high-tech defence hardware such as aircraft, ships, submarines, missiles even rifles etc mainly from Russia, Japan, Israel and United States. India was the world's second-largest arms importer in 2015–19.

Listed as the 4th most powerful and the 2nd largest armies of the world our defence imports have skyrocketed over the years. A teeth to tail ratio of civilians vs Military personnel remains completely warped, a 14.5 lakh Armed Forces have 4 lakh non performing civilians supporting them, a ratio of 3.6:1 and a burden on defence budget.

To list a few (Figures are approximate):-

- MES-86000-budget 14000 Cr
- 41 Ord Factories-77000-budget 1500 Cr
- 51DRDO labs-31000-budget-18000Cr
- Defence accounts Department-26000-Budget 1000 Cr
- Defence Estate Department-18000 sitting on 10000 acres of prime land.
- DGQA, QGAQA, AFHQCS, DOS, CSD, MOD-24000-budget 16000 Cr

Border Roads the only such organisation which is doing a yeoman job is being targeted for downsizing/disbanding.



Brigadier Pradeep Sharma

The author was commissioned into the JAT regiment and has had rich operational experience. He has seen closely the happenings in J&K, Punjab, Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram in operational circumstances. In addition, he has had the distinction of being, selected to raise the NSG and being a squadron commander with the 51 SAG, an Instructor in the IMA, Colonel General Staff of an active division, Commander of a Brigade in super HAA, Directing Staff in AWC, and the Brig Gen Staff responsible for facilitating the training in various Military

Establishments. He has been a member of study groups in China as well as Officer Cadre management in his time. The author can be reached on email: pradeepsharma66@gmail.com

Views expressed are the authors own, and do not reflect the editorial policy of 'MVI.'

Concluding thoughts

The Present imbroglio, with China/Pakistan is the result of the long-standing refusal by Governments, past and present, to acknowledge the need for India to be a strong military power as deterrence to our adversaries.

The knee jerk efforts at fast track procurement of weapons & equipment, reflect bad planning. Inability to maintain surveillance over areas of Interest or areas of Influence is another indication of flawed priorities.

Governments and higher military leadership have also failed to see the great opportunities in engaging the potential capabilities of Nation Building that our Armed Forces have. The vast numbers skilled in diverse fields spanning the entire spectrum of National needs as well as that of Industry are ignored.

The capacity for R&D at technical institutes is underutilised to say the least. It is to the credit of the IDF that they have some of the best indigenous weapons and technology, examples of the Merkava, Uzi, Iron Dome and many others can be quoted.

This article is aimed at stimulating thought for better utilisation of India's Armed Forces as a National Resource for Nation building, Education, Character Building, and Imbibing a National Spirit amongst citizens. 🇮🇳

'I am hopeful that this well-timed book on Kargil warriors will revisit their stories, rejoice in their victories and keep the memories of our brave soldiers alive for coming generations'

SHRI RAJNATH SINGH, RAKSHA MANTRI



Rachna Bisht Rawat

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Mechanised Forces: A Force Multiplier In High Altitude Areas

The Indian Armed Forces must be prepared to deter, prevent and if necessary, take retaliatory action. As all future wars will be joint operations, the synergy and capabilities of the Tri-services need to be enhanced. The Army would need to upgrade its fire power and manoeuvre capabilities to operate in High Altitude Areas (HAA).

by Colonel Pradeep Dalvi (Retd)

7 Light Cavalry played a key role in Kashmir operations in 1947-48 surmounting the heights of Zozila pass at 11,500 feet. Major General K S Thimmaya, General Officer Commanding (GOC) Srinagar Division conceived the idea of employing tanks (Stuart tanks) to clear the pass and road axis to Zozila. The tanks were dismantled and transported up to Baltal (base of Zozila pass) as bridges could not take the weight. The assault was led by tanks to capture Zozila pass and Gyumri basin along with 77 Para Bde. Strategic, operational, and tactical surprise was achieved.

However, with this historical wisdom, we did nothing to improve on our infrastructure and add on to our experience of employing Mechanized

forces in High Altitude Areas (HAA) as a force multiplier until General Sunderji inducted Mechanised Battalion (1 Mech Inf) in Ladakh and North Sikkim as part of 'Operation Falcon'. The heavy lift capability of IL-76 and AN-26 was utilized to place T-72 and ICVs at Demchock area of Ladakh and ICVs of 16 Mech Inf were inducted by road to North Sikkim at Kerang Plateau at a height of above 16,000 feet.

My Odyssey to North Sikkim

My battalion (16 Mech Inf) had just returned after 'Exercise Brass Tacks' to our peace-time location after exploiting the ICVs in the dessert in early 1987 and the focus was on maintenance and upkeep of our equipment,

just then we received orders to move to our next location and be placed under 33 Corps near Bagdogra with one Mechanised company to move as advance party immediately.

On reaching our new location we received orders from the higher authorities to induct one mechanised company with ICV BMP-1 to Thangu at a height of 15,000 feet in North Sikkim and be placed under orbit of 17 Mtn Div. On carrying out initial reconnaissance of the route along with Major KA Singh, the company commander, we realised the enormity of the task at hand.

The main route to Gangtok via Rangpo was out of question as some of the bridges were class 9 classification

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Mechanised forces should be suitably integrated with planned Mountain strike corps. Time has come to smell the coffee and Mechanised Forces should not be lagging in this aspect and should carry out due diligence, analysis of its equipment profile, defensive and offensive capabilities based on past experience.

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and movement of ICVs and tank transporters was not possible or feasible. An innovative route and out of the box plan was needed to carry out the task at hand. The team along with some engineering task force came up with the idea of modifying the HIPPO (Ashok Leyland) vehicles used for transportation of dozers for construction of roads in HAA.

The issue of increasing the HIPPO platform and securing/lashing of ICV on the Hippo was resolved through a hit and trial method and finally the carrier vehicle was put through trials successfully. To maintain secrecy, a façade of movement of Border Road equipment was given to the entire exercise. Finally, the most important part of the operation was the route to Thangu which was chosen after due deliberations.

The Route and the Odyssey

The route of more than 250 km was chosen from Bagdogra to Thangu criss crossing the Himalayas and negotiating the Teesta river over the course of six days. As most of the bridges were class 18, the ICV had to be dismounted from the Hippo (as the combined weight was more than 25 Tonnes) and mounted again after crossing the bridge on the Hippo along the narrow winding roads which was a herculean task in itself.

- Bagdogra- Sevoke road-Damdim-Aligara- Pedong
- Pedong-Rani pool
- Ranippol-Gangtok- Rang Rang br
- Rang Rang br -Mangan-Tung br-Chungthang

• Chungthang-Lanchen-Zima

• Zima-Thangu

The entire induction of Mech coy from Bagdogra to Thangu took almost two months along with up gradation of certain bridges. This also assisted in the induction of the first troop



HIPPO carrier negotiating Tonk Br

of armour to Thangu from 71 AR and subsequently the squadron of armour which could operate in Kerang plateau.

Chinese Incursion in Ladakh

China over the past two decades has made phenomenal advances in their capabilities to operate along our Northern borders. They first enhanced their development of infrastructure and have now provided all-weather metal roads leading to the Tibetan plateau right up to their border posts.

Apart from this their railway lines connecting their hinterland to the plateau have greatly enhanced their mobilization capability. Under the garb of carrying out exercises in Tibet and taking advantage of the COVID-19 pandemic world over, the Chinese mobilized two Mechanised Divisions closer to our border at eastern Ladakh. 4th Highland Motorized Infantry Division opposite Galwan, hot spring and finger area. The Division is made up of two Motorized Infantry brigades (bde), one tank bde, one Arty bde, one Atk bn and one AA arty bn.

The Chinese Infantry has been recently converted into APC mode which gives them the option of holding the ground and also carry out manoeuvres. The second Division that is the 6th Highland Mech Inf Div has been mobilized and located in depth

towards Galwan valley. This Div consists of two Mech Inf Bde (with T-15/ZTQ Light tanks) and one armed bde. Each Mech Inf bde consists of 4 Mech Inf bn and one tank bn equipped with T-99A.

This Div, in addition, has one fd arty bde, one AD bde, one comb engr bn, one EW bn and one CBRN bn. This Div also has on its orbat Div Recce Bn equipped with ZBD-04A and AFT-10 ATK Msl. From the above it is quite clear that troops assembled opposite the Galwan sector have the capability



We should avoid panic buying of new technology and instead integrate new weapon platforms in a planned manner to boost the present asset of Infantry and Mech forces.



to carry out initial breakthroughs and break out with Mech forces towards depth-strategic locations. It has also dedicated combat support including EW and CBRN Bn and required air cover.

Present Deployment and Technological Trends

Currently, the Indian army primarily operates Russian T-72 and ICV BMP-2 in Ladakh and North Sikkim, bordering China. T-72s are less effective in Ladakh because they are heavy weight and create logistical nightmares in bringing them up to high altitude areas by air.

integrated Recce and support bn in the desert and plains effectively in fighting the battle of Forward Zone. The time is ripe to induct suitably structured and organized Recce and Sp bn in HAA, one per Div to be eyes and ears of the Div Cdr.

The Bn to be equipped with light ICVs, MR BFSR, Nag Msl weapon platform and state of art communication system. We should avoid panic buying of new technology and instead integrate new weapon platforms in a planned manner to boost the present asset of Infantry and Mech forces. Some of the New Technologies available which can be considered are:

- Drones and satellite warning system
- Nag Msl system/platform for Mech Inf
- Man Pack Msl system for Infantry
- Induction of new Spike ATK Msl system (Israel). New msl system to be 4th generation with fire, observe and engage and lock on after launch.
- New loitering munitions.
- Hpctr msl launched system.

The Way Forward

The Indian Armed Forces must be prepared to deter, prevent and if necessary, take retaliatory action. As all future wars will be joint operations, the synergy and capabilities of the Tri-services need to be enhanced. The Army would need to upgrade its fire power and manoeuvre capabilities to operate in High Altitude Areas (HAA).

Mechanised forces should be suitably integrated with planned Mountain strike corps. Time has come to smell the coffee and Mechanised Forces should not be lagging in this aspect and should carry out due diligence, analysis of its equipment profile, defensive and offensive capabilities based on past experience. As they say, "Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it". 🇮🇳



ICV BMP1 crossing Rang Rang Br

We need to create suitable infrastructure for their induction and have the ability to move them from one sector to another based on progress of operations. We need to develop light weight tanks with 30/35 Tonnes and find suitable replacements for aging BMP-2. They should be road, air transportable or even air dropped.

We need to shed our defensive operational strategy and with integration of other force multipliers be capable of carrying out limited offensives in Tibet plateau. We have successfully



Colonel Pradeep Dalvi (Retd)

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COVID-19 Global Pandemic and Aspects of Human Security in South Asia

Implications and Way Forward

Delwar Hossain • Md. Shariful Islam

COVID-19 Global Pandemic
and Aspects of Human
Security in South Asia

Implications and
Way Forward

Delwar Hossain
Md. Shariful Islam

The COVID-19 global pandemic has triggered health insecurity, food insecurity, and economic insecurity among many others in South Asia. It has profound impact on every sector of human activities ranging from the economic to environment. There is a need for a critical study of the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic for human security in order to fathom the emerging theoretical and policy issues in the region. Hence, the book provides an understanding of the consequences of the COVID-19 global pandemic for human security in South Asia. This intellectually stimulating book provides a

critical analysis and insights on this contemporary challenge to policy makers, health professionals, academics, students, researchers, NGO workers working with health, human security and anyone interested in health and human security in South Asia. The book covers major human security areas, i.e. health security, food security, economic security, and environment issue. The role of regional cooperation and global health governance is also covered in the domain of COVID-19. This book fills the existing knowledge gap on the human security in South Asia in general and linking with COVID-19 in particular. From the perspective of policy, the insights of the study would guide the policy makers in South Asia in reframing their security policies emphasising human security issues and challenges. Finally, this book contributes to the evolving debate and discourse on the impact of the COVID-19 on the South Asian region from a human security perspective.

Price: ₹ 895 /-

Binding: Hardback

Subject: Social Science/ COVID-19

Territory: World

ISBN: 978-93-90095-08-7

PENTAGON PRESS LLP



www.pentagonpress.in

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Para Military Forces: A Need for Restructuring, Merger, Consolidation, Employment in Befitting Roles

Today, India has 15-16 types of Para Military Forces (PMF): CRPF, BSF, NSG, ITBP, CISF, DSC, Assam Rifles, RPF, SSB, Indian Reserve Battalions, and some more outfits like the COBRA Force, a commando force of nearly 10,000 personnel organized on the lines of Greyhound's in Andhra Pradesh. In addition to the Territorial Army, Rashtriya Rifles, a GARUD Force the IAF has been planning to raise for defence of airfields and the Army. The question is, what are we trying to achieve?

by Major General VK Madhok (Retd)

Structuring, Role and Employment of PMF

A taxpayer is puzzled at the scale and range of our 10 lakh or so Paramilitary Forces (PMF) the fourth largest in the world. Though an indispensable requirement, these continue to proliferate at an unrealistic and unimaginable pace. I believe a decision was taken two years ago to further recruit another 1.23 lakh personnel (nearly 123 battalions).

This would take the strength of central forces to nearly 11 lakh-more or less equivalent to the strength of the regular Army. Therefore, crucial questions arise? Why can't we merge those forces which are performing the same tasks? What are the major disadvantages of multiplicity and why have the NSA and the NSC not rationalized this situation?

Do we need these forces at this scale when finally, for instance after the Dantewada incident in 2010 (75 jawans

of CRPF were killed by Maoists), we are still wanting the Army and are now going to recruit Ex-Servicemen for the tasks. If that is so, then the PMF needs a serious look and total restructuring.

Types of PMF and Their Proliferation

Today, India has 15-16 types of PMF: CRPF, BSF, NSG, ITBP, CISF, DSC, Assam Rifles, RPF, SSB, India Reserve battalions and some more outfits like

the COBRA Force Command battalions for Resolute action) a commando force of nearly 10,000 personnel organized on the lines of Greyhound's in Andhra Pradesh. In addition to the Territorial Army (TA), Rashtriya Rifles (RR), a Garud Force the IAF has been planning to raise for defence of airfields and the Army. The question is, what are we trying to achieve?

Several proposals are still pending with the Government which when implemented would increase the expenditure. Indian Reserve Battalions to get 35,000 personnel (sanctioned in Dec. 2007), Assam Rifles to get 26 additional battalions (sanctioned Jan 2010) ITBP to get an additional battalion for NBC warfare and disaster management, CRPF to get 13 additional battalions for anti-Naxalite operations (sanctioned Jan 2008).

That is not all; CRPF has created its own Spy Wing (sanctioned in Feb 2005). It wants to set up a Disaster Management Institute at Latur, Maharashtra (cost 100 crore), It wants more institutes: An Internal Security Academy at Mt Abu, an all India Police Academy, an OTS and a recruit training institute (sanctioned Nov 2006) And now there is a proposal to bifurcate the CRPF, one half to deal with soft targets and the other for dealing with hard targets.

RPF is to raise a women's battalion and awaits Hi-Tech equipment for nearly 100 crores (sanctioned in Oct 2008). ITBP has three training institutes and wants two more and a satellite facility. One can go on and on with the list of demands of each PMF!

Basic and Enlarged Role of PMF During War & Peace

There cannot be any disagreement on the issue that when war breaks out, there are many peacetime duties mostly of a Police nature which are required to be carried out at the border. Prevention of smuggling, protection of check posts, patrolling, safeguarding of installations close to the border as well as protection of bridges, railway lines or even tackling dacoits, are just a few of these.

If the Army was to undertake such tasks, then it would need two types of units: one for Police duties during peace and the other for military operations during war. This would weaken the Army. Accordingly, the PMF are required for protection of the border in peace as well as to restore order within the country when the Police fail to do so.

The roles of PMF have however been enlarged to include: Protection of industrial and administrative establishments which are of National importance (by RPF), the environment and of construction for in inaccessible areas like building of roads in northern borders (by BRO) and so on. Most of these PMF are organized on the pattern of the Indian Army but do not

Role of ITBP/BSF and the Need for a Merger

In the last 60 years or so, a variety of PMF have sprung up. Some raised in a hurry like the ITBP after the Sino-Indian agreement on trade was signed in 1954. Its task was to provide protection to the border check posts on the Indo-Tibetan border. As the Army was not able to spare troops, after 1962, the ITBP was expanded to operate as a guerrilla force. Its role has since been brought at par with the BSF, raised in 1965.

Therefore, a force which should have either merged with the BSF or dispensed with has now acquired a separate identity. In Mar 2008, a decision was taken to raise 13 additional battalions to be deployed on the Sino-Indian



ITBP trooper maintaining vigil

come under the Army or the Army Act.

They carry light weapons and follow separate chains of command except in sensitive areas like J&K where even during peace, PMF deployed at the LoC are placed under the Army's operational command. It is essential that PMF are so organised, trained and equipped, that they are in a position to convert to an active operational role at the outbreak of hostilities when placed under the Army. This is generally the pattern followed all over the world. No reason why it should not be followed in India.

border. It is also raising a women's battalion (commando) to be deployed at Nathula in Sikkim to frisk traders and for protection of VIPs even at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Multiplicity of Forces and Need for Integration

As regards multiplicity of forces: This means a separate Director General (DG) and the connected hierarchical structure for each PMF, separate training establishments, separate budget and rules and regulations for service and recruitment and a distinct chain of command under separate

ministries. Further, each PMF wants more units, more funds, more officers, better accommodation and weapons and additional transport to perform its tasks. The bureaucracy and ministries under whose control these functions, in turn feel justified to get such recommendations through.

As a result, fragmentation of effort and competition with each other for narrow interests cannot be avoided. Assam Rifles, a 31-battalion force is now raising another 31 battalions for the Indo-Myanmar border. The raising of each battalion costs 10-12 crore. Besides, led by regular officers, the Army will find it difficult to provide them the additional officers in view of its own shortage of nearly 50% against its authorisation.

There are sufficient examples to show that similar tasks are being performed by different PMFs. For instance, the ITBP, BSF or the Assam Rifles, but on different channels. In an operational sector controlled by the Army, one may find the BSF, Assam Rifles or the ITBP units deployed side by side in addition to the regular Army units at the international border. Or there may be Village Guards, CRPF or a medley of state and central intelligence agencies.

Besides, there is the DSC for providing protection and security cover to the Army, Navy and IAF installations and Ordnance Depots, CISF for providing security cover to Public Sector undertakings (PSU), BRO for developing road communications in remote areas and RPF for providing security cover to the Railways.

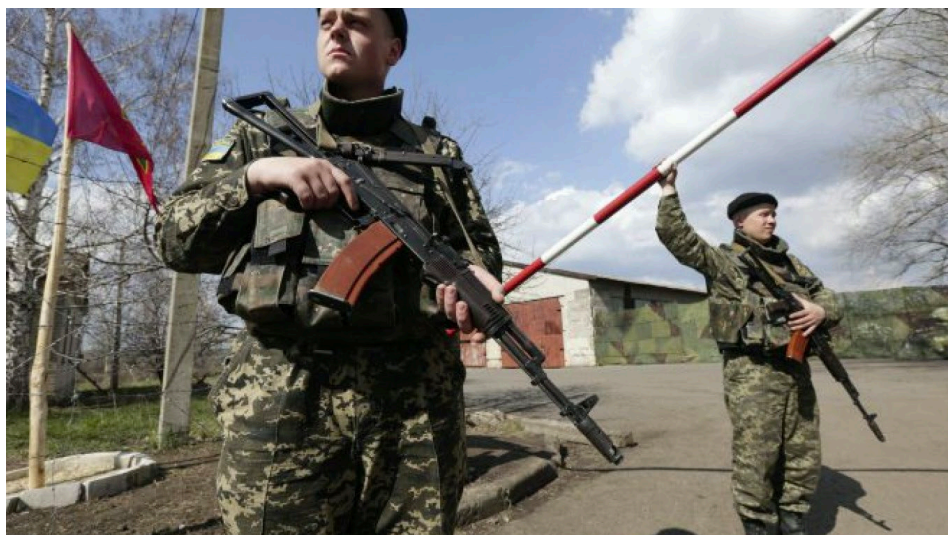
Now the issue is that when the NSC was formed and became functional with appointed NSA, their first important task should have been whether India can afford the luxury of having such many PMF? Further, multiplicity of PMF has created the most serious problem: Lack of coordination:

PMF Must Effectively Support the Army

If these forces are to support the Army besides taking on the first shock at the border, then a number of important issues need looking into: their equipment, officer cadre and its age

group (an older Colonel will not be in a position to handle stressful assignments at the border) and training. India's current and future security environment requires the conversion of resources to a war time machine in the shortest possible time.

Assam Rifles and the Rashtriya Rifles are the only PMF whose units can be treated at par with regular army units except that they do not carry heavy weapons. The remaining PMF have Police officers except the BSF which has a sprinkling of army officers. Units with a Police orientation meant for dealing with law and order situations cannot be expected to operate in battlefield conditions.



Ukrainian Border Guards on duty

An interesting situation arises when along a single line of communication say Tezpur-Tawang road in 4 Corps area; a number of PMF units are maintained with each force having its own transit camp, check posts, transport columns, even a small hospital and block timings to move. Therefore, departmental battles at Delhi, duplication of command and control channels has indeed led to unhealthy rivalries amongst the PMF and between the Army and the PMF.

Emulating Other Countries and Their Forces

In most of the foreign countries, PMF are designed for employment in four distinct areas: A border defence or

a police force patterned on an army culture, a police oriented internal security force, an organization for training the youth and a People's Militia to help expand armed forces in an emergency. What stops India from adopting this concept?

Take Russia's example on whom we are dependent for supply of nearly 80% of equipment and weapons for our armed forces: They have Frontier Guards to protect the border which touches nearly a dozen or so countries. When an independent unit of Frontier Guards is in the same area as Army garrison, the former is grouped with it.

Review Structure of PMF for Speedy Interaction with Armed Forces

Why not in India? As regards internal security forces, their basic training is akin to the Army's. The integration of these PMF with regular forces is far easier. China has its Public Security forces, a People's militia, a protection and construction corps and local forces.

Notice this: the diversity is minimal, and their pattern has emerged after trial and error and of course with experience. In both cases, the Border Guards are so designed that they can take the first shock. The recruitment

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We have created a monster in the shape of the fourth largest PMF in the world which is making a big hole in the taxpayer's pocket. There is a crucial need to reorganize these. All we need is a Border Security Force, an Internal Security Force, TA (Citizen's Militia), NCC and a Border Construction Force (BRO).

”

of their officers, equipment and state of training are on the army lines.

Russia's Frontier Guards are headed by a senior General from the army. We, in India, can take a cue from foreign countries as we can ill afford to have such a large variety of PMF especially where the tasks are duplicated. Accordingly, a national policy should be evolved after reviewing the entire structure of the PMF including their equipment, training, officer cadre and the need for quick interaction with the armed forces.

The concept evolved would need to keep certain broad principles in view summarised in the following sub paragraphs.

- Those PMF whose purpose is to guard the international border during peace and which are currently deployed for this purpose should be merged and re-designated as Border Guards. In this category fall the BSF, Coast Guards, ITBP and the State Armed Police (SAP). These forces would need an army orientation except for the Coast Guards who are meant for the Navy-Each force should be commanded by a senior service officer. The recruitment should be based on the service pattern.

The entire PMF should have a single code of conduct and one set of regulations. While it should be primarily offered by regular officers on deputation, its own corps of officers should be recruited on the army pattern. Above all, this force should come under the Ministry of Defence and not the Ministry of Home Affairs.

- Those forces which are meant for internal security and restoration of law and order should come under

the Ministry of Home Affairs and should have a police orientation. In this category will fall the Assam rifles, CRPF, RPF, CISF, Home Guards and the Indian Reserve Battalions. Various Land armies like those in Karnataka and Rashtriya Rifles should also be included in the Internal Security force. The Village and Home Guards should be merged with the TA. This leaves the NSG and SPG at the disposal of the Centre, while the states will have their Police and SAP to look after law and order problems specifically related to the states.

- Finally, after restructuring, besides the three services, India will have: The Border Guards under the Ministry of Defence, an Internal Security force under the Ministry of Home Affairs, TA-the Citizens Volunteer Militia to help the armed forces expand immediately at the commencement of hostilities and to relieve them from static duties, BRO for construction purposes in remote areas and the NCC for training the youth.


Maximum use of Ex-Servicemen should be made by employing them in the PMF. This is a workable concept in which there can be minor differences of opinion. Obviously, this concept would draw 'flak' from the existing hierarchies of PMF and the Bureaucracy due to a 'resistance to

change'. But unless we act now the PMF would continue to proliferate at the taxpayers' cost!

To sum up, India is in the thick of terrorism. Multiplicity and resultant lack of coordination are an obstacle and a serious handicap in tackling it. This aspect is slowly but surely dawning on our Government, and therefore, we are now asking for the Army to counter it. I suggest to the Honourable PM, HM, RM and concerned heads of all our Military and PMF to objectively consider restructuring the PMFs and tame this 'monster' that we have created.

Further, the People of India need to be involved in tackling Terrorism, and this can best be done by expanding the TA (Citizen's Militia)

We have created a monster in the shape of the fourth largest PMF in the world which is making a big hole in the taxpayer's pocket. There is a crucial need to reorganize these. All we need is a Border Security Force, an Internal Security Force, TA (Citizen's Militia), NCC and a Border Construction Force (BRO). It is ardently proposed that the Honourable PM gets a detailed briefing from the three Chiefs, DG's of PMF, the Home Minister, Defence Minister, NSA and so on to take a final call on this proposal.

In the present confused and unpredictable scenario within the country and at our borders, chances of a two-front war between India and Pak-China combine seem remote, but can we rule it out? No! A set back here can be disastrous for the country. Let there be no doubt about it! We cannot take it for granted and must remain prepared for it. 



Major General VK Madhok

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Forfeiting National Security for Turf

‘Men will always be haunted by the vastness of eternity’ fretting how their actions would echo across the centuries. Will they be known for the greatness they achieved or by the blunders they committed?’ - ‘The Iliad’ by Homer

by Pankaj Bhagwati

The defeat of 1962 is a psychological watershed in the history of our independent nation. Even today the progeny of V.K Menon, the infamous defence minister avoid in public familial linkages with his persona as do those of General Kaul (the Eastern Army Commander) or Gen. Thapar (the Chief of Army Staff) who decided to go on a foreign holiday just prior to the Chinese invasion. But rather than blame a few, often calamities are manifested through the cascading effects of numerous blunders that have escaped rectification, courtesy the silence of stakeholders. This article is an attempt to bring into limelight one such blunder at the national level which under the blanket of turf is essentially leading to divergence of security alignment and dissipation of our resources.

A Bedlam of Agencies

India has a myriad of armed entities entrusted with a plethora of tasks which can broadly be classified as policing to maintain law and order, border management & Territorial Defence. It has the Armed Forces (Army, Air Force, Navy) to protect the Nation from External Aggression and Internal Disorders. Then there are Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), who have been given the mandate of maintaining Law and Order and Border Management. We have the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), the Railway Protection Force (RPF) in whose gambit falls the task of Law and Order and safeguarding infrastructure.

The National Security Guard (NSG) whose function is to carry out counter-terrorist operations and VIP security is also a CAPF. Further, we have the Border Management agencies of Border Security Force (BSF), the Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and the Shashastra Seema Bal (SSB). Assam Rifles (whose task also involves policing the borders of North Eastern States) is a Paramilitary Force under the control of the Army, but which is increasingly being mentioned as a CAPF in various literatures emanating out of Delhi.

The Coast Guard whose task is primarily policing of the maritime boundaries has surprisingly been classified as an Armed Force parallel with the Navy. Each of these parallel organisations function adiabatically

with their independent Headquarters, Training infrastructure, Intelligence gathering agencies, communication apparatus, pay and pension disbursing agencies, financial departments, procurement agencies etc.

The Problem

Geographical & Task Overlap

The term National Security with its nebulous scope covers an entire range of activities ranging from overt external threats to internal disturbances. In today's world of unrestricted and across the spectrum warfare, security of the nation is as vulnerable to activities within its borders as it is to those outside. It is therefore not surprising that within India, we find different agencies tasked by the government within the same geographical space to fight common or different threats.

Thus the Army battles Counter-insurgency Operations in Jammu and Kashmir, while also defending the border. Within the same geographical space, the BSF, the ITBP, the CRPF, the state police and a host of intelligence agencies also fight the same battle. Compartmentalised within their organisational structures and reporting channels, the environment can best be described by the term 'Bugger's-Muddle'.

It is simply not possible to have a seamless flow of intelligence and execute joint operations in a streamlined manner owing to rigid structures, different operating procedures, non-compatible communications, different training and motivational standards and above all 'Turf'. Inter-organisational cooperation and camaraderie is a fallacy which has been propagated for long. This situation is replicated in the North-Eastern states of India. Unsurprisingly, responses to threats to National Security are stymied, incoherent and uncoordinated, lack synergy and above all wasteful in man-effort and economy.

Hierarchical Handicap to Responses

Manifestation of threats onto our National Sovereignty would broadly emanate across the domains of Air,

Maritime or Land. The response to an air-threat is most streamlined in India with the Air Force as the mother agency in-charge of our Air-Space. A response to Maritime Threats would face a time-delay due to the simple fact that two parallel agencies (rather than a single one), the Navy and the Coast Guard are both responsible, enhanced by the impossibility of maintaining clear jurisdictional separation while responding to it.

Responses to land-based threats are appallingly disjointed due to geographic and jurisdictional overlap of a multitude of agencies. It is not coincidental that incidences of Pathankot and Pulwama occurred. The worrisome aspect is that we continue to NOT learn from our mistakes, diverting our attention and efforts towards other aspects rather than address the key problem – Hierarchy of Command.



3 BSF trooper manning the International Border

Impending Disaster in War

The hamstrung responses to threats during peace-time will magnify disastrously in war. It will be surprising to learn that the stated mandates of every paramilitary body or CAPF with the exception of Assam Rifles and the Rashtriya Rifles (both of which are under operational control of the Army) have no enunciation in War. The BSF which until the last war had functioned under the operational control with the Army and had aligned and intimately trained with it, is today a parallel organisation with no cross-pollination of men or officers. Surprisingly today, the task of defending the border by occupying defensive positions in concert with the Army finds no mention in its mandate.

This alarming omission in task is resonated by the other border management agencies of ITBP and the SSB. This has resulted in these agencies relegating their capabilities to merely policing and deprived them of the capability to augment the Army in defending the border during war and freeing it to undertake offensive actions.

Being officered purely by the Indian Police Service (IPS) who do not have the domain knowledge of warfare or the nuances of fighting against a uniformed adversary, the ITBP or the SSB have simply not optimised their potential. The present ongoing debate of re-organising the Assam Rifles on the same lines of the ITBP will be another major blunder with ruinous consequences.

What Must be Done

The German Example

The effects of turf and parallel organisations can best be summarised by invoking the example of Germany during the Second World War. Despite the fact that Germany had finally overcome its combat regeneration capabilities in 1944, its resources were divided amongst numerous organisations such as the Volkssturm, SS Waffen, the LuftWaffe (which also maintained a Ground Army), the Sturmabteilung, Hitler Youth, etc which frittered away its advantage. Parallel organisations with independent command hierarchies when entrusted similar tasks only create dissonance. Hemmed in by a belligerent Pakistan and an

aggressive China we in India are emulating the follies of Germany.

Where Did We Err?

Our unique problem with two belligerent neighbours demands a large standing force. On the West we face the sixth largest military force and on the East the world's largest. Manpower requirements for a force commensurate to the task in hand are economically prohibitive. However, manpower intensive force cannot be wished away as territorial sanctity has to be ensured. Therefore, we should have economised and optimised our security forces in such a manner that CAPFs are able to complement the tasks of the Armed Forces and manpower can be sidestepped from one organisation to the other when necessity demands.

Instead of creating security organisations with integrated structures, we created parallel organisations. Every organisation must have a primary and a secondary role. While the secondary role of the Army is in the realms of policing, the secondary role of CAPFs should have been to assist the Armed Forces in War. The omission of enunciating war-time roles has curtailed the scope of individual training in Police Organisations and denied the employment of this vital resource in War.

What Can We Do?

One method to rectify this miscalculation is to revise our concept of employment of manpower of CAPFs and enhancing their manpower potential enabling them to undertake a variety of tasks within the security domain. Even at the individual level, the ability to swap manpower in between the CAPFs and the Armed Forces would enable a major upgrade in our capability of fighting a two front war.

In times of war, the CAPFs could become immediate feeder agencies supplying trained manpower to the Armed Forces (plugging the gestation gap between recruitment and training of fresh soldiers), and also retain the capacity to relieve the Army from low intensity areas. The idea is to view every man in uniform bearing arms as an asset empowered and capable of

effectively participating in all security related tasks?

Cross-Pollination

At the lowest level, the capability of an individual is incumbent primarily on his aptitude, the training he receives and leadership he follows. Therefore, given the training and leadership, every constable in a CAPF can become a soldier and every soldier can also carry out policing. Though it may not be practical or economical to train every individual within the CAPFs as a soldier, we seem to have closed a very important avenue to enhance his potency i.e. cross-pollination with the Army. In order to optimise our manpower and streamline our effort at combating threats to National Security we must carry out the following reforms:-



ITBP troopers patrolling using ice ski's

Subsequently, soldiers of the Army after completion of their terms of service can sidestep automatically into the CAPFs, retaining their currency to act as reservists and populating vacancies within these organisations. If religiously ensured, then within the span of a decade, all individuals in uniform (Army and CAPF) would have valuable exposure, capable of performing all security related tasks in both peace & war.

- **Command Hierarchy.** During peacetime, a unified HQ, staffed by Army and CAPF personnel and officers, under an appointed commander (based on seniority of operational service) should have operational jurisdiction. Supported by a unified intelligence apparatus, such a HQ will better be able to respond to internal threats. During War, the Army HQs will take precedence

- **Mandatory Tenures.** If every officer and individual in every security agency is mandated to serve for one or two tenures with the Army, he will not only develop deep linkages with it, but also by virtue of his posting become trained and more empowered in prosecuting war related tasks in addition to that of his domain. Similarly, formalising compulsory cross-pollination of all Officers and men of the Army into these sister agencies will broaden their horizons in analysing and performing tasks related to civil administration and policing.

and have under its command the resources of other services to augment its effort. Mandates for War should therefore be clearly enunciated for CAPFs and PMFs.

- **Intelligence Infrastructure.** The present diversion of intelligence effort by having multiple service specific intelligence agencies should be abandoned and a Unified Intelligence Branch capable of feeding both internal and external intelligence in war and peace, should be established. This intelligence amalgam should in-fact be christened into a separate Arm.



It is simply not possible to have a seamless flow of intelligence and execute joint ops in a streamlined manner owing to rigid structures, different operating procedures, non-compatible communications, different training and motivational standards & above all 'Turf'.

Inter-organisational cooperation & camaraderie is a fallacy which has been propagated for long.



What Will We Achieve?

10. The above minor changes will enable us to optimise our resources in terms of security. It will enable us to majorly upgrade our capabilities and streamline security responses by affording the following spin-offs:-

- **Manpower.** During war, the Army is always short on manpower. Cross-pollination with and by the Army will provide CAPFs with a strong skeletal structure upgrading their capabilities during war. The availability of 186 Battalions of BSF, 56 of ITBP, 41 of SSB & 246 of CRPF (529 Battalions in total), will majorly free up the Army from tasks such as Defence of low-priority areas, Rear Area Security etc, thus substantially increasing manpower available for offensive tasks.
- **Leadership Base.** Exposure gained through cross-pollination by officers of Army, BSF and IPS will hugely optimise mid-level leadership of all security agencies empowering and enabling them to handle varied portfolios across the spectrum in both peace and war. During peace-time, this can also iron out issues related to cadre management and lateral absorption.
- **Lateral Absorption.** Formalisation of this idea will also open doors for lateral absorption not only for army personnel (after completion of their terms with the Army), but also allow for sidestepping of officers and men of other services who discover greater aptitude for Army related tasks. This will enable retention of best talent pools for respective portfolios.
- **Opportunities & Allowances.** Officers and personnel posted to an organisation will have

the same opportunities and receive the same salaries and allowances as their counterparts in that organisation by virtue of location and commonality of threats they face. This will not only remove grounds for inter-service animosity but also promote camaraderie through greater interactions and alignment to cause.

- **Orientation Training.** Orientation and pre-induction training prior to cross-pollination can be carried out for a few weeks in training establishment of respective services designed in such a manner that knowledge/training-voids specific to the service are covered (on similar lines as Rashtriya Rifles).

Stumbling Blocks


However logical synergising multitude of agencies towards National Security may appear, such ideas in our Nation often get buried under perceived notions of impracticality, difficulty in implementation, and issues of turf. Undoubtedly, there will be a great deal of rehashing and restructuring clubbed with the methodology of implementation of the idea; but some turmoil is always associated with the dynamism of reform. The largest and most potent threat to any transformation, is without debate, the officer community, who restricted by traditional, compartmentalised thought-process are characterised

behaviourally by a substantial resistance to exit comfort zones, also possess an amazing propensity to disrupt and kill even the most progressive and logical reform despite it being in the National Interest. The next issue is definitely turf which is a bastion that can only be breached by strong directives from the highest levels of policy making.

Conclusion

Vietnam Border Defence Guards are a branch of the Vietnamese People's Army. The Tahan Phran which is the border patrolling force of Thailand is an auxiliary of the Royal Thai Army. The Border Defence Regiment of China works under operational control of the Central Military Commission. Nearly every nation in the world has a strong integration at the execution level between its Regular Armed Forces and other security agencies.

In 1986 America passed the Goldwater-Nichols act that laid the path for the Defence Reorganisation. We in India have yet to have that moment despite debacles such as 1962. Contrary to all logic and global precedence we continue to move towards parallel adiabatic structures ruled by turf sentiments, frittering away our National Resources and endangering National Security.

In the 18th Century prior to Nadir Shah's invasion, the Dutch representative to the Mughal Court noted that- 'The Mughal army was so large and finances so abundant that they could have conquered the whole known world; if only they had been trained in European Standards'. It was never a question of availability of resources. It was always the resistance to change and adapt which has been our perpetual malady. 

The article was initially written for Army War College (AWC).

Pankaj Bhagwati



During his service in the Indian Army Pankaj Bhagwati has served in Counter Insurgency Operations both in Jammu & Kashmir & North East India. Highlights of his service include participation in Operation Vijay in 1999, rendering service as an aviator for eight years, as a Staff Officer in UNIFIL during the Israeli Hezbollah Conflict of 2006, commanding a battalion in Kargil, a tenure in Information Warfare & as an instructor in Army War College. Views expressed are the authors own, and do not reflect the editorial policy of 'MVI'



'A Strong Military Power' Is Imperative For Indian & Regional Security

"The Galwan clashes and subsequent mobilisation of troops on both sides of the LAC has brought into public domain the weaknesses in our ability to defend our Territorial Integrity with reference to the Indo-Sino land borders."

by Brigadier Pradeep Sharma (Retd)

The news of 20 Indian soldiers killed in action on night 15/16 Jun 20 at Galwan and subsequent developments and rapid mobilisation on both sides of India-China Line of Actual Control (LAC) need serious assessment of India's options in the face of increasingly expansionist China.

Whilst there are reports of a 'Pull Back' by both Indian and Chinese forces, the boundary dispute with China and Kashmir issue with Pakistan remain unresolved keeping our forces tied down on both fronts. There is a need to protect our vulnerable sea coasts and maritime interests from likely Chinese belligerence that could pose a direct threat to our Naval power. With our resolve on issues like POK, Gilgit-Baltistan, Aksai Chin, BRI, Baluchistan and regional flare ups in Taiwan & Hongkong are some critical

areas of 'Conflict' that we are likely to be affected by.

The frequent harping and re drawing of maps to claim additional Indian territory, reference to the implosion of India due to the diverse communities through the 'Red Corridor' and tacit support to various insurgent groups are amongst the prominent worries that India must focus on.

Keep in view of the above background; we shall examine a few relevant factors of 'National Interest' and Power. A look at this from a historical perspective sufficiently indicates that our 'Neighbouring States' have always adopted an attitude of 'Conflict' instead of 'Cooperation', leaving us little choice than to 'Protect National Interest'?

A History of Two Nations: An Example of China

In 1949, Mao Tse-tung announced that the Chinese people must either lean to the side of Imperialism or to the side of Socialism. "To sit on the fence is impossible. A third road does not exist."

Throughout the 1970s, the Soviet Union displayed an increased military build-up and deployed its most sophisticated nuclear and conventional weaponry along the Sino-Soviet border. By the end of the decade, China faced 45 Soviet divisions in 1973, 150 Soviet SS-20 intermediate-range ballistic missiles, and the Soviet Backfire bomber.

Moscow was intent on coercing China to accommodate itself to Soviet interests. But China was unwilling to

“Will we lose the opportunity of bringing the age old and prolonged boundary dispute to a close or settle for an ambiguous ‘Agreement of Peace & Tranquillity’ only to be broken when the Chinese decide next?”

succumb to Soviet line of interest and stood her ground, relying on a strong Military.

Preserving national interest, the Chinese have today ‘outgrown’ themselves and indulge global engagement to improve the economy, build military power, and ultimately challenge the US too.

We must ask ourselves now: Has India evolved from a protest voice on the world stage to an active shaper of the international order?

Post-Independence, India’s strategic outlook was shaped by Jawaharlal Nehru, who viewed the West with scepticism and had a rosy view of Socialist ideals. This led to a foreign policy on three key pillars: non-alignment in the international arena; preservation of autonomy in domestic affairs; and solidarity among developing nations, particularly those that had recently gained independence from colonial powers.

This policy continued throughout the Cold War, when India leaned toward the Soviet Union while deftly maintaining strategic autonomy and charting its own course in a bipolar international order.

Successive events through the mid-80s leading up to the present times saw the USSR collapse and the Indian economy grow. We championed the cause of global warming, took the lead in the war against terror, and aligned with the US. While Pakistan lost trust, China emerged as a strategic competitor against the US and its allies.

India emerged as a nation-state that could play a pivotal role in balancing against China. Can India confront China like China did against the Soviet Union? Are we ready to stand alone? Or should we cry to Uncle Sam for help against China, the Big Bully?

True National Interests

In Another ‘Great Debate’: The National Interest of the United States, Hans J Morgenthau suggests that it is often believed that there is an irreducible core of national interest for any state at any given time, called the vital interest of a nation.

Vital interest is that on which, if necessary, a country is prepared to go to war. It is so important for the state



Republic Day Parade (2019)

that it is normally willing to go to war immediately or ultimately, in order to safeguard that interest.

The vital interest of a country is supposed to be so basic that it is often regarded as permanent and primary. All other aspects of the national interest remain subordinate to it. National interest invariably has an emotional appeal to the people, including for all states, as a minimum, the protection and preservation of their independence and territorial integrity.

Cooperation, conflict, war, competition, rapprochement and all take place keeping in mind the interest of the nation at a given situation.

Given the existing environment between India-China-Pakistan, the question to be asked to our government is simply one and one alone: Does the environment threaten our nation so much, so as to necessitate going to or being prepared to go to war? If so, have we prepared our military power adequately?

National Strength

What is the ‘strength of a nation’? One can get various theories on this aspect. However, in simple terms, it is best explained in the words of Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister.

In his words, a third of the Jews were destroyed 75 years ago and today, they are a force to reckon with. Stressing on national strength, he said: “The

strong survive, the weak don’t survive, you make peace and alliances with the strong.”

The first requirement, therefore, is to achieve the minimum strength to ensure survival. Distinguishing between soft and hard power, Netanyahu went on to prefer hard power. What does it mean to have power?

- Military power, military hardware, intelligence, other issues important for survival. Defence and security always come first. It costs a great deal of money, which comes from the second source of power.
- The second source is economic power, technology and industry.

- The third is political power which is possible only if military and economic power are met.
- The fourth is values and beliefs in our deep roots with our traditions and ancient cultures.
- Last is a free society in a democratic system that makes life worth living.

It would be correct to presume that in order to achieve the above, governments are responsible for correct policies and measures in national interest which includes the safety, security, and well-being of its citizens, as well as territorial integrity amongst others.

Settlement of Conflicts: International Politics

The situation in the Indian Subcontinent brings to mind an established fact that it is the more 'Powerful' who call the shots!

When relating this wisdom to International Relations it would be right to suggest that 'Observance of Rights of States' depends upon their Power to compel respect on the part of other States. Hence, one needs to understand, that the pursuit of National Interests amongst others, promotes the pattern of political behaviour seeking security, respect for its rights, realization of its aspirations and ability to impose their will upon others.

State policy in relation to this comes in several forms of coercion short of war. Being the last and final instrument of coercion ; 'war' is generally preceded by 'questions of legal rights, obligations, threat of use of force, posturing, ultimatums, mobilisation, economic means of coercion like discriminatory tariffs, suspension of commerce, boycott, breaches of treaties, diplomacy including the breaking of diplomatic ties, international pressure and negotiations.

It is only once these fail to bring about a desirable settlement/resolution that a Nation resorts to War as a means of settling disputes. Only in that sense and after an interval of 'Bloodshed and Destruction' , the weaker party yields to the stronger or both fall exhausted to agree to a compromise

which may have seemed unacceptable so long as each felt confident of imposing its will on the other.

States resort to War because armed coercion is an instrument of State Power and a means of protecting and promoting National Interests. Most wars break out after threats of war fail, conversely most threats of war or other coercive means fail if a Nations 'War Waging Ability' is either weak or questionable.

In this background, the next question that begs an answer is: Have our governments, past and present, ensured a strong military power for India? Did we plug the gaps? If so, why is it that neither Pakistan nor China have been contained? Why do our borders remain volatile? Does the 'Military Leadership' fully understand the implication of the term 'Loyalty', if so, have they expressed themselves effectively to the Political Leadership in Organisational & National Interest?

Some questions need to be left unanswered for the reader's imagination to consider. Indeed, we have miles to go.

Conclusion


The Galwan clashes and subsequent mobilisation of troops on both sides of the LAC has brought into public domain the weaknesses in our ability to defend our Territorial Integrity with reference to the Indo-Sino land borders. Redrawing the map and claiming large parts of Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Ladakh amongst others,

setting up Naval Bases in the Indian Ocean and providing tacit support to insurgents apart from the close ties with Pakistan should have got our leadership thinking long back !

The 'COVID-19' episode has put China on the back foot, international opinion is currently weighing heavily against China and Taiwan , Hongkong & Tibet are once again on the rise. Protective measures to 'Block' Chinese products amount to an Economic Blockade. Simultaneously there are suggestive indications in the media informing us of a calibrated withdrawal by both Indian & Chinese Forces.

Will we lose the opportunity of bringing the age old and prolonged boundary dispute to a close or settle for an ambiguous 'Agreement of Peace & Tranquillity' only to be broken when the Chinese decide next? Is it not 'high time' to settle issues relating to construction of Dams and much more?

India can ill afford a weak military power, our Navy, Air force and Army must get the kind of support the environment demands.

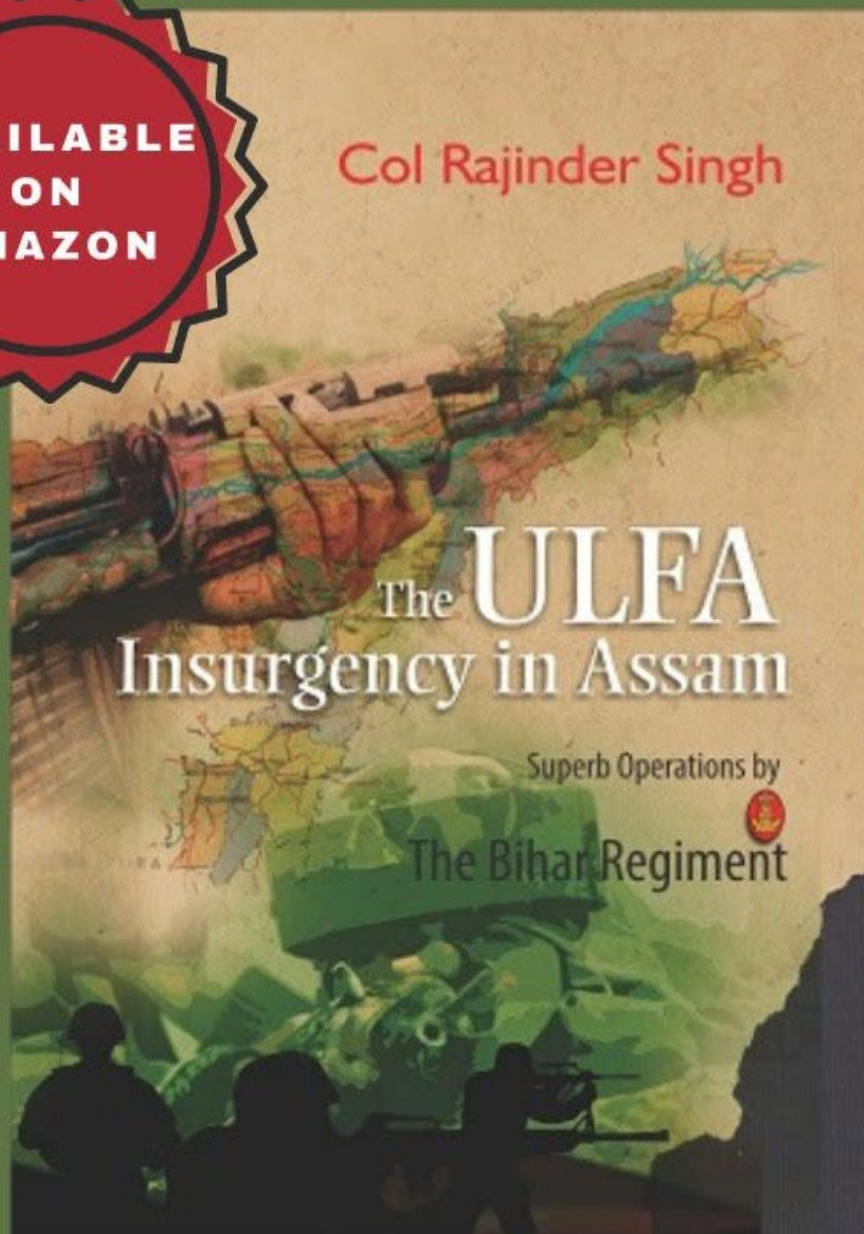
With a Strong Government in place, an NSA, CDS & Chiefs of choice, public opinion demanding strong action, expectations are high. It is time for the Government to not only set right all the earlier wrongs done to the Defence forces but initiate all necessary measures to build a strong Nation with a 'Strong Military Power'. 

Brigadier Pradeep Sharma



The author was commissioned into the JAT regiment and has had rich operational experience. He has seen closely the happenings in J&K, Punjab, Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram in operational circumstances. In addition, he has had the distinction of being, selected to raise the NSG and being a squadron commander with the 51 SAG, an Instructor in the IMA, Colonel General Staff of an active division, Commander of a Brigade in super HAA, Directing Staff in AWC, and the Brig Gen Staff responsible for facilitating the training in various Military Establishments. He has been a member of study groups in China as well as Officer Cadre management in his time. The author can be reached on email: pradeepsharma66@gmail.com. Views expressed are the authors own, and do not reflect the editorial policy of 'MVI'

"The book carries many lessons for civilians, military and media personnel who are charged with the responsibility of fighting militancy."— Lt Gen NK Kapur (Retd)



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China's Strategic Myopia

“The Chinese are strategically myopic. It is now clear that too many tactical objectives were attempted through miscalculation without thinking through strategic ramifications or having a fall-back option.”

by Lieutenant General PR Shankar (Retd)

The Sino-Indian military pause is part of a geostrategic continuum. Some domestic and international experts opine that India is cornered and in a pickle. They are as myopic as the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) planners. Bottom line, it has been China's choice to come in uninvited. It is India's choice to let it go back.

As per Yun Sun (a Chinese Scholar in Stimson Centre) “If a strategic friendship with India is untenable, it frees up room for tactical gains”. It explains the Chinese aggression. It is a politically motivated, expansionist tactical land grab adopting a strategy of “Belligerent War Avoidance”. It needs a matching political response. Surprisingly, some feel that if we cannot evict the Chinese militarily from Finger 4 and restore status quo ante, we have lost it. The issues

are larger. We will just see who is in a corner.

Two Front Situation

India has thwarted China twice. Unchecked incursion at Naku La and Galwan could have resulted in our troops in the Giagong Plateau or the DSDBO road being cut off, respectively. If any of these attempts were successful it would have been disaster. If the ambush at Galwan had been successful and had the Chinese suffered lesser casualties, China would have declared victory all the way back to Middle Kingdom and would have painted the town red of having taught India a lesson. Finito.

Full credit to our boys for giving China a bloody nose. China has been able to come up to Finger 4 in Pangong Tso

area and firm in due to a relatively better approach to the Fingers Area. The core issue is how to get China to restore status quo ante. For that talks are on at appropriate levels and some disengagement has commenced. Besides this, both armies have mobilized and are battle ready. Notwithstanding, after their Galwan debacle, big talk and threats have disappeared from that comic strip called Global Times.

Enhanced posturing has gravitated forces towards the Chinese rear door. If India fixes considerable Chinese resources here, they will not be available elsewhere.

In the South China Sea, China is carrying out a major Naval exercise which portends an island grab. USA is also carrying out an exercise in the area with two carrier strike forces to foreclose that

option. Mutatis mutandis this poses a direct threat to Chinese mainland also. Additionally USA has redeployed forces from Europe into this area. PLA's force gravitation would have taken place towards the East Coast also. If anything goes wrong.

PLA could be short on ground forces. As per Yun Sun "China has always been careful to avoid a two-front confrontation with America in the east and India in the west". Not this time. Careless or myopic? Overall PLA is stretched in a tinder box situation. If a shooting match starts at either end, China is in a bigger pickle.

Geostrategic Issues

China has opened too many geopolitical fronts—military aggression, Hong Kong, Corona Virus etc. Our Prime Ministers visit to Leh conveyed unprecedented strategic resolve. The message to China – India will not back down. The message to the world—China can be stood up to. In Ladakh, the Indian Armed forces hold a clear edge for multiple reasons. China will get a rude shock if it attempts to force the issue. India is not in a state of adverse asymmetry with China. Read the Havard Belfer Centre report.

The current Indo-US posturing emboldens smaller nations to face China squarely. UK is upset over the Hong Kong security law and seeks more hands to handle China. Taiwan has been actively cocking a snook in China. Australia has increased its defense budget by 40% for the next 10 years. France has pledged steadfast support to India. Germany and USA have blocked Chinese anti-India moves at UNSC. A dissipating five eyes Intelligence is back together. The QUAD is taking better shape.

Vietnam and Philippines are protesting Chinese activity in South China Sea. Balance of ASEAN, Japan and S Korea are also pushing back. Even Cambodia one of China's major beneficiary is not toeing the line. Lo and behold! Its iron brother seems to be rusting. A recent view in Dawn is curious. "It would be naive to think that Islamabad and Beijing are not exchanging notes on what's unfolding in Eastern Ladakh. Yet, it would be equally simplistic to think that there is about to be a pincer

movement by the two against India. China has its own reasons for doing what it has embarked upon, and that policy does not include any free lunches or simplistic scenarios". China is isolated and the world is uniting against its bullying as per New York Post. I agree with it.

Digital Strike:

The fallout of India banning 59 Chinese apps citing security and sovereignty issues is going to be widespread. It circumvents WTO and GATT regulations. China talks of legally protecting its interests. Whom will it appeal to? International Court of Justice? Ah ha! Laughable. In addition, Huawei and ZTE will be eventually squeezed out from India, USA, and UK. Chinese military aggression legally empowers other



Representational Image: Peoples Liberation Army

countries to follow India's lead. Tik Tok alone represents a 6bn USD loss.

That will widen irreversibly. Chinese firms are being excluded from contracts in Telecom and Infrastructure sectors in India. Many Chinese firms are being delisted from US stock markets. Market reputations count and valuations will be hit severely. Incidentally, the balance of trade used to be around \$60bn in China's favour. I read a report that it is down to \$44bn. If India picks up the slack on offer in the digital world China's pole position is under threat.

It is an Indian opportunity to exploit. It also opens a case to firewall China out of the digital world on a reciprocal basis.

The cost of the landgrab in Pangong Tso will keep increasing as time goes by. The digital isolation is severe and is beyond normal understanding.

Economic Slide:

Examine any Chinese economic index. It is going southwards. Imports are down. Exports are down. Consumption is weak. BRI is in deep trouble. Military expenditure on two fronts will spike. Jobs are scarce. If bloggers and gamers are considered as 'employed' in China, the situation is bad. The digital strike has wider economic ramifications. The virus is dampening the economy and will not allow revival beyond a point.

The theory that "while we are weak, others are weaker" will hold up to a point. As the current situation and the virus persist, decoupling will move

faster. There is an opinion that disengaging from the noxious elements of the Chinese economy isn't a divorce, it's a deworming. The law of diminishing returns will set in soon. The famed and flaunted comprehensive national power of China is eroding. An aging China will hasten the erosion.

Lebensraum and Nazism:

Communist China, first usurped East Turkestan, Tibet, and Aksai Chin militarily and made a deal illegally with Pakistan for the Shaksgam Valley. Later they coerced Central Asian Republics into parting with territory when settling borders. Now they are again looking at Indian territory from a

convoluted perspective. It is a precursor to slicing territory off Nepal, Bhutan, and Russia. The claim on Vladivostok has clearly rattled Russian neutrality.

China claims sovereignty over the entire South China Sea and disputes with all maritime neighbours. Debt trap diplomacy supports expansionism through BRI and CPEC. Hambantota in the pocket, Pakistan is the next target. Hitler's lebensraum pales in comparison. Examine the sociological pairings. Middle kingdom and Aryan supremacy. Century of Humiliation and Versailles Treaty. Nazi and Uighur concentration camps.

In some ways the Galwan Valley intrusion is akin to the Ardennes Offensive. Xi Jinping and Hitler desire to create the greatest military on earth and orchestrate operations. Public exhortation to prepare for war under garb of "peaceful rise". If China is not checked now, a scourge will rule. India has provided a bridgehead to stem it. Will the world leaders heed the message and act? Or. Will they be Chamberlains at Potsdam to allow reincarnation of Hitler?

Century of Self-Humiliation:

Much is made that Chinese seeks revenge on the "Century of Humiliation". However, what is hidden is the post imperial "Century of Communist Engineered Self Humiliation". It encompasses two man-made famines, Civil War (the Long March), the failed Great Leap, Expansionism, the Purges and disastrous wars with Japan, Russia and Vietnam.

Do not forget the disastrous "one child policy" which will hasten an aging China into decline. The Communist Party has distorted history and peddled it. We believed it. Chinese strategic thinking is insidious. We fell for it.

Strategic Myopia:

The Chinese are strategically myopic. It is now clear that too many tactical objectives were attempted through miscalculation without thinking through strategic ramifications or having a fall-back option. PLA has failed in Ladakh in achieving its primary objectives. Indian infrastructure is intact, and its development is going to be trebled.

All their enforcement actions are having opposite effects. India by itself has a bouquet of options to handle China. These are unfolding. The disastrous Galwan ambush and its handling has made India the underdog and everyone is rooting for it. World opinion, trust, and image matters to China. That is on India's side. Any military confrontation with India runs the risk of driving the Indo-US relationship closer.

That has happened. Beyond that India and USA have discovered a strategic partnership paradigm where China can be forced into an adverse two front worst case option. Very importantly, China has managed to shred the One China Policy. Where are my bifocals?

The Chinese are now caught in a situation. After Galwan, they cannot risk another setback. They cannot declare victory and go back after the hidden losses. After the PMs talk, the area between Finger 4 and 8 is a mirage. Till they continue to sit there it will continue to fuel Indian and international antagonism to check the Chinese. If they continue to sit there past August, the elements will get them. Very importantly, this generation of Indians will always consider China as its enemy.

They are not prepared for all this by any stretch of imagination. China might soon realize that Nations do not run on conflict and nationalism alone. Either democracy or economic prosperity must go with it. If one goes out, the other comes in. Need to

get my long-term vision checked. Any Chinese ophthalmologist around?

Strategic Gains:

Where does it leave India? Having stood up to China, international opinion has gravitated to our side despite some Chinese acolytes and disbelievers. The Armed Forces will stand resolute. That confidence and message is quite clear. Has China miscalculated the rise of India? That is what South China Morning Post thinks! Are we seeing the emergence of India as a new global power? That is what Dawn thinks!

This event has probably paved way for a seat on the UN high table. However we still need to focus on seeing the Chinese off properly. A process is underway. Let us have the strategic patience to go through the long haul. Till then do not trust the Chinese. Shoot first and talk later. In the meanwhile we must capitalize on the strategic opportunities which have opened.

Atma Nirbharta, decoupling and distancing from China, strategic independence and digital leadership need to be converted into practical programs and outcomes. That is also a long haul. That will be our victory.

"From little acorns grow mighty oaks. Let us thank our boys at Galwan who stood fast and resolute in the face of odds, they have made it possible for India to hold its head high in the pantheon of things theirs might be a small tactical action it is that little acorn from which a mighty India will grow"



Lieutenant General PR Shankar

Lt Gen PR Shankar was India's Director General (DG) Artillery. He is highly decorated and qualified with vast operational experience. He is now a Professor in the Aerospace Dept of Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras. You can reach him on Twitter: @palepurshankar, Email ID: pravishankar3@gmail.com. Views expressed are the authors own, and do not reflect the editorial policy of 'MVI.'

COVID-19 & ITS CHALLENGES Is India Future Ready?

Edited by
VK Ahluwalia | Amrita Jash

Today the world has stopped at COVID-19: envisaging a make or break moment for the world and its people. In this backdrop, the overarching thesis of the book is centred on offering an Indian perspective to COVID-19 and its challenges. This book seeks to examine the pandemic largely from a 'national security perspective'. In doing so, it focuses mainly on India's national security, which has been studied from a two-fold perspective: the politico-economic-strategic environment as impacted by COVID-19; and the criticality of non-traditional and traditional

threats to India's security, in that order of priority. The essence of the volume lies in assessing the threats, challenges and opportunities that are likely to shape India's national security strategy in the post-pandemic world order.

With its holistic approach, this book has nine chapters, which examines the need for India to prioritise: human security and environmental security in its national security; economic growth and sustainability in national policy; self-reliance as the key to success; taking a decisive role in global arena; re-appraisal of India's military thinking; the evolving role of the Indian Armed Forces; and use of technology for maximising security- all aimed to shape a better future for India.

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COVID-19 & ITS CHALLENGES Is India Future Ready?

Edited by
VK Ahluwalia | Amrita Jash

Price: ₹ 750 /-

Binding: Hardback

Subject: Social Science/ COVID-19

Territory: World

ISBN: 978-93-90095-02-5

PENTAGON PRESS LLP



www.pentagonpress.in



Crimson Tide Sweeps Nepal

“We must acknowledge that communists of Nepal have sold their country to China even if not yet completely. Any government in Nepal will need support of communist parties. If our foreign policy, national security advisors and R&AW find themselves stumped with the rapid turn of events, fault is ours.”

by Lieutenant General Prakash Katoch (Retd)

The recent turn in India-China relations and events in Nepal surprised many but not those who know that China plans 50 years ahead and kept track of developments – joining the dots as they emerged. In fact, Nepal should be a case study how China plans. Mao Zedong had famously said, “Tibet is the palm of China and Ladakh, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan and NEFA (read Arunachal Pradesh) are its fingers.” In a recent media interview Lobsang Sangay, President of Tibetan government-in-exile recently warned Nepal that after occupying Tibet, China is looking to accomplish its ‘Five-fingers plan’, adding “China is driving a wedge between centuries-old Indo-Nepal relations to quietly colonise the Himalayan country.” China has already soaked Nepal

communists in red dye. How did China achieve this?

With Nepal priding itself the only Hindu Kingdom in the world, China knew conquering this finger wouldn’t be easy. Mao found the answer in a communist revolution. An article in Debka files of 2002 reads, “The Maoist insurgency in Nepal may be one of the last surviving operations of a little known Chinese intelligence organ known as the Ministry of Foreign Liaison, a body of CCP set up in Mao Tse Tung’s time.

This ministry recruited and supported mostly Third World extremist Maoist groups, such as in Nepal ... Burma Philippines ... Cambodia, Japanese Red Army, and ... in Peru. Not all those revolutionary movements

survived. One that did is the Nepalese Maoist Communist Party of Nepal. Chinese intelligence infiltration operations into Nepal, that began decades ago, set off a self-perpetuating Maoist “People’s War” that has never really ended. It would be in China’s interests to install a regime in Kathmandu that is not too friendly with the US or India.”

Mao was China’s President from September 1954 to April 1959. His Ministry of Foreign Liaison must have set its sights on Nepal in early 1955 – some 65 years ago. The bloody Maoists insurgency (also termed Civil War) was launched by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists) against the Nepalese Government on February 13, 1996 with the stated purpose of overthrowing Nepal’s monarchy and

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Nepal has committed nine projects to China's BRI: Kathmandu-Kyerung Railway; Madan Bhandari University; Galchi-Rasuwegadhi-Kerung 400 KV Transmission Line; 762 MW Tamor hydropower project; 426 MW Fukot-Karnali Picking run-of-the-river hydropower project; upgrading Rasuwagadhi Highway; Tokha-Chahare road; Kimangthan-Hile road, and; road connecting Dipayal with Tibet

”

establishing a Peoples Republic. It ended with the Comprehensive Peace Accord on November 21, 2006.

Notably, Pushpa Kamal Dahal (alias Prachanda) wanted the armed rebellion to be launched in 1991 but lacked consensus. The insurgency resulted in deaths of over 17,000 and internal displacement of hundreds of thousands; characterized by massacres, purges, summary executions, kidnappings and worst of crimes against humanity – on same lines what Mao had perpetrated in China. On June 1, 2001, King Birendra of Nepal and most of the royal family were massacred. Crown Prince Dipendra was accused of the killings. He 'supposedly' died on June 4, 2001.

China actively cultivated two Nepalese Maoist leaders of the civil war – KP Sharma Oli (present Prime Minister of Nepal) and Prachanda. Both have flourished under Beijing's tutelage and are indebted to China. Oli was first arrested in 1970 for subversive politics and later imprisoned for 14 consecutive years (1973-1987).

He has served as Prime Minister from October 11, 2015 to August 3, 2016. Prachanda was part Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) during the Maoist insurgency. Now from Nepal Communist Party (NCP), he has been Prime Minister twice – 2008-2009 and 2016-2017. In between his two premierships, Prachanda had told Nepalese media, "The ultimate war will be with the Indian Army". Visiting China when not Prime Minister, he was still accorded welcome as 'Head of State' in Beijing. In February 2018, Oli vowed to stop Nepalese from joining Indian Army. It is evident both Oli and Prachanda parrot what Beijing wants.

India and Nepal have historical cultural relations. Some six hundred thousand Indians are in Nepal presently and more than seven million Nepalese are in India, serving in Indian Army, police, private sector or otherwise residing in India. India pays US\$12 billion annually to Nepal-origin pensioners from Indian Army (80,000), Assam Rifles (17,000) and 11,000 widows of soldiers. Total bilateral trade



Anti-India protests in Nepal

in 2018-19 reached INR 57,858 crore (US\$ 8.27 Bn).

Both countries have a Power Exchange Agreement since 1971 for meeting power requirements in border areas. Some 150 Indian ventures operating in Nepal are engaged in manufacturing, services (banking, insurance, dry port, education and telecom), power sector and tourism industries. Total economic assistance earmarked under 'Aid to Nepal' budget in FY 2019-20 was INR 1200 crore.

China began constructing the 770 kms railway connecting Lhasa with Nepal's border town of Khasa in 2007. A Nepalese military delegation visiting India in 2013 sought assistance to establish a Think Tank in Kathmandu was only promised

technical assistance, no funds. Very next year China's Confucius Institute in Kathmandu University co-established by Hebei University of Economics and Business, with full support from Office of Chinese Language Council International.

Post the two-month blockade of India-Nepal border in 2015, Oli signed Trade and Transit Treaty with China in 2016 during his first premiership, giving Nepal access to seven Chinese seaports and dry ports. The blockade was an economic-humanitarian crisis – Indians in Nepal witnessed four km long lines for fuel, non-availability of medicines and severe food shortages. Nepal was pushed closer to China for which it accused India. Nepalese financial system was also affected by sudden Indian demonetization.

Nepal has committed nine projects to China's BRI: Kathmandu-Kyerung Railway; Madan Bhandari University; Galchi-Rasuwegadhi-Kerung 400 KV Transmission Line; 762 MW Tamor hydropower project; 426 MW Fukot-Karnali Picking run-of-the-river hydropower project; upgrading Rasuwagadhi Highway; Tokha-Chahare road; Kimangthan-Hile road, and; road connecting Dipayal with Tibet. Over 90 percent of total FDI in Nepal comes from China since past three years. One example of Chinese FDI in Nepal is the Hongshi Shivam Cement, a joint partnership between Hong Kong Red Lion No 3 Cement Co Ltd (70 per cent), wholly owned subsidiary of Hongshi (China) and Shivam Cement Pvt Ltd, Nepal (30 per cent). Another US\$ 140 cement factor is in the process of being set up by China.

China plans 50 years ahead and kept track of developments – joining the dots as they emerged. In fact, Nepal should be a case study how China plans. Mao Zedong had famously said, “Tibet is the palm of China and Ladakh, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan and NEFA (read Arunachal Pradesh) are its fingers.

China has gripped Nepal with hard and soft power. PLA soldiers in uniform were observed in northern Nepal in areas bordering Tibet known to have uranium deposits as early as 2014. China deployed PLA in these areas to grab uranium exploration and block Tibetan refugees. Such PLA deployment also catered for nibbling Nepalese territory which is happening already but in connivance Nepalese communists.

Nepal cannot stand up to Nepal anyway I bigger nations don't. About 500-600 Nepalese army personnel are presently under training in China. China provides scholarships to scores of Nepalese students, as also sponsors study tours for hundreds of Nepali civil servants, security personnel, politicians, civil society members, and journalists annually. Large number of Chinese tourists visit Nepal every year – 1,50,00 visited in 2018. Mandarin is now mandatory in Nepal's schools with the teachers coming from China who will imbibe anti-India sentiments in upcoming generations.

China has become major player in Nepali politics and the economy especially after it managed to combine the two major communist parties in Nepal and bring them to power. In May 2020 there were signs of split between Oli and Prachanda but Beijing managed to broker truce between the two. Events moved rapidly after this China's behest; new Nepalese map claiming three Indian territories, Nepal deploying armed police on its border with India, firing on Indian nationals inside Nepal, Nepalese army chief visiting the border with Pithoragarh (India) to establish border posts, anti-India broadcasts by Nepal Radio, move to amend Constitution of Nepal to curb Madhes citizenship rights and the like.

Unconfirmed reports indicate Oli government has agreed in principle to allow China deploying 3000 PLA personnel in Kalapani area under garb of Nepalese army. China's ultimate aim would be to establishing itself along India-Nepal border in conjunction the Nepalese army assisted by Pakistan's ISI to threaten India's northeast. It was on Chinese behest that erstwhile Pakistani Prime Minister visited Nepal and presently Imran Khan is jumping with joy to support Oli.

ISI has been operating from Nepal against India for long and has intensified activities in wake of the India-China standoff. The security establishment has noticed increase in presence of ISI-backed groups along India-Nepal borders. Few years back, four Chinese nationals were caught coming across with fake Indian documents on a mission to meet Naga rebel groups. On July 1, 2020 two Chinese of Tibetan-origin were caught coming via Nepal; one a special agent of People's Armed Police integral to PLA and the other with links to Indians in Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh. The implications are clear with many that can come through the porous borders.

Our policy makers are sanguine about India-Nepal military-to-military relations as also our cultural relations. But it is the government that matters; military and public have little say – same as in Sri Lanka. Immediate attention is needed to the India-Nepal border. As for the current Oli-Prachanda rift, apparently latter feels left out of the limelight. China will try its best to broker peace between the two, possibly through top-level power sharing deal like in Israel and Afghanistan. If the Oli government stays as part of power sharing or by itself, we may witness a China-Nepal Extradition Treaty for Tibetans. China would want this immediately as a sequel to America's bill to recognize Tibet.

We must acknowledge that communists of Nepal have sold their country to China even if not yet completely. Any government in Nepal will need support of communist parties. If our foreign policy, national security advisors and R&AW find themselves stumped with the rapid turn of events, fault is ours. We need to face realities and plan accordingly on long-term basis like China. 🇮🇳

(This article was first published in the 'Indian Defence Review' and has been reproduced with due permission from the author, who is a supporter MVI. Views expressed are the authors own, and do not reflect the editorial policy of 'Mission Victory India')

Lieutenant General Prakash Katoch



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Special Operations Cases Studies: Lessons for India and India's Special Forces: History and Future of India's Special Forces. The author can be reached Email: prakashkatoch7@gmail.com



BOOK REVIEW: **MISSION VICTORY INDIA**

By Lt Col Balasaheb Barge, 15 Maratha LI, 1965 & 1971 War Veteran

'Mission Victory India' (Volume 5 of Victory India Campaign books) Edited & authored by Col Vinay B Dalvi with essays, articles and responses from 30 military veterans and academicians is indeed a 'treasure book' strongly supported by select print media, especially Gomantak Times Goa and Fauji India magazine. The book gives immense insight into multifarious military issues of national importance.

The book is informative containing valuable articles and essays with rich responses, honest and clear opinions, concrete recommendations, and pragmatic views, constructive write ups aimed at honest and progressive approach for the betterment of the armed forces. This is in fact the need of the hour!

Essentially, both aspects, i.e. proper and meaningful training with mature leadership need greater attention to maintain the standards achieved by our predecessors to arrest the slide down. .In nutshell, overhauling is desired at all levels without any fear or compromising trends.

The mindset needs to be positive especially at higher levels. Unfortunately, the armed forces are exposed to the undesirable elements and hence there appears to be some turmoil. Soonest we return to the apolitical state the better it will be. Honesty is the key factor! Everything will fall well in place. As all know, our armed forces are the largest and disciplined force in the country. Hence, the protective approach is a must. Also care is required to be taken by all 'Think Tanks' that such a fine and dedicated force of mankind is kept well protected before it disintegrates into thin air!

In retrospect, it appears that the present situation is deficient of moral values and precious principles which has resulted over a period of time and now requires a strong and corrective action before the situation gets into retrograde mode. Essence must be well thought out with well desired training and very high order of leadership.

The collective work of this book includes articles and essays with responses from several learned and committed veterans and academicians which is undoubtedly praiseworthy! It has very high value to be emulated for participation and practice. The relentless pursuit can bring about definite positive change and past glorious days of high training standards and moral & ethical values.

Book details : '**Mission Victory India**'. 217 pages Price Rs 795 /\$27.95

Publisher Pentagon Press LLP, New Delhi. email rajanaryaa@gmail.com & rajan@pentagonpress.in

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Multiple External Threats & Safeguarding National Interests Demand Renewed Indian Foreign Policy

“It is time that we shed the veil of secrecy and compartmentalization surrounding Foreign Policy and involve the talent India has in our deliberations to enable the framing and articulation of a pro-active, positive and futuristic Foreign Policy.”

by Major General VK Madhok (Retd)

Today in this 21st century due the multifarious and complex challenges confronting our country there is an imperative and inescapable need to review our Foreign Policy to safeguard all our vital interests and protect our sovereignty. The justification for the review and recommendations in this context have been made in the succeeding paragraphs. These are not adequately validated or ratified but must be considered or debated for their worth!

It is time that we shed the veil of secrecy and compartmentalization surrounding Foreign Policy and involve the talent India has in our deliberations to enable the framing and articulation

of a pro-active, positive and futuristic Foreign Policy. Any further delay on this will result in our Cabinet ministers once again rushing to the US, China, France and other countries without much headway or conclusions being reached and leaving the citizens wondering and ignorant.

Critical Issues & India's Vital Interest

Five Critical Issues

- Today, it is of vital interest to India to see as to who rules Afghanistan? A Fundamentalist Taliban regime in place there can pose serious threats to India's security. Specially, when Al

Qaida is striving desperately to get hold of some sort of nuclear arsenal. Further, India is as much interested in oil and gas resources of Central Asian Republics as US, UK, and Russia. And for that matter, from Myanmar and Bangladesh. Towards that end, insufficient efforts have been made so far.

- India's second vital interest lies in the possibility of a threat from its eastern flank, Myanmar. Which is now being termed as Chinese satellite. The saying as it goes is, that Myanmar's foreign policy is drafted in Beijing. India needs to actively engage Myanmar with diplomacy in the first instance besides to meet future challenges

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“Why not recognize the Tibetan Govt in Dharamshala? Above all the country must revisit Doctrine and develop a second/first strike capability along with its missile systems, now that a bold step has been taken to conduct the nuclear tests.”

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from the Chinese Navy as well as to counter support from Myanmar's bases to various secessionist movements in our northeast.

- The third important issue is that the country must decide once and for all whether we want our territories back from China and Pakistan or to compromise and surrender these? But the question is, can India afford to compromise? If it did, many more problems would arise. If not, then the country must prepare itself with all its might. We have kept quiet and let China get on with creating a strategic corridor from Gwadar deep seaport via PoK to KK Pass and then to Sinkiang. We have not questioned Beijing about the 4100 sq. kms of PoK- Indian territory, given to China in 1962 for construction of KK Highway by Islamabad. A lot of explaining would have to be done to the citizens for this most timid approach in our dealings with China and Pakistan. Further, the country must decide on the Tibetan issue on merits and not because the Chinese want it in a different way and will not have any anti- Chinese propaganda from the Indian side. Why not recognize the Tibetan Government at Dharamshala? Above all the country must revisit Doctrine and develop a second/ first strike capability along with its missile systems, now that a bold step has been taken to conduct the nuclear tests. All these issues and many others lie in the domain of foreign relation policies.
- The fourth issue is that China and Russia have been brought together owing to US pressure. Russia has a choice between China and India. Russia will not intervene in case of an Indo- Pak or a Sino- Indian conflict. Further, Russia does not wish to lose its arms market in China or India. But it will start selling arms to Pakistan should India go to purchase

arms and specified equipment from other countries. This tricky situation has arisen due to lack of efforts for Indigenization by India.

- Finally, keeping India's National interests steadily in view and in full belief in the proposed doctrine, Foreign Policy planners should set about taking initiatives at least 10 years ahead on the various issues some of which are listed at end of this article .



The Nerve Centre of India's Foreign Policy

Revamping 'Ministry for External Affairs'

But all what has been proposed cannot be done in isolation. To do so, the External Affairs Ministry would need to be revamped in the first instance. As it is one understands, some sort of start has been made to sanction doubling of the present strength of 650 officers. While doing so it has to be ensured that India needs quality and not quantity in the MEA. Further, the Nation does not know as to what the NSC or the NSA is up to? There is no reason as to why they should not bring together experts from diverse fields to identify India's vital interests and make concrete proposals to achieve these. To reiterate, the insulation between Defence and Foreign Affairs would have to end.

The Launching of a ruthless program for Indigenization of Defence hardware which would involve the Private industry has been delayed inordinately. A pragmatic Defence policy to support Foreign Policy objectives, to ensure that India's armed forces are ready to exercise a Military option when the Nation demands it, has yet to be framed

Today, India's image both within the country and abroad is that of a weak, dependent country which seeks aid and protection from outside. A country which has high ideals but low vigour to implement these. A country which has adhoc Foreign and Defence Policies. No wonder, no one listens to India any longer because the country has nothing to give except markets and cheap labour. A case in point is that during ex PM's visit to the US to participate in the Non

Nuclear Proliferation conference from 10- 15 April 2010, India, the founding father of NAM was excluded from a conference of NAM leaders convened by the Vice President of UN on Apr 14, 2010 because India had not signed the NPT. Isn't it a snub? If our image is to change, then the country will need a Renewed Foreign Policy based on hard realism, strength, protection of its vital interests, which may also include the restoration of our original geographical boundaries as there were on Aug 15, 1947.

The Way Forward

An attempt has been made in these missives to draw attention to some crucial issues concerning our Foreign Policy. Policy Makers would do well not to ignore the following three recommendations:

Firstly: Citizens have a right to know as to the basis on which India's National Aim, its interests and doctrine to achieve these have been arrived at? In future, they will demand to know this. Which is only possible by means of meaningful debates in the Parliament.

Secondly: What is the process which is being followed by the Government to arrive at its Foreign Policy Objectives? US, Russia, France, or China, they all have a laid down procedure and process to finalize their Foreign Policies. We, in India have been following ad-hoc methods.

Thirdly: Compartmentalization will need to be removed. Defence must play its part in Finalizing Foreign Policy. Armed forces must know their objectives-both in war and peace. Or they will be severely handicapped in restructuring their organizations, or initiate demands for newer equipment to the DRDO or the Ministry and most important, plan their training, tactics and strategy.

Fourthly: To start with, we will have to put our Governance right, initiate measures for population control, speed up oil exploration and give an impetus to Indigenization of Defence hard and soft ware and above all, educate our society about India's Foreign Policy."

Some Proposals for a Futuristic Foreign Policy

- Ensure that besides external and internal threats to India's northeast, the chances of Pakistan or China (with Myanmar as the base) waging a second proxy war in that area are checked and eliminated.
- Formulate and announce a pragmatic policy on India's nuclear plans, Kashmir and towards those countries which are supplying arms to militants or supporting Proxy wars or other irregular warfare in such a way, that it shows India's will to pre-empt such moves instead of being caught off guard.
- Establish workable and not ideal, relations, alliances, agreements and plans for procurement of oil and gas from Turkmeniston, Kyrgistan, Iran, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Thailand

in addition to what India is getting now from Saudi Arabia other Gulf states or Iraq.

- 4. Forestall likely Chinese initiatives in the Bay of Bengal, analyse fully Beijing's "strings of pearl" philosophy in the Indian Ocean in the early 21st Century and if necessary, enter into Maritime agreements with Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Myanmar to neutralize the likely Chinese influence. No initiatives have been taken here. In fact we have let China take on the construction of Hamantota port-150 kms South of Colombo which was offered to India for construction seven years ago but we declined. The 3rd and final phase of this port will be ready in the next 5-7 years. And then the Chinese ships will dock here.
- 5. Negotiate from strong bargaining position with Beijing in such a way that every Chinese move which threatens India's security is balanced with a counter move. But this needs highly skilled and competitive intelligence inputs with analysis.
- 6. Initiate diplomatic moves which will keep the US, China and Russia away from interfering when and if India uses force to have its territories back.
- 7. Launch a drive to educate India's citizenry as well as those in outside countries- particularly in the US and other countries in the west to remove their ignorance about India and to place its requirements and policies before them. This extremely important to elicit support to India's Foreign Policy from Indian citizen.
- 8. Initiate well thought out diplomatic measures to ensure that countries bordering India do not get involved in Defence alliances and pacts which are prejudicial to India's security and National interests specially Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh.
- 9. Re- examine and re-draft existing treaties with Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and initiate one with Bangladesh so that foreign powers cannot use these countries against India's interests in the future.
- 10 Engage Pakistan in a much more serious and meaningful dialogue then what is happening now. If necessary, with the assistance of other countries, over the return of PoK so as to Circumvent it from supporting the Militants till there is no option left for India but to use force to reunify PoK with J&K.
- 10. Support a debate on the goings on in Tibet in the Parliament, particularly the implications of Chinese nuclear missiles targeting Indian Cities.
- 11. Ensure that Dhaka does not sign a treaty with the US or China without consulting New Delhi. If that happens, whatever influence India has on Bangladesh will disappear.
- 12. Decide on the initiatives India should take in Sri Lanka as that country stands on the threshold of a possible historic change. Here is an area of strategic interest to the US, China and many other western powers vying with one another to get afoot hold here. If we ignore the changes here, we will be left as mere on lookers as in the case of Myanmar. 🇲🇲



Major General VK Madhok

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Book of Records

Indian Record

The **Indian Air Force** organized half-marathons simultaneously across 100 air force stations as part of the birth centenary celebrations of Marshal Arjan Singh on 14 April 2019. The marathon began at 5:30 a.m. and concluded at 9:30 a.m., and saw the participation of 12,600 air warriors. The marathon distance was 21 km and it was conducted in three age categories: below 35 years; between 36 and 45 years; and 46 years and above. Marshal Arjan Singh was the first and only officer of the Indian Air Force holding a five-star rank.

Vatsala

Vatsala Kaul Banerjee

Editor, *Limca Book of Records*



CERTIFIED AUTHENTIC
BY THE HOLOGRAM

Date of Issue: December 2019
(LBR 2020)



Pak In Turmoil: Aborted Coup Attempt By 'Secret Group'!

“Every segment of Pakistan is against non-performing duo of Prime Minister Imran Khan and General Bajwa. So much so that even the judiciary has now turned against the government.”

by Colonel Rajinder Kushwaha (Retd)

Unconfirmed reports from Pakistan reveal that there was, probably, a coup attempt by a secret group within the Pakistan Army. Reports suggest that Lieutenant General Abdullah Dogar, Lt Gen. Ajaj Chowdhury and Lt Gen. Bilal Akbar along with 60 officers of various units have been dismissed from service for being members of a secret WhatsApp group. Use of smart phones were banned inside Pakistan army installations.

There are a number of tweets on this from within Pakistan. In some quarters it is also being claimed that Foreign Minister, Shah Mohammed Qureshi is being held in 'Medical Custody'. A few days ago he was diagnosed positive for COVID-19. It is not clear whether it was genuine or a measure to cover up the aborted coup. Probably, he was being considered as a possible replacement for Imran Khan.

There has been much talk of 'Minus One' in Pakistani political circles. 'Minus

one' in Pakistani parlance means removal of the incumbent Prime Minister with some more capable and efficient leader. Even Imran Khan hinted about it in his budget reply speech in Pakistan National Assembly. His railway minister, Sheikh Rasheed had gone a step further. He talked of 'Minus Three'. It seems something was cooking in the background.

The rumours of a likely military coup is alluded to in an orchestrated interview, given a few days back, to Voice of America by Pakistan's Minister of science and technology, Fawad Chaudhary. He talked of internal infighting within the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). He highlighted the failure of his party to deliver and the general frustration of the people. According to him, there was total mismanagement. He does not blame Imran Khan but hints about some who were aspirants of the top job. Therefore, there was something fishy going on in Pakistan, whose tell-tale

marks are visible in various disciplines of governance.

There has been a simmering discontent against General Bajwa, Chief of Pakistan Army and Imran Khan, the prime minister of Pakistan. Not only the rank and file of the army but even the general public is disappointed with the duo. It seems both are concerned about their personal interests. While Imran was concerned to ensure his continuity without army intervention, General Bajwa was keener to get extension of a tenure as a Chief. Interests of Pakistan were pushed to the background.

The extension of three years as Chief of the army to General QJ Bajwa had sparked the discontent in the army, slowly and gradually. This has stalled the progress and growth of many Generals. As stated above, It was being felt that it was done by Imran Khan to safeguard his own position as Prime Minister.

It may be noted that the Supreme Court of Pakistan had questioned this extension, when it was first announced by Imran Khan. It was termed as illegal. However, the Supreme Court gave a reprieve of six months to amend the statutory laws for extension of an Army Chief. It was done after a number of strictures were passed by the Supreme Court on the Imran Khan Government.

Though opposition parties were not in tune with the ruling party, yet they agreed to give an extension of three years because of the fear of the army, who is the actual ruler. Everyone knows that the army in Pakistan can concoct legal cases and involve dissenting politicians in legal cases. The case of Nawaz Sharif, former Prime Minister of Pakistan, who dared to challenge the army, is a living example to show as to how he was deposed through a judicial coup by the army.

Ironically, history of Pakistan tells one that army chiefs of Pakistan, appointed by civilian Prime Ministers, actually oust the said Prime Ministers. It may happen with even Imran Khan. Extension of three years to General QJ Bajwa may turn Imran Khan's Waterloo.

Discontent is not only within the army but also it is in the general public against Imran Khan and Bajwa's failure to deliver on the economic front. The so-called 'Change' or 'Tabdili' for which PTI and Imran Khan were voted to power is nowhere visible. Prices are skyrocketing of consumer items, which include, cooking gas, sugar, flour, electricity and petrol. The general public is crying to the extent of abusing Imran Khan and Bajwa.

The rank and file in the army is getting restless. The insurgency in Balochistan is picking up momentum. There is a definite resentment against Chinese aided projects on account of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). China is maltreating the local population of Balochistan. Labour and skilled force is from China, while Pakistanis are not getting any employment. This is not only causing resentment but also fuelling the insurgency in Balochistan.

The recent attack on the Karachi Stock Exchange by Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) is borne out of the fact that 40% of this stock exchange is owned by China. In fact there are a whole lot of questions

raised on CPEC. There is an estimate that by 2040, some 50% of the population of Balochistan would be Chinese.

Dawn leak-2 in 2017 had revealed that Pakistan had virtually mortgaged everything from agriculture to railways to airports and industry to China. As things tumble out of secret files, it had to affect the concerned minds. Soldiers being more nationalistic are the first one to raise voice against such deals. This is another reason why this secret group was formed within the army.

Imran Khan and QJ Bajwa have nothing much to show as performance over the last two years. Internationally, Pakistan stands isolated. Other than China and Turkey, no one stands with Pakistan in the international forums. The economic situation is so bad that Pakistan is almost begging the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a mere \$4 to 6 billion loan. The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is almost at the verge of putting it in the 'Blacklist'. The Pakistani Rupee as compared to a dollar has fallen to a new low of 165/1 dollar.

Every segment of Pakistan is against non-performing duo of Imran Khan and QJ Bajwa. So much so that even the judiciary has now turned against the government. Imran Khan and his advisors got a slap on its face on the reference case of SC judge Qazi Faej Isa. This shows outright incompetence of Imran Khan and those who got him selected as Prime Minister.

Manipulation of the media is leading to open defiance of the government. It is no doubt that the Army and Government have been manipulating the print and electronic media. In a recent case of a TV news Channel (24 News), Lahore High Court had to intervene to restore its functioning blocked by Imran Khan's Government. Many journalists have fallen

out of jobs due to the army and government threats to media houses.

The real turmoil in Pakistan is due to mis-handling of Corona Virus cases. The number of infected and dead people seem to be 20 times more than the official figures. The data is being manipulated by the government. Some say, dead persons of Punjab are being disposed off quietly by the army in Gilgit and Baltistan. This is also causing great resentment in the Gilgit-Baltistan region.

Failure of Imran Khan to deliver and the selfishness of General Qamar Javed Bajwa has been causing a great resentment not only amongst the Generals but also the rank and file of the army. Soldiers too have their families and they do understand the economic hardships suffered by their near and dear ones due to total mismanagement on all fronts by the Imran Khan-QJ Bajwa dispensation. Therefore, the news of an attempted coup seems to be correct. It may have been foiled now but there is no guarantee that it cannot be attempted again.

One is reminded of an Irish terrorist message to UK Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s. The message was given after the terrorist's attempt failed to kill Margaret Thatcher in a bomb explosion, when she had luckily escaped. The message said: You have to be lucky every time, we have to be lucky only once. Perhaps this could be a warning to Imran Khan and General Bajwa to pay more attention to internal situations than crying about Kashmir and India. 🇮🇳

(The author was a former CO of 3 Bihar. Views expressed are the authors own, and do not reflect the editorial policy of 'Mission Victory India')



Colonel Rajinder Kushwaha

Col Rajinder Kushwaha is an ex-NDA, commissioned into the 3 Bihar Regiment in June 1971 and was the Commanding Officer of the same unit in insurgency environs in Assam in 1990-93. Has vast experience in CI Ops from North East to Punjab and J&K. A prolific writer-cum-critic on defence and security matters, he has authored the book, 'Kashmir: A Different Perspective'. His second book on Assam was released in April 2018. Held prestigious appointments in the army including as an instructor at a premier army institute, Col GS, Col Adm of an Infantry Division and Col "Q" works at a Command HQ. He can be contacted on email: rajee749@yahoo.com



Lessons from the Ladakh Standoff

The norm we follow is to appoint committees after conflict situations whose reports are either buried like Henderson Brooks report of 1962 or lessons forgotten like of Kargil Review Committee. Commenting on shortcomings ‘during’ the conflict is taboo – even considered anti-national. Result is we tend to keep repeating our mistakes.

by Lieutenant General PC Katoch (Retd)

But there is much to be learned from the current scenario.

- One, Jarnail Singh, former joint secretary in PMO has blamed R&AW for intelligence failure for the 1999 Kargil intrusions in his book ‘With Four Prime Ministers – My PMO Journey’. 21 years later we suffered similar intelligence failure with Chinese aggression in Eastern Ladakh, even though NTRO was raised after 1999. Mere intimation of PLA exercise in Aksai Chin, which is training area for PLA mechanised forces, was hardly enough. China had constructed a new road four kilometres short of Galwan which satellite imagery should have picked up. The NSA and the Joint Intelligence Committee failed to warn the Cabinet Committee on Security of the impending threat, as did the Director General, Defence Intelligence Agency to the Defence Minister.
- Two, China has had 24x7 satellite cover astride the LAC, but we have been focused on Pakistan and failed to do so against China despite missions to the Moon and Mars.
- Three, China had reacted strongly to our map of Union Territory of Ladakh issued in October 2019 which included Aksai Chin. This was reason for us to be more vigilant. In fact, intelligence reports indicate that China was to intrude into Eastern Ladakh last year itself, but the operation was delayed because of COVID-19.
- Four, prior to Kargil Intrusions, Pakistan had observed that our reserve Division at Nimu in Ladakh had been moved to the Kashmir Valley to deal with the heightened insurgency. In the current context, India was busy battling COVID-19 and because of the lockdown the routine exercises were called off and mobilisation hampered because of limited rail movement. Did we anticipate that China will seize this opportunity? Our Army too must share the blame for not taking precautions knowing that PLA's Western Theatre Command was exercising.



Chinese action since 62' remained anti-India and never respected agreements.

- Five, a foreign scholar has written a detailed article on how PLA rehearsed the aggression on a full-scale model (satellite imagery provided) before advancing into Eastern Ladakh. Why did we miss out detecting this?
- Six, we failed to read the enemy (China's Communist Party) and President Xi Jinping even though every Chinese action since 1962 was anti-India and China never respected border protocols and agreements.
- Seven, without a Strategic Defence Review and National Security Strategy, we went about the exercise to reduce the Army strength by 1,00,000 plus. In doing so we glossed over China's illegal claims on Indian Territory. The Division looking after Eastern Ladakh has a frontage of about 800 km – does it have adequate manpower; surveillance means and reserves to deal with intrusions?
- Eight, the ITBP deployed in Eastern Ladakh even in sensitive areas of Depsang and Chumar is not under command of the Army, as required by the Kargil Review Committee and follow up Group of Ministers headed by the then Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani. ITBP follows its own chain of command through their IG and DG to Ministry of Home Affairs. This creates avoidable operational problems militating against requirements of unity of command. In 2013 also China made a 19 km deep intrusion in Depsang.
- Nine, during the Kargil Conflict, then Army Chief General V.P. Malik was constrained to say, "We will fight with what we have." In the current context, witness the mad rush to procure weaponry, ammunition, rifles, helmets, bullet proof jackets, unmanned aerial vehicles and the like. This has happened because of the political belief that there would be no war and as a result successive defence budget allocation that have been negative in actual terms - even adversely commented by former diplomats as lowest since 1962.
- Ten, China and for that matter Pakistan also understands power. Soft Power has no value without Hard Power. While Soft Power 'softens' blow of Hard Power for

the recipient, both Soft and Hard Power must be employed in tandem. Hybrid Warfare is now the preferred form of conflict, which India has not fully acknowledged. We need a road map for building hard power holistically with a timetable, plugging operational gaps on priority.

- Eleven, there will be no bigger fools than us if we still believe in China's promises and peaceful intentions despite being warned periodically starting with Sardar Patel's letter to Nehru on November 7, 1950. Despite the motions of disengagement, China still has presence inside Depsang and a Mechanised Division lined up opposite Depsang and Demchok which implies PLA could still initiate conflict.
- Twelve, theory provides cumulative wisdom through cumulative strategic study of previous conflict that helps exploit practical opportunities. Clausewitz had said, "Theory exists so that one need not start afresh each time sorting out the material and ploughing through it but will find it ready at hand and in good order". We need to draw right lessons from the Ladakh Standoff to deal with China in future. 🇮🇳

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Lieutenant General Prakash Katoch



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Revive the Mountain Strike Corps!

“There is an urgent need to review and reassess all our military capabilities and options to ensure that not only are we prepared to stymie Beijing’s territorial ambitions but to also carry out offensive operations beyond our borders.”

by Lieutenant General Shankar Ghosh (Retd)

The current volatile situation in Eastern Ladakh and with China’s aggressive approach to dominate us politically and militarily, India seems to have been literally caught on the backfoot. Over the years we have been lulled into complacency with the belief that military restraint along the LAC, coupled with a “peace and prosperity” approach, would result in a permanently harmonious environment between the two nations. Beijing has just proved everyone wrong.

We are a highly threatened nation with two unpredictable and hostile governments and militaries focused on keeping us destabilised with confrontations and aggressive actions across our borders. There is no likelihood of any change in their inimical approach in the coming decades. In the larger interests and aspirations of our nation and our people, we need to keep both

these countries in check. This will only happen if we keep our military strong, well prepared, and motivated.

There is an urgent need to review and reassess all our military capabilities and options to ensure that not only are we prepared to stymie Beijing’s territorial ambitions but to also carry out offensive operations beyond our borders. Simultaneously, we must also reassess our interests and futuristic threats in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). As a major power in Asia, with so much at stake, we cannot remain passive in developing our defensive or strategic power projection capabilities.

The Army has three Strike Corps for deep offensive operations into Pakistan. Ideally, two more Strike formations are required for the mountains, one each for the Ladakh and the Eastern borders. In 2013, to overcome

this offensive vacuum to some extent, the government sanctioned the raising of 17 Mountain Strike Corps with two infantry divisions, two independent armoured brigades and strong combat support in the form of artillery, engineer, air defence and aviation brigades. The raising commenced with existing resources of the Army but unfortunately, the Government did not allocate a separate budget for it.

As a result, the raising was halted in 2018, leaving a truncated force comprising the Corps HQ, one infantry division and certain other combat and combat support elements. This force was then further tinkered with by testing them as smaller Integrated Battle Groups (IBG) for offensive actions in the mountains. The current status and roles of 17 Corps remain a little ambiguous.

With the changed military scenario along the LAC, the need has come to revive 17 Corps so that it is organized, equipped, and trained to undertake offensive operations soonest.

At the outset, the Corps should be renamed as 17 Corps (Strategic Operations) with the primary role of carrying out offensive operations in the mountains and a secondary role in the IOR by detaching part of the Corps. While this may sound complex, with China also being the primary threat to our island assets and areas of interest in the IOR, we have no option but to train for multiple roles, just as some of our existing elements are dual tasked for operations on different borders.

That apart, with the likelihood of military alliances being formed with other nations in the Asia-Pacific region, it would be necessary for us to have a credible power projection force ready and prepared.

The major tasks of the Stratops Corps will be to (1) launch offensive operations in the mountains to capture/destroy/disrupt critical targets having direct impact on ongoing or planned operations by own forces, and (2) Power projection and combat operations in island territories or beyond, under the overall control of Andaman & Nicobar Command.

While currently we have to go along with standard infantry divisions as the strike elements of the Corps, in the long run we will have to raise Airborne and Air Transported Infantry Brigades comprising Special Forces battalions, Parachute battalions and Ladakh and Arunachal Scouts (Para) units. Apart from the normal combat support elements, the Strike Divisions would need integrated airlift capabilities, as also special elements like Apache and Chinook helicopter flights, UAV/drone units etc.

The Army will also need to carry out a holistic review of the role and employment of our forces meant for the Western borders and rebalance and re-allocate these resources to prepare for future wars.

It would be necessary to create habitat and logistical support to locate major elements of both divisions in Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh. All Special Forces/Parachute/Infantry battalions should be permanently affiliated to the Stratops Corps to develop domain specialization, as also to ensure that major elements always



(Special Forces Operators about to Embark on a Para Jump (File Photo))

remain acclimatized and trained for high altitude operations.

Interchangeability of affiliations and locations of units should, however, take place between the two Strike Divisions as per a planned schedule, to ensure change of habitat as also to gain wider operational experience.

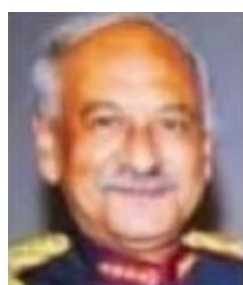
A developing nation like ours will always have a problem in finding resources and budget for the military. A strong military and a stronger economy will, however, have to co-exist, more so now that we have seen the ominous territorial plans of China. "Guns or Butter" will have to settle down to a "Guns and Butter" compromise by reprioritizing all major and minor government schemes, cutting out wasteful expenditure on

non-essentials and ceremonials, reducing the vast manpower of Central and State governments and by strict fiscal discipline.

The Army may also have to reduce some of our high cost, equipment-oriented units in the West to provide the budgetary requirement for the Stratops Corps.

In the coming years, China will only expand its territorial aims along the LAC, as also in the IOR, threatening our island assets and areas of interest in this region. Till such time India remains a challenger to China, our border issues, far from being resolved, will get further aggravated at the time and place of Beijing's chosen strategic plan. Today, with the severe resource crunch, the Army has no option but to train for multiple roles over different terrains and environments.

In the final analysis we would, however, need an Airborne/Air Transported strategic force with multiple deployment/operational capabilities on the lines of the US 101 Airborne Division to ensure that our nation is kept safe from aggressors. 🇮🇳



Lieutenant General SR Ghosh (Retd)

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10 Lessons From The Ramayana For NDA Cadets

“Lord Ram led a deeply spiritual life, cadets need to be taught, how and why constant short cuts, cheating or managing can over the years diminish their sense of propriety”

by Colonel PK ‘Royal’ Mehrishi (Retd)

1. During Induction do not be overtaken by undue pride that you are someone special. Be loyal to the Service you intend to join and do not think what position can be obtained (Appointment etc). Be attached to the service and not to the position: Lord Ram was willing to become the king as a service to Maharaj Dashratha and he was also willing to go to the forest as a service to his father.
2. NDA is a tough place, Lord Ram in his growing years stayed with his brothers and fellow students in Sage Vashistha’s Ashram undergoing a rigorous spartan routine. Leading the life of a scholar/soldier. Mission of life should be to learn with humility and constantly be part of the learning curve: Lord Ram’s purpose was to use his skills to slay demons (anti-nationals/enemies) and it was fulfilled by his banishment to the forest. (postings-away from the comfort of your homes for a national cause)
3. Extreme reversals if taken in the proper spirit will help us fulfill our mission in life: For example, General Slim’s Defeat into Victory. Space has zero gravity, Earth does not. Mind does not follow the law of gravity, so also does spiritual consciousness. Lord Ram one evening prospective King (Yuvraaj), next morning banished to the forest for 14 years.
4. Ram or Aaram, a test for every seeker: Each cadet has to choose either of the two (work hard or sleep walk through the training) NDA has a scientific, progressive and structured training routine. Supervised by the best in their fields, unauthorized training without a guru or mentor has to be given a short shrift, Sage Vashistha and Sage Vishwamitra were the perfect mentors, adept in imparting in- depth knowledge of all facets to raise scholar / soldiers, Lord Ram did not learn war fighting/soldierly qualities or got trained by his contemporaries/colleagues.
5. Alertness in Spiritual Life: Lord Ram led a deeply spiritual life, cadets need to be taught, how



Artist rendition of lord Ram in battle



A trio of three high achievers from the NDA looking forward to becoming officers

and why constant short cuts, cheating or managing (stealing items of kit?) can over the years diminish their sense of propriety (right from wrong) and lead to disastrous judgements when they rise to positions of power.

6. The goal is to follow correct orders of the superior, for Bharat, he wanted to stay in the forest which was easier than to return and rule the Kingdom but he did it on the instructions of Lord Ram. Harder right than the easier wrong.

7. All power is transitory: As a cadet and later as an Officer fulfill your duties in a balanced



Colonel PK 'Royal' Mehrishi

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manner, Bhoktaram Yajna Tapasam (Bhagavad Gita 5.29). All power and pelf is transitory, what is important is how it is exercised. Bharat was ruling the kingdom on Lord Ram's behalf by keeping the Paduka's (footwear) on the throne. We are only caretakers, He is the real proprietor, He can give and take away. The caretaker acts to the best of his abilities as a true Karmayogi (duty bound)

8. Patience, Determination & Enthusiasm: As a cadet there will be extreme demands on each physically & mentally. Only the strength of your spirit will carry you. Examples of Shabari/Hanuman/Vibhishana/Angad.

9. Arrogance cannot understand well-wishers: The world is a mirror of our own consciousness. Learn to cultivate persons around you, who exercise their own mind in overcoming adversities. A yes man can lead to inglorious defeat. None among Ravana's ministers could speak the truth, Ravana despite good counsel did not pay heed to Vibhishana and Mandodari.

10. Always stand by what is right: Jatayu's integrity. Real success is to do your duty with devotion. Jatayu lost his life fighting for Lord Ram (faith/belief/duty) but achieved the purpose of his Life to die in the name of a higher calling (in this case Lord Rama). It is better to lose and win than to win and lose. 🇮🇳



A Transformative Approach For The Selection Procedure In The Armed Forces

“The Tri-Services (especially the Army) have been functioning with a shortage of approx. 20–30% in the officer ranks alone since the 1970s. All the efforts to find a solution have failed primarily due to lack of a cohesive understanding between the users and the scientific/research wing of the MoD.”

by Brigadier LC Patnaik (Retd)

Post-independence, the Indian army was one of the foremost government organisations in introducing an advanced scientific method of selection of officers based on the need of the organisation. The Defence Psychological Wing, now renamed as the Defence Institute of Psychological Research (DIPR), did a commendable job of analysing the British, German and American models and by introducing a very sound system.

The system was reviewed in 1963, post the 1962 Indo-China war and a revised model with a lesser number of attributes/OLQs (officer like quality) was introduced. The system was again reviewed in 1975, wherein the number of OLQs was further brought down to fifteen, from twenty-nine. Apparently,

the Indian Armed Forces' selection system has always attempted to assess the potential officers based on personality which was defined and quantified through various attributes/OLQs as was perceived by the scientists of DIPR (DRDO). The user elements (Services) mostly remained away from the design and formulation of the OLQs as it was felt that they did not have the adequately qualified persons for such a task.

The Services (especially the Army) have been functioning with a shortage of approx. 20–30% in the officer ranks alone since the 1970s. All the efforts to find a solution have failed primarily due to lack of a cohesive understanding between the users and the scientific/research wing of the MoD. It is paradoxical that our nation cannot innovate a

system to recruit 2500 officer cadets in a year from an under-25 youth population of approx. 60 crores.

Organisational Concerns

The battlefield scenario, the equipment profile and the psychosocial dynamics of the society has dramatically changed in the last 50 years. Technology has so rapidly changed, that the common man moves around with a super-computer in his pocket. There is an enhanced political transparency and legal endeavour for resolving issues. The state is no longer a single dominant entity with a resolute power for implementation. The rise of regional parties and a continuous threat of secessionism with approx. 50% of the total districts under a Naxalite threat has ushered in new socio-political

uncertainties, impacting the Armed Forces' capability and functioning in a democratic country.

On the operational front, the nation is confronting a hybrid/sub-conventional form of warfare characterised with a situational uncertainty. The enemy on the battlefield continues to be elusive (no clear enemy). The subcontinent remains in the 'nuclear hang' with the NWNP (No War No Peace Situation) being threatened with heavy firing at the borders and infiltration. The future operations need speed and precision in application.

The technical environment has moved towards more sophisticated command, control and surveillance systems, information overload, unmanned vehicles, pre-programmed weapon systems, network-centric warfare and a very high state of technology in the ground/air/ naval weapon systems. All these systems need to be operated optimally in war and war-like situations which are entirely different from the peaceful areas of our cities and towns. It entails a technical knowledge of a very high order with a cognitive capability for application.

On the psycho-social front, there has been an increased alienation of the soldier from the society. The youth of the country prefer to choose professions with an enhanced availability of soft options like the services industry (hotels, telecom, IT, etc.) where there is a higher flexibility of vocations. There has been a diverse population with a high aspirational growth, wanting to make it to the top at the earliest. The people are no longer patient to wait for the time-bound tier method of promotion as it exists in the military or the govt.

The lure of a job for safety and perks in the services are relegated to the desires of mediocrity with pervasive colonial ideas which no longer sparks the young generation. As such, the psycho-social orientation of the youth today vastly contrasts with the organisation and values of the Armed Forces. Moreover, the family legacy of soldiering so prevalent in the martial classes of our country, is breaking apart and moving towards business and different professions. However, the biggest psycho-social impact is the degradation of the status of the Armed Forces in the national and

regional protocols and the lack of recognition for national sacrifice. This has deterred the youth from joining this noble profession.

The Selection System in the Armed Forces

The Armed Forces have a total number of fifteen selection boards spread across five selection centres. It has a total of 132 assessors, out of which 35 are interviewing officers, 53 GTOs (Ground-Testing Officers) and 44 psychologists. The candidates are required to undergo a five-day test including screening in which they are required to be tested in all the three techniques (psychology, ground tests & interview). Assessments are carried out in the form of 'ratings & markings' and finally decided at the 'board conference' which is also informally termed as the fourth technique. Marks are also given to potential candidates on trainability based upon their age, social background, insight, type of entry and exposure. In a nutshell, the selection process is carried out at the technique level. The technical control of the selection process is carried out by the DIPR (DRDO) with no interference from the Service HQs, which are primarily responsible for administrative control.

Strengths

There is a great amount of standardisation among the assessors of different boards located at different places, primarily due to the training conducted at a single institution. Professional pride and competency exists for the assessors as their selection and training is a stringent and a methodical process. Many officers, especially GTOs, fail to qualify the training capsules and have to be returned.

Personality-based selection has withstood the test of time as compared to the civil services which are a combination of the intellectual and personality tests. The psychological test is a unique system in the process, where many candidates with negative traits have been effectively screened out. Such a technique is not available in any other selection system in the country.

Assessors belong to the same profession. Hence, they are able to have a

practical approach towards the selection process. The conference procedure is unique in the sense that any assessor can have the flexibility of rejecting or selecting a candidate based on mutual discussion during the conference.

Limitations

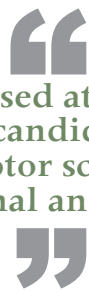
The screening test consisting of the intelligence test and PP & DT (Personality Projection and Description Test) needs to be completed in one day. Hence, 'entries' which do not have a written test for filtering candidates have an extremely large reporting (e.g. technical entries). As such, a large number of assessors are required to be pooled in from different boards. This has its own 'cost' in terms of objectivity and transparency.

Physical tests are not conducted separately but are integrated with the obstacle test in the GTO leg. There is a scope to widen the scope of physical tests due to the inherent scope and nature of the military profession.

The overloading of the assessors, especially the psychologists and the GTOs, have an impact on the assessment. There is a 22% deficiency of psychologists which has been partially made up by Technical Officers (TOs) after a short psychological exposure given to the selected officers from all arms and services. This needs immediate attention. The existing 'technique level' of assessment is straight jacketed and doesn't take into account a candidate's cognitive ability and emotional quotient.

Analysis

The operational, technical and socio-psychological concerns entail that the future military leaders need to undertake speedy and precise decisions with a high degree of comprehensive capability, level of ideas and problem-solving. This will entail a shift of focus from the planning and organising ability towards a higher cognitive thinking and mental process. This, by no means, is to suggest that we move towards an intellectually dominated process, but more towards the selection of candidates who possess a higher level of ideas with a mental comprehension. This quality will enable the leaders to take quick decisions and explore



The existing taxonomy-based attributes in the personality assessment index of the candidates need to be replaced with cognitive-psychomotor scientific attributes to meet the complex operational and technical challenges.

multiple options for the application of a higher technology.

The fluidity of the battlefield would entail a situational uncertainty, demanding the future leaders to have more dynamic agility, courage of conviction and development of positive emotions to handle the varying emotional states of the subordinates. This is greatly manifested in an NBC attack, air raids and superior enemy capability in a particular sector or sudden/unexpected attack by militants/terrorists. Our officers and personnel would continue to be called upon for assisting the civil authority for national disasters. The devastating floods in Kashmir in 2014 had demanded the army to come to the rescue of a large number of civilian population in dire emotional imbalance and stress.

The military leaders need to help their countrymen and women, despite their own families being in distress. There are many stories in Kashmir where the valiant troops of Jammu & Kashmir Light Infantry went out to rescue the civilians, while their own families were stranded in the floods. Hence, our future leaders need a strength of character in order to control impulsiveness, anxiety and for remaining assertive in a state of high turbulence. This requires a strong emotional intelligence amongst our young officers, wherein their ability to 'affect' a situation is greatly enhanced. Hence, the personality trait of future leaders must have a high quotient of emotional intelligence and psychomotor ability to counter the battlefield fluidity and emotional stress.

For very long, our personality attributes in the OLQs have depended on social factors. For example, a total of 8 out of 15 OLQs at present is dedicated for social adjustment and social effectiveness. This was primarily adopted to ensure the military leaders to be socially sound for motivating the troops and for being effective team workers.

While such qualities are essential, what is more important for the future leaders is a sense of values, where a leader's self-discipline, dutifulness and positive assertiveness become essential. Today, our troops are being tasked to fight insurgency, terrorism and militancy/Naxalism within the borders. This has over a period of time become the norm than an exception.

Such low intensity conflicts have a large social dimension in terms of the alienation, public reputation and image of a soldier. Future leaders need to develop a high degree of courage of conviction, resilience, control of impulsiveness and high excitement in order to meet extraordinary situations. Such operations also require high psychomotor abilities with a dynamic mental agility, bounded anger hostility and a high sense of self-discipline. Needless to say, the negative impact of minor leadership aberrations has damaging consequences for the image of the organisation.

Hence, we need to redefine our OLQs/personality traits to look for candidates with a high cognitive and psychomotor ability and possessing those value systems which would help him/her become a good military leader. We need to find a novel method of determining the emotional intelligence level of the prospective candidates, especially in the fields of positive emotion, anxiety and social vulnerabilities in order to assist the charting out of a behavioural pattern. This would possibly address the various disciplinary cases in the army and assist in linking the dots in the motivation cycle.

The Way Forward

There is a need to shape the environment for an entry and exit to and from the armed forces. This can be done by initiating statutory measures to modify the terms and conditions for the armed forces which over a period of time have

become outdated. Today's youth is no longer motivated with free rations, canteen, medical facilities, etc. There is an urgent need to restore the lost status and dignity of the armed forces through constitutional/statutory amendments to ensure their rightful protection for all times. There is also a need to enhance the intellectual capital of the officers while in service and also to introduce statutory provisions for an armed forces exit policy and a lateral absorption of the non-empanelled/short service officers.

The pre-commissioned training academies (NDA/IMA/OTA) should be upgraded to world class institutes of intellectual repute with a flexible retention policy. These institutes should have joint affiliation with foreign military training institutes (West Point/Sandhurst, etc.) and have professional exchange programmes and joint exercises, adventure expeditions and sports competitions with selected foreign military academies.

The NDA, which is already a reputed institution in the country, should endeavour to figure in the top ten professional training institutes. The academic faculty needs to be given special recognition and should have exclusive terms and conditions for career progression. The UGC may be requested to provide special privileges to the civilian faculty as their charter is entirely different from that of the other university teaching staff.

The feeder schools for the NDA established over a period of time have undergone dual control turbulence in the last three to four decades. A strategic overhaul of the military and sainik schools is needed to bring them at par with the elite schools of the country. We may consider the entire funding of the sainik schools by the MoD (defence budget) with a centralised management system like the AWES (Army Education Welfare Society).

The NCC Directorate needs to be aggressive in its enrolment in the top elite schools of the country. The sports and adventure programmes offered by the NCC Directorate are unique. Hence such programmes can be great tools of motivation and exposure platforms for the school students. Moreover, service

officers posted to the NCC can be integrated with the school academic faculty for training them in personality development and disaster management. In a nutshell, the existing MoD reach in the academic sector needs to be fully optimised for creating positive motivators for the secondary school students. It is unfortunate that the NCC entry has failed in its concept and application. This entry should be integrated with the CDs/TEs.

Presently, we have approx. 17 types of entries. All these entries should be amalgamated to only three entries, i.e. Undergraduate Entry (UGE) (NDA/TES/ACC), Post Graduate Entry (PGE)/Graduate Technical Entry (PGTE) and Service Entry. The UGE and PGE could be UPSC-based, while the balance can be under the Services HQs. This will enable uniform control, flexibility to change within an entry with common terms and conditions.

A Professional Military Scholarship (PMS) needs to be introduced under the aegis of the MoD for the students of top medical, engineering and law colleges of the country with suitable options for higher study and research. These methods have been introduced by the Chinese army (PLA) and have been found to be very successful. The full scholarship would guarantee an officer a maximum service of five years only. This would help a large number of meritorious students from poor families and would also meet the short-term requirement of the armed forces. The experience of the PLA shows that more than 50% have opted to serve for longer tenures! This method could be seriously considered by our govt.

The existing OLQ/attributes could be reviewed to bring in factors affecting the cognitive ability and psycho-motor responsive stimuli in a candidate. An aspect relating to the emotional intelligence which affects a person's behavioral pattern in great adversity or battlefield challenges needs to be incorporated. We need to consider also the strong values that need to be inculcated in a military leader. Such values should form part of the attributes. Qualities like self-discipline and a sense of duty should find a prominent place in the OLQs. The present set of 15 OLQs should be revised to ten OLQs with

revised factors of emotion, intelligence, cognition and value system. It is recommended that the following factors and the OLQs be adopted:

- Cognitive Ability (factor 1): Comprehension
- Mental Processing Ability (MPA)
- Emotional Intelligence (factor 2): Positive Emotion Control Assertiveness
- Resilience
- Dynamism (factor 3: Dynamic Agility)
- Courage (Moral & Physical)
- Speed of Decision
- Value System (factor 4): Self-Discipline

Sense of Duty


Synergy between the selection centres and the pre-commission training academics needs to be enhanced with an aim to validate the assessments, streamline conformity and assessment variations, ensure common interpretation of attributes/OLQs and provide psychological inputs for cadets who have been found wanting in their emotional intelligence. A two-way process of exchange of each other's technique is essential for an overall assessment and training of cadets.

The screening tests need to be conducted at the ZROS/NOIC/ASC to relieve

the selection centres from the burden of conducting these tests. The existing intelligence and PP & DT tests should be replaced by online cognitive and psycho-motor tests. This will assist in better accessibility for the candidates, reduction of the time line, enhance the reporting rate and increase the capacity of the existing boards.

Conclusion

The existing taxonomy-based attributes in the personality assessment index of the candidates need to be replaced with cognitive-psychomotor scientific attributes to meet the complex operational and technical challenges. As such, the effort should be to view the selection process at a 'systemic level' rather than the 'technique level' by synergising the theoretical complexities and their effective implementation within the selection system.

There is an urgent need to restore the status of the officers through suitable statutory amendments in the order of precedence. Our terms and conditions need to be revised in the backdrop of lukewarm approach of the government to defence issues as has been recently witnessed while announcing the OROP. Moreover, an integrated approach at the govt. level with participation of the Ministries of Finance, HRD, Home and the State Governments are necessary to formulate a long-term sustainable transformation model to build up the leadership potential of the armed forces. 



Brigadier LC Patnaik

Brig LC Patnaik was an Infantry Officer having vast experience in all theatres of war and types of operations. He has handled crucial military diplomatic challenges in the Middle East, peace keeping operations and training of foreign armies. He has substantial experience in the selection process in the Indian Army (President – SSB) and in the government. Presently, he is the Chairman of the Odisha Public Service Commission (OPSC), where he has also served as a Member. He can be reached at Email: lcpatnaik@gmail.com. Views expressed are the authors own, and do not reflect the editorial policy of 'MVI'



Glaring Discrepancies In Selection, Training, And Placement Of Armed Forces Personnel

“It is pertinent to have a relook at officers’ selection by the Services Selection Boards. Ironically, even after knowing the glaring discrepancies, neither the recruitment directorate nor the Defence Institute of Psychological research has moved in addressing the lacunae.”

by Brigadier Rajbir Singh (Retd)

India rightly boasts of one of the largest, motivated, and well-officered defence forces in the world. The armed forces never failed to live up to the countrymen’s expectations, both in peace and war. Civil society always looks up to its armed forces in times of natural calamities, be it floods or any other natural disasters that continue to visit our geological space too often. At the time of writing this text, our nation remains engaged in finding ways of the complex border issues with our intractable and hostile northern neighbour.

I see no one who is not confident of the ability of our armed forces in coming out victorious in case violent engagement occurs. We also are convinced that the armed forces would

continuously renew the weapon systems and engagement procedures periodically to stay ahead of our adversaries. Our defence forces are the truly secular, nationalistic, apolitical, and energetic image of new vibrant India.

Fighting Elements & Regimental Pride

Indian army, in its present form, was constituted in the mid-sixties of the nineteenth century by the British. The British had the experience of working with the regional armies like the Bengal army of the erstwhile East India Company and carried the concept forward to structure the larger British Indian Army. The basic premise was the identification of martial

castes and structuring the fighting elements around this basic idea.

We have Infantry, Armoured, and Artillery units based on the rigid caste system. This practice proved useful in the world wars and later in engagements after independence with our neighbours. Our soldiers draw their emotional strength from their caste identities and the regions represented in their respective units.

This system of the structuring of the fighting army units is unique to our subcontinent. No western army is mainly structured on this premise. This idea was not practised for the employment of the Indian officers by the British in respect of Indian units before independence.

“If the methods and the psychological test batteries remain unchanged, there exists a wide gap in perception of the competencies between the assessors in the Selection Boards and the trainers in the academies.”

We carried the same message forward, and now Tamil officers are leading Sikh, Jat, and the Maratha troops with excellence. Indian Airforce and the Indian Navy also did not follow the practice and continue to perform exceedingly well both in war and peace. Since the present structures are proving exceedingly useful in energizing and motivating our troops, it may not be possible immediately to do away with caste and region-based structuring.

It is, however, desirable to do away with this arrangement for more than one reason. The foremost reason is the emergence of new national consciousness beyond caste and racial thinking. Indian army recruits better-educated youngsters in fighting elements since the mid-eighties of the last century. These new service persons think in broader national paradigms.

The second more pertinent reason is that a large number of castes, racial and tribal groups remain unrepresented in the fighting arms who are equally qualified and motivated. Gradually, a parallel national consciousness is emerging, and the caste identities are taking a back seat. The country has to reconsider the structuring of the fighting arms solely on the castes for sustained motivation and regimental pride.

Upgrading Written Tests for Soldiers, Sailors & Airmen

This discussion about doing away with caste-based fighting units has not even commenced in our country, which is long overdue. We do see a large number of teenagers running on the interior roads all over the country, preparing for the physical tests for recruitment as soldiers.

It is a pleasant sight, and it is an indication that there is complete transparency in the recruitment process now.

Men getting recruited are physically fit and motivated. It is also a fact that these youngsters are job seekers and are ready for enrollment in any part of the army, be it fighting arms or the services. The physical test follows a general ability test for which many coaching centers exist all over the country.

The tests are slightly more difficult for those who apply for the technical

a better selection of our soldiers, airmen, and seamen.

US Military Selection System

The United States of America uses well researched, standardized test batteries to recruit service members in different fields. The test battery is called ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery). The system commenced in the year 1968 and was later upgraded. The last up-gradation was instituted in 2004. It is a multiple-choice test administered by the United States Military Entrance Processing Command, equivalent to our Recruitment Directorates for the three services.



Avoidable injuries due to lack of fitness has lead to harrowing rates of Relegation's

branches. The general ability test is not an aptitude test. It is merely indicative of basic general awareness of issues that may not have a direct bearing on the vocational choice and later performance. Future soldiers are assigned corps and regiments without counseling and without obtaining their express acceptance of the choice offered in most cases.

No aptitude related distinction is made, and the procedure is highly arbitrary. Time has arrived to upgrade our written tests for the recruitment of servicemen like the western armies. This positive change will ensure more self-actualization and job satisfaction. In case we fail to do so, we won't be using available psychological tools for

The tests are conducted both on the computer and also in writing. The test is often offered to High School Students willing to join the military service. We have The Defence Institute of Psychological Research that needs to take up the standardization of such an instrument post haste for scientific selection of our men for different branches.

The introduction of high physical standards and transparency is a vast improvement from the arbitrariness of previous decades. The introduction of aptitude tests will take our recruitment to world standards and make the system comprehensive. There exist several culture-free well-validated,

useful, and reliable psychological instruments that need to be utilized.

All modern armies are making good use of the scientific methods for the recruitment of their servicemen. The world is moving fast, and human consciousness is evolving even more quickly. Old concepts of motivation and enlistment, some are middle-aged, have become redundant, and we need to transcend to modern ways, sooner the better.

Glaring Discrepancies in Our Officer Selection System

It is pertinent to have a relook at officers' selection by the Services Selection Boards. This issue has already been deliberated several times. Ironically, even after knowing the glaring discrepancies, neither the recruitment directorate nor the Defence Institute of Psychological research has moved in addressing the lacunae. Also, if the methods and the psychological test batteries remain unchanged, there exists a wide gap in perception of the competencies between the assessors in the Selection Boards and the trainers in the Officers' Training Academies.

A large number into the Selection Boards get pushed with deficiencies in cognitive and dynamic qualities, namely organizing ability and ability to persist in the face of obstacles and failure. These observations are acute in case not addressed timely. The assessors recommend candidates with reasonable assumptions that these qualities will improve in training in the academies, and later in the units after the candidates pass out of the academies. Academies these days are provided SSB dossiers of the cadets with the express purpose of addressing such individual issues.

I have worked both in the Selection Boards and in the Academies more than once. I am convinced that the young trainers give no such personal attention to the profiles that emerge in the selection boards in the academies. Instructors remain concerned only with two categories of cadets; those who are in the category of excellence, mainly in sports, and those who are too weak in the physical tests.

Rest is the silent majority that moves on and waits for the passing out day. The young instructors get no training even in the first mandatory period of three months required for acceptance as instructors in the academies for dossier assessment of the cadets needed to address the individual issues of their future wards.

Crucial Physical Fitness Factor Overlooked for Officers

There is a need to address one of the central issues related to the physical fitness of the prospective candidates in the SSBs that has a crucial bearing on the training in the academies later.

Services Selection Boards are not screening candidates for physical fitness before the primary testing and remain concerned only with the psychological attributes. The only physical test that the Group Testing Officers conduct is a three minutes obstacle test that is primarily to test necessary physical confidence and organizing skill. Col Vinay Dalvi, who had been associated with the academies as Physical Training Officer, is much concerned about the physical fitness standards of the cadets, which is the main obstacle and the cause of lost confidence in the prospective officers. Nearly fifty percent of the cadets continue to struggle with physical training till the last phases. The tests are so basic that it is difficult to fail by any active teenager.


This state attains pathetic scenarios when young men fail to jump nine feet and swim fifty meters. It causes a severe lack of self-esteem and a loss

of confidence, which is so crucial in future officers. It is a well-known fact that crucial mental and emotional energy of nearly fifty percent of the candidates is spent in a struggle to attain even the minimum mandatory basic physical fitness standards.

They fail to make use of excellent facilities of the academies for self-growth, like participation in sports, club activities and reading in the well-stocked libraries.

Linking Officer Selection with Training

The SSBs must screen the candidates based on the basic physical tests of the academies. Once this requirement is made public like in case of physical standards needed for the screening of the prospective servicemen, everyone will be preparing well before reporting for the interviews. Academies, after that, will only prepare the cadets for higher physical and mental attainments. Physical test anxieties will reduce, and self-esteem and self-confidence will grow immensely.

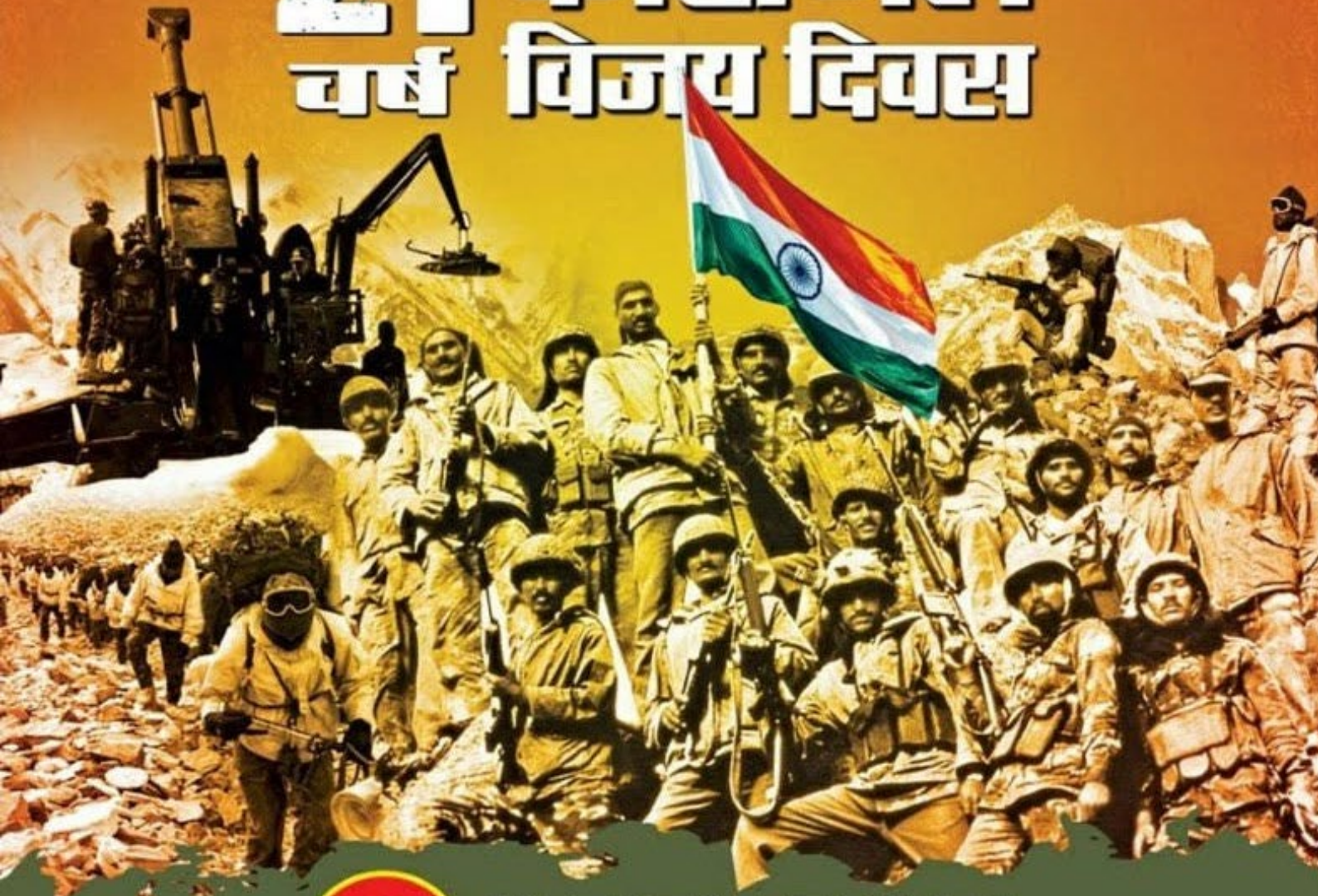
Interestingly, even the performance of the candidates will improve in the selection process. Only a Physical Training Instructor of APTC posted in the SSBs will suffice for the screening. Strangely, we all know that better physical fitness standards lead to obvious mental and emotional benefits and still do not institute screening at the time of testing. We all want boys and girls who are more energetic, have stronger resilience, and better cognition and still fail to take the required action. 



Brigadier Rajbir Singh

The author was commissioned in the Army Educational Corps in June 1975 from the Indian Military Academy (IMA). A postgraduate in Psychology, he held several Instructional appointments including one in the Army Cadet College. He worked in all the three Service Selection Centres as Technical Officer and as a Psychologist. He retired from IMA where he was last posted as Head of Academic Department. He is presently working as a consultant in an organisation engaged in assessing the corporate managers. He can be contacted on email: rajbierr@gmail.com. Views expressed are the authors own, and do not reflect the editorial policy of 'MVI'

21 कारगिल वर्ष विजय दिवस



INDIAN ARMY NATION FIRST

ऑपरेशन विजय

पाकिस्तानी घुसपैठियों को खदेड़ने और क्षेत्रीय अखंडता बरकरार रखने के लिए भारतीय सेना ने कारगिल में ऐतिहासिक लड़ाई लड़ी। यह लड़ाई कारगिल के द्रास, काकसर, बटालिक और तुर्तुक सेक्टर में 12000 फीट से भी ज्यादा ऊंचाई पर लड़ी गई। ऑपरेशन विजय हालिया वक्त के सबसे कठिन और लंबे अभियान में से एक था।

आज कारगिल विजय दिवस पर आइए, हम अपने वीरों के साहस, शौर्य और बलिदान को याद कर उन्हें श्रद्धांजलि अर्पित करें।

इस पावन दिन क्षेत्रीय अखंडता और देश की संप्रभुता की रक्षा के अपने संकल्प को भारतीय सेना फिर से दोहराती है।

हमारे शूरवीर



कैप्टन विक्रम बhatt
परमवीर चक्र (मरणोपरान्त)
13 जम्मू-कश्मीर राइफल



परमवीर चक्र-4



महावीर चक्र-10



रैनेन्द्रियर
योगेन्द्र सिंह यादव
परमवीर चक्र
18 रैनेन्द्रियर



राइफलमैन तेजपाल कुमार
परमवीर चक्र
13 जम्मू-कश्मीर राइफल



वीर चक्र-49



लेफ्टिनेंट मनोज कुमार पाण्डेय
परमवीर चक्र (मरणोपरान्त)
1/11 गोरखा राइफल



सेना मेडल-135

हर एक काम देश के नाम



Military Psychology: Study & Relevance For Military Leaders

“From obsolete equipment to WW II recruitment techniques. What can India do to have a Military ready to fight future wars of the 21st Century? We need to urgently focus on the following in Military Psychology to prepare our military to win!”

by Colonel PK ‘Royal’ Mehrishi (Retd)

Psychology is the study of Mind and Behaviour. Psychology has many sub-fields, the important ones from a military point of view are: -

- Clinical psychology is an integration of science, theory, and practice.
- Cognitive psychology investigates internal mental processes such as how people think, perceive, and communicate.
- Developmental psychology is the study of how a person develops psychologically over the course of his life.
- Military Psychology is the research, design and application of empirical data and scientific theories on Military Personnel for countering

battle/training related stress and help in the selection system. If this be the aim of studying and applying it in the military, we in India are woefully inadequate and ill equipped due to lack of understanding of this important subject.

Aldous Huxley in his book the ‘Brave New World’ writes about a Hatching and Conditioning Centre, where through Bokanovsky and Podsnap Processes the Hatchery produces thousands of nearly identical human embryos who are graded from Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, Delta to Epsilon.

Alpha embryos are destined to become the leaders and thinkers of the World State. Each of the succeeding class is conditioned to be slightly less physically and intellectually

impressive. The Epsilons, stunted and stupefied by oxygen deprivation and chemical treatments, are destined to perform menial labour.

The beauty of the process is sleep-learning, psychological manipulation, and classical conditioning wherein a particular batch of embryos on full maturation will have identical looking people, who even have similar thinking/thought process and react similarly in a given situation. Is this what we all want from our military, especially the thinking part? The danger inherent in this is for all to visualize and comprehend.

Are our training institutions falling into the trap of ‘tried and tested formulas’ and training methods? We need to collectively wake up from this deep

slumber and understand the reality of 21st century.

The issues confronting our military are multifarious, from obsolete equipment to WW II recruitment techniques. What can India do to have a military ready to fight future wars of the 21st Century? We need to urgently focus on the following in Military Psychology to prepare our military to win the next war:-

- Selection/Classification and Placement of Personnel.
- Human Factors and Military Performance.
- Environmental Factors and Military Performance.
- Leadership in the Military.
- Individual and Group Behaviour.

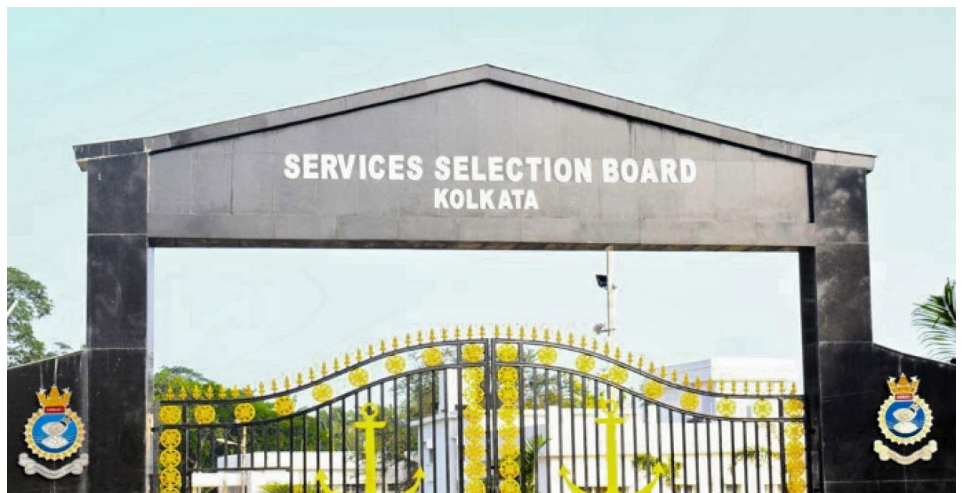
Selection/Classification & Placement of Personnel: Our system of recruitment is antiquated, for the men, it is a combination of a run, some physical tests, rudimentary written test and medical. There is no effort to put the lot through a Psychometric Test/Psychological Analysis, no wonder we have increasing cases of soldiers running amok, suicides/fratricides, PTSD cases etc.

As the joint family system breaks down further and soldiers get recruited from suburbs/semi urban areas we will have to be prepared to deal with a new set of problems. For Officers the dynamics are different as they have to be responsible for “what happens & what does not happen under their command”. Are we training independent minds? So that when the chips are down our junior/senior leadership does not look over their shoulders for orders to tackle a life/death situation facing them on ground?

Officers work under the overall aim of their higher Commanders and fight to protect national honour/integrity and the constitution. Are we spoon-feeding and over supervising our Officer cadre and bludgeoning them to servility?

Human Factors and Military Performance: There are a host of human factors which effect performance of military personnel. From the basics of food, shelter and clothing there are higher order needs that drive and motivate individuals. The need for recognition, achievement, power are also factors which drive individuals to perform Herculean tasks.

Combating solitude, loneliness for longer periods at isolated posts/piquet's creates feelings of neglect/deprivation because humans are social animals and have a strong sense to associate/affiliate. A thorough study of all human factors affecting the military and its implementation in man management can yield out of proportion dividends to Commanders.



SSB Kolkata

Environmental Factors and Military Performance: It would be naive to presume that environment has little role to play in a hardy soldier's survival. What the military needs is peak efficiency and vigor in execution of military tasks in all terrains. Each terrain/area imposes restrictions which are typical/peculiar to that area/environment.

Understanding oxygen depletion and its effect over decision making in high altitude areas, effects of extreme heat (deserts) on human muscle, extreme rainy conditions where clothes never dry, humidity, cold, snow are all environmental factors. Environment would also encompass unit culture, initiation/induction rites (hand holding), regimental traditions and so on.

Leadership in the Military: One of the most important factors which effects day to day functioning of the military is the Leader. From the junior most to the senior, each one is important and contributes in smooth functioning of a complex and gargantuan organization like the Indian Military, with 1.3 million troops answering call to arms and loyalty to the national flag.

Future wars will require a modern military, drawing inspiration from its roots but modern and forward looking with the best equipment and training headed by imaginative, bold, fearless Leaders who do not wait for fleeting opportunities/possibilities in the battlefield but create them and set up the

opponent so that the tide of battle is always in their favour.

Older theories of Leadership have to be jettisoned for progressive models like Transformational and Change Leadership. Individuals who understand the man-machine mix and with high EQ will be able to rise in the leadership stakes.

The subordinates will become more demanding of their Leaders/Commanders, as the media will get hungrier and will highlight cases of corruption and impropriety more frequently. A monolith like the military can ill afford its leadership being dragged into unnecessary controversies as it would affect troop morale.

Individual and Group Behaviour: The French Foreign



Are our training institutions falling into the trap of 'tried and tested formulas' and training methods?

We need to collectively wake up from this deep slumber and understand the reality of 21st century.



Legion (FFL) has been successfully practicing a unique psychological concept termed FIRO. It stands for Fundamental Interpersonal Relationship Orientation. In simple terms it is the study about what period of time is required by individuals to jell/fit into a team. How does the team dynamic affect the individual and vice versa?

Individuals in the military come from diverse backgrounds, what qualities need to be preserved and what needs to be weeded out? What values do we need to impart to Individuals so that on pain of death these are never compromised? How can we enhance morale? Concept of nation first and penalties when absolute values are compromised by anyone. Transcendence from I- Me-Myself to Us-We-Ourselves.

As is evident, study of Military Psychology is the need of the hour. Implementing various tested theories will not only help us transform but create a modern environment with a scientific base to tackle myriad issues which have been neglected till date.

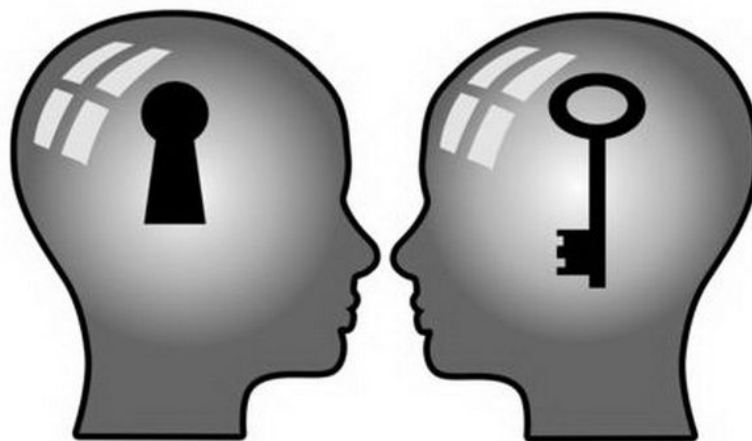
The Psychological Tests in use are Redundant

Firstly, there is an urgent need to have the Psychological Tests being held in SSB to be held on a computer/laptop (online) so that results are available immediately; however an experienced Psychologist is required to interpret certain results.

The age old tests in use are:-

- Thematic Apperception Test (TAT)
- Situation Reaction Test (SRT)
- Word Association Test (WAT)
- Self-Description Test (SDT)

Thematic Apperception Test (TAT)- Designed as a projective test. It consists of a series of pictures of relatively ambiguous scenes to which subjects are requested to make up stories or fantasies concerning what is, has, and is going to happen, along with a description of the thoughts and feelings of the various characters depicted. The test protocol thus provides the examiner with a rich source of data, based on the subject's perceptions and imagination, for use in the understanding of the subject's current needs,



The psychological tests employed need review (Representational Image)

motives, emotions, and conflicts, both conscious and unconscious.

Its use in clinical assessment is generally part of a larger battery of tests and interview data: The manual provides no information on Reliability or Validity. TAT is recommended as a projective method of personality assessment.

Situation Reaction Test (SRT)- Situational Reaction Tests (SRTs) are personnel selection instruments that present job applicants with work-related situations and possible responses to the situations. There are typically 2 types of instructions: behavioural tendency and knowledge.

Behavioural tendency instructions ask respondents to identify how they would likely behave in a given

situation. Knowledge instructions ask respondents to evaluate the effectiveness of possible responses to a given situation. No proven Reliability or Validity.

Word Association Test (WAT)- Designed to reveal associative connections between stimuli words and response. The word association method is a psychological test intended to reveal associative connections between stimulus words and free verbal responses.

Although the method has no necessary tie to any theory, it is usually employed as a projective technique. There are no formal scoring procedures employed with this method. The manual provides no Reliability and Validity information.

Self-Description Test- (SDT) - In this test the candidate is required to write 5 paragraphs on What his Parents, Teacher/Employer, Classmates/Friends, Candidates own opinion about himself and What qualities he would like to develop for the future. The test has no proven Reliability and Validity.

Need to Change Selection Process of Officers: Reform SSB

We need to address the issue of selection of Officers ab-initio, the present SSB system has inherent flaws. Some glaring examples are:-

All of the four Psychological tests are projective and antiquated.

TAT and WAT, SRT and SDT do not clear a statistical construct, mandatory in Psychological tests of Reliability and Validity, ie these tests are not reliable nor valid in testing what they propose to test repeatedly (in different batches)

The tests are subjective with a skew towards manipulation/bias by all stakeholders.

SRT has a booklet of 60 questions to be answered in 30 minutes. These booklets cannot be changed every time; there are "N" numbers of question banks of up to 500 plus akin situations available in the market.

The coaching centers are having a field day in putting potential candidates through these set piece situations.

SDT is a nonstarter, anybody appearing for SSB, who has undergone some coaching knows how to fill up this formatted sheet and can stack up more plus points about him with minor weak points to make an impression or conversely confuse the assessor.

The usefulness and reliability of projective tests depend on a number of factors, including the extent to which identical personality interpretations can be reached by different evaluators (subjective) using the same test data and the extent to which those interpretations are supported by assessments of personality from other sources (e.g. personality inventories and clinical observation).

In consideration of such factors, psychologists are sharply divided over the value of projective tests, despite their prominence in both personality research and therapeutic practice. The projective tests in use at our SSB's have clearly outlived their utility.

Five Traits that we need to measure in the SSB for Officer cadets are (these subsume the 15 OLQ's, SSB is basically looking for):-

- Interpersonal Competence (Leadership, Team building, Communication)

- Cognitive Functions (Intelligence, Ability to Plan, Utilization of Resources)
- Motivation and Drive (Self Starter, Tenacity, Task Completion)
- Conscientiousness (Careful, Diligent, Dedicated)
- Emotion (EQ, Care for Troops/Men, Balanced)

There is no need to look for 15 plus OLQ points as the a/m Five have a wide enough scope to include all the points an SSB is looking for and can be scientifically tested by the Modern Psychological tests mentioned. Incidentally out of USA, UK, France, Belgium and Israel none uses a projective Psychometric Test for selection of their Military Officer candidates.

Military tests for Cognitive ability normally measure, Numerical literacy, Verbal literacy, Spatial reasoning, Mechanical/Technical reasoning, Speed/Accuracy/Memory and Higher-level reasoning and critical thinking.

The need of the hour is to test a potential Officer Cadet on the following Modern testing parameters in SSB:-

- Aptitude for the profession of Arms (DAT/DAS)
- Openness to experience, organized, outgoing, friendly and confident (Big-5)
- Any trace of thought disorder (MMPI-2)
- Personality Type (MBTI & PF-16)
- Self-Concept (Tennessee Self Concept Scale)
- Values in Life (Study of Values Scale)
- Leadership and Personality (BIG-5)

Recent cases of suicides in the NDA (seven in last 5 years) and increasing cases of corruption/moral turpitude/court cases among senior officers is a malaise which can be traced back to the selection and training system we are following. A longitudinal study, entry wise may reveal some startling



Rising suicides, fratricides and cases of PTSD require military leaders to pay attention to military psychology

facts as to who is more prone to, I–Me–Myself syndrome.

Are the SSB’s failing us in our selection process? Is the DIPR the sine-qua-none of all knowledge on selection of Officers? If some of us are asking for positive reforms, is it blasphemy or a scandal?

It is a known fact that we are what our predominant thoughts are. Since Officers come from different backgrounds/ regions/social strata, there is an urgent need to instil, a military value system by way of constant conditioning (Pavlovian) from a young age. A value is something which one holds dear, close to his own existence/ life. Without a robust value system, the Officer class will continue to be rudderless.

Modern Tests & What They Measure?

MMPI-2 (Minnesota MultiPhasic Inventory -2)

Measures various Personality Characteristics.

Measures Depressive (precursor to suicide) tendencies.

Expression of nonconforming attitudes and possible issues with authority.

MBTI (Myers –Briggs Type Indicator)

Measures 16 Personality Combinations

Extraversion (E) vs Introversion (I),

Feeling (F), vs Thinking (T),

Sensing (S) vs Intuition (N)

Judgment (J) vs Perception (P)

Commander Trait Inventory (CTI) is an ENTJ personality (suitable for Officer selection in the Military)

DAT/DAS (Differential Aptitude Tests/ Scale)

Measures basic aptitude for Military way of Life.

Aptitude test batteries typically contain sub-tests giving indications about cognitive qualities such as numerical reasoning, verbal reasoning, spatial ability, mechanical comprehension and general reasoning.

In order to classify military candidates, scores can be calculated separate per sub-test, or scores can be grouped in a total score.

Such a score is called a composite score, reflecting a general level of cognitive functioning and ability to learn.

PF (Personality Factors by Cattell)

Have 16 Personality dimensions.

Abstractedness: Imaginative versus practical, Apprehension: Worried versus confident.

Dominance: Forceful versus submissive, Emotional Stability: Calm versus high strung.

Liveliness: Spontaneous versus restrained, Openness to Change: Flexible versus attached to the familiar.

Perfectionism: Controlled versus undisciplined, Private-ness: Discreet versus open.

Reasoning: Abstract versus concrete, Rule-Consciousness: Conforming versus non-conforming.

Self-Reliance: Self-sufficient versus dependent, Sensitivity: Tender-hearted versus tough-minded.

Social Boldness: Uninhibited versus shy, Tension: Impatient versus relaxed

Vigilance: Suspicious versus trusting, Warmth: Outgoing versus reserved

Cardinal traits are those that are so dominant that they are expressed across situations and various parts of a person’s life. This type of trait is considered rare.

Central traits are the core traits that tend to remain relatively stable throughout life. Many trait theories of personality focus on these traits. These traits serve as the “building blocks” of personality.

Secondary characteristics are those that emerge in certain situations. These can be inconsistent and may not remain stable over time.

Big -5

Openness to experience: (inventive/ curious vs. consistent/cautious).

Conscientiousness: (efficient/organized vs. easy-going/careless)

Extraversion: (outgoing/energetic vs. solitary/reserved)

Agreeableness: (friendly/compassionate vs. challenging/detached)

Neuroticism: (sensitive/nervous vs. secure/confident)

The predictive power of the Big Five personality traits is robust across life domains: personal, interpersonal, and social or institutional. Recent research indicated that personality traits may be equally strong predictors of mortality (adding as much as five years to one’s life), divorce, and job performance as socioeconomic status and cognitive ability. High neuroticism precedes the development of all common mental disorders.

Self-Concept (Tennessee Self Concept Scale) -2

The Tennessee Self-Concept Scale-2 (Fitts & Warren, 1997) assesses self-concept across multiple domains and also incorporates validity scores (e.g., inconsistency, faking good, self-criticism).

The scale is comprised of 82 self-descriptive statements that are rated on a five-point scale (“Always True” to Always False”). It yields two summary scores: Total Self-Concept and Conflict.

It has six self-concept scales assessing different domains: Physical, Moral, Personal, Family, Social and Academic/ Work. Administration time is approximately 10 to 20 minutes.

It can be easily scored in a few minutes by hand. There is also a computer scoring program that generates an interpretive report. It can be easily

administered by a trained technician however scores should be interpreted by a professional.

Internal Consistency: Internal consistency described in the manual is good (.73 to .95). **Test-retest reliability:** Test-retest reliability described in the manual was adequate, ranging from .47 to .82.

Study of Values Scale (SOV)

Theoretical - Main interest in the discovery of truth; attitudes are cognitive, empirical, critical, and rational; aim is to acquire a systematized knowledge.

Economic — Interest in what is useful and practical; interest in consumption of goods and the accumulation of wealth; thinks education should be practical — unapplied knowledge is a waste.

Aesthetic — Values beauty, form and harmony; interest in people but not necessarily in their welfare; tends toward individualism and self-sufficiency.

Social — Interest in people; has an altruistic, philanthropic love of people; regards love, as itself, the only suitable form of human relationship.

Political — Primary interest in power, competition, and struggle; often found in leadership positions.

Religious — Values unity; seeks to relate oneself to the universe as a whole; directs self to the creation of the highest and absolutely satisfying values experience.

The Way Forward

In all of our study and written work, implementation on ground remains a key lacuna. A concerted time bound effort is required by the highest decision making body to get these recommendations evaluated and push through a pilot project in which the stake holders in Uniform have a major say in process of selection:-

COSC needs to take cognizance of this important facet of our selection process and ask for an Independent Test



Graphical Representation depicting problem solving

Audit of all Projective Tests being conducted at the behest of DIPR in our SSB's.

In this vision of permanent adaptation, it is important that selection policies, instruments and procedures are developed on the basis of an interaction between research and lessons learnt in military operations.

The audit team should have Psychologists of repute from renowned universities and equal number of Officers exposed to combat/insurgency (3+3)

DIPR has very little stake in Officers intake, the major stake holders are Training Institutions/Units/Fighting Formations. Irony of the situation is, the major stake holders have little say in the selection process.

The Modern tests mentioned above can be administered through a Laptop /Computer at the SSB's with less

subjective parameters. The results will be immediately available.

The Interview by itself is subjective as there are three methods of conducting an Interview. Structured, Semi Structured and Unstructured. On some parameters the Interview needs to be structured so that comparisons

can be drawn like, on 5-grade scales, of the variables Social ability, Motivation for the profession, Stability, Intellectual ability, Energy and Maturity. The interview manual should define these variables in detail, providing anchors for both extremes of the continuum. A comprehensive rating of General eligibility should be made, based on the six sub-variables.

Harping on old tried and tested methods of selection will yield diminishing returns, it is time we change our selection norms after a thorough analysis of recommendations made. 🇮🇳



Colonel PK 'Royal' Mehrishi

Col PK 'Royal' Mehrishi (Retd), an alumnus of the NDA, has been an active Infantry combat leader for 28 Years. A qualified clinical psychologist, he is a prolific writer, author of several books, a TV panellist and a motivational speaker. In addition, he is a Harvard Business School product, certified in 'Expert Negotiations'. He can be reached at Email: pkradventurer61@gmail.com.

Views expressed are the authors own, and do not reflect the editorial policy of 'MVI'



Splitting The Anatomy Of The Indian Military's Officer Selection Woes

by Aritra Banerjee

The Indian Armed Forces Officer selection procedure: The Services Selection Board (SSB) has been long considered sacrosanct and beyond scrutiny. However, long-standing lapses in the officer cadre have brought the need for closer introspection. The SSB procedure designed by the Defence Institute of Psychological Research (DIPR) has not been reformed or revised in over seven decades, begging the question: Is India's Military Officer Selection keeping up with the evolving trends in military leadership, and the evolving nature of modern warfare?

Speaking on this pertinent issue Brigadier Rajbir Singh, a psychologist who has had extensive experience with the selection system, shared his insights, calling for a change in the now antiquated selection procedure.

Brig. Singh was commissioned into the Army Educational Corps in June 1975 from the Indian Military Academy (IMA). A postgraduate in Psychology, he held a number of Instructional appointments including one in the Army Cadet College (ACC). He worked in all the three Service Selection Centres as a Technical Officer and as a Psychologist. He retired from IMA where he was last posted as Head of Academic Department and is presently working as a consultant in an organisation engaged in assessing corporate managers.

Q: What is the primary cause for the lack of reforms in the SSB? Has the DIPR been resisting changes in a bid to hold monopoly over the selection procedure?

Ans: The question that no significant change both in the concepts and the procedure has taken place in the last over seventy years needs serious deliberation. The answer that the present format is good enough is illogical. All armies are revising their respective selection techniques based on the latest psychological findings and environmental requirements.

In my personal view, it is a case of mega procrastination and lack of accountability by everyone concerned. DIPR (Defence Institute of Psychological Research) is one of the units of DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organisation), which is an autonomous organization, and the Recruiting Directorate has no control even in terms of issues related to SSB testing and the connected research on selection.

SSBs are sanguine in the situation that they do not have to effect change, which is always troublesome, and DIPR does not have to institute a mega research project for review and up-gradation of the present system.

Q: How does the SSB cater to the different categories in terms of qualitative needs, potentiality and trainability? Has it been effective in addressing these?

Ans: The question is relevant whether the same leadership qualities are good enough for IAF ground duty engineers and the fighter pilots?! The SSBs tests all candidates on the fifteen qualities. The same question is also relevant for the Special Forces officers and those who remain engaged in sedentary duties in the Army Service Corps and Army Ordnance Corps and several others.

The justification provided by the Selection Boards is that they test candidates on the fundamental leadership qualities. Concerned organizations IAF or the army further hone these essential qualities to meet special needs. Whether it is possible to upgrade the qualities in training for specific needs is again a matter of research by the scientists.

Logically speaking, a fighter pilot having cleared PABT still needs a much higher level of a quick grasp of the emerging situation, split-second decision making, and much higher reaction time. Fighter pilots fly very modern, sophisticated, and costly machines, which leads to enormous pressure and the ability to withstand that stress is an additional need. In this context, DIPR has a higher responsibility to have a relook at the system.

Q: Some veterans feel that the quality of officer intake has deteriorated post the 1971 war, do you agree with or dispute this characterization?

Ans: The concern of the veterans is genuine. The expression that the quality of the officers joining the defence services has gone down may not be entirely accurate. Young

officers have done exceptionally well in engagements, be it in Kargil or elsewhere. There seems no lack of motivation and pride.

It is, however, true that the social profile of candidates appearing in the SSBs has undoubtedly changed. One rarely finds a candidate from the elite schools and belonging to so-called wealthy families. I never saw even a single candidate whose parents worked in higher administrative services. Most candidates who passed out in the last December 2019 from the Indian Military academy are sons of lower-middle-class families.

Large numbers were sons of the serving or retired JCOs and NCOs. It is also a fact that all three assessors do not recommend a large number in the SSBs. They are recommended with specific observations with the assumption that the training in the academies, and later in the units will take care of minor negative observations. Such discrepancies may remain unaddressed or get exaggerated for the detriment of the service.

Along with this trend, standards for clearing for the training have also gone down. However, the motivation of young officers is still intact. This situation seems contradictory, but the relaxed standards in assessment and later disconnect with the trainers in the academies may prove detrimental in the long run.

Q: Do you believe that the SSB procedure is fool-proof? Does the system fare well in terms of objectivity and the quality of candidates selected?

Ans: The assessors in the SSBs are the individuals with the highest integrity. They do exceedingly well within the testing system provided to them by the DIPR. The issue is with the testing instruments, which remain unchanged for over seven decades. In that context, speaking only for psychological testing, the assessors are not even aware that they are selecting the right material or not.

The projective tests, TAT (Thematic Apperception Test) and WAT (Word

Association Test), have low reliability. Ratings of the two assessors invariably vary in the absence of assessment manuals for these tests, which do not exist. No foolproof manual can be designed since the responses to the stimuli presented in the projective tests would vary for every individual.

Q: How does the SSB effectively cater to the demands of 21st century warfare, given that the system has not been reformed in over 70 years? Is there a disconnect between selection standards and the nature of the current defence and security environment in which they are to operate in?

Ans: This issue poses the question of research by social scientists and psychologists. Minds have evolved in the last seven preceding decades. The testing instruments provided to the assessors are based on the research carried out in the late thirties and early forties of the previous century. World armies continue to upgrade their testing kits continuously based on the evolved consciousness of the affected population. Why haven't we done is a mystery.

Q: There have been a harrowing rate of relegations in our officer training academies each during each course. This year saw the mass relegations of Lady cadets from OTA Chennai, on grounds of poor physical fitness. Given the fact that these cadets are all recommended by the SSB, does it not highlight a major discrepancy between what is required by the SSB, and what is expected at the respective training academies?

Ans: This failure is the question that Col Vinay Dalvi is addressing to the authorities that matter since the last one and half-decade. There is no one better than him since he worked as the PTO in the academies. He deserves to be heard. Strangely, his counsel is being ignored. Cadets entering the academies with poor physical fitness standards face an uphill task in training.

A maximum number of relegations is for not clearing even the necessary physical tests. This attrition not only results in a waste of precious time by the cadets who go down in seniority compared to their colleagues but considerably lowers their self-worth and motivation. It dents the self-image of future officers for life. Only and the only answer is to include physical tests in screening before subjecting candidates to SSB testing.

Q: What are your views on the disconnect between our 73 year old DIPR selection system selection system and actual training requirement to which DIPR/SSB qualified officers (GTO, IO, and Psychologist/Technical Officer) have become captive to?

Ans: Having worked in the academies, I am aware of the disconnect between training in the academies and the SSBs. Standardization exercises are conducted to address this discrepancy. In that, teams of the SSB assessors visit academies to ensure that observations made in respect of some candidates are being ironed out in training. These visits are infrequent, and discussions are superficial.

Academies have their own agendas. Competencies of the cadets on which the trainers' work do not match the fifteen qualities tested in the SSBs. The only solution to this pressing issue is to associate officers posted to academies with SSBs. They must physically stay in the SSBs for a reasonable time and participate in the selection process.

Q: Do you feel there is a lack of coordination amongst the agencies involved in terms of selection requirements at the SSB? If so, what solution do you propose?

Ans: This disconnect is serious, particularly in the fast-changing world of today. This matter must engage the highest authority in the defence forces and the Government. The only answer to my mind is to institute a standing committee to address this issue by way of continuous monitoring and research.

Q: What are your recommendations to reform or review the SSB procedure and how would they help deal with the problems plaguing India's officer selection?

Ans: Nothing earth-shaking is required to reform the system. Any thinking person given a chance will take a few logical steps. These are:

- Scrap the existing screening test since it is superficial, arbitrary, and does injustice to candidates who come through strenuous written examinations of UPSC and Army Headquarters in the case of ACC candidates. An intelligence test can be introduced for screening non-UPSC entry candidates, as was the case before 1998 when the present screening system was introduced.
- Introduce physical fitness screening tests in consultation with the physical training officers working in the academies. Higher fitness will infuse confidence in future cadets and enhance their overall performance in the academy.
- Institute a research team to review, revise, and upgrade the existing test battery. It is to be done in a time-bound manner. The project must be completed and introduced expeditiously.
- Instructors getting posted to academies must remain attached to the SSBs for a reasonable period before taking up jobs as trainers.
- SSB selectors must necessarily visit units posted in the forward areas in insurgency prone regions at least once in one year.
- Standardization exercises of the selectors need to be taken up in an in-depth and serious manner.

Q: Do you believe that the DIPR has by and large lived up to its mission? If yes, how? If not, why?

Ans: The answer is NO from me. Why the DIPR has not lived up to their mission statement is a mystery

and needs to be probed. It can be mentioned in the passing that they must be made accountable to the Recruiting Directorates of the three services in matters of selection.


Q: How should the SSB selection procedure change or be reformed to improve the quality of officer intake, our training methodology and grooming to give the end users qualitatively better officers?

Ans: The comprehensive answer is contained in the five painstaking volumes produced by Victory India under the energetic guidance of passionate Col Vinay Dalvi and his colleagues. I am only qualified to answer psychology-related pertinent questions contained in this well-drafted questionnaire.

Q: What could the armed forces learn from the corporate sector in terms of selection and delegation of authority?

Ans: I worked with a team to test senior corporate managers for over six years after superannuation. We tested and counseled persons working in prestigious corporations like TATAs and Reliance to include several others. Indian corporates are quite confused about the qualities they require in their senior managers.

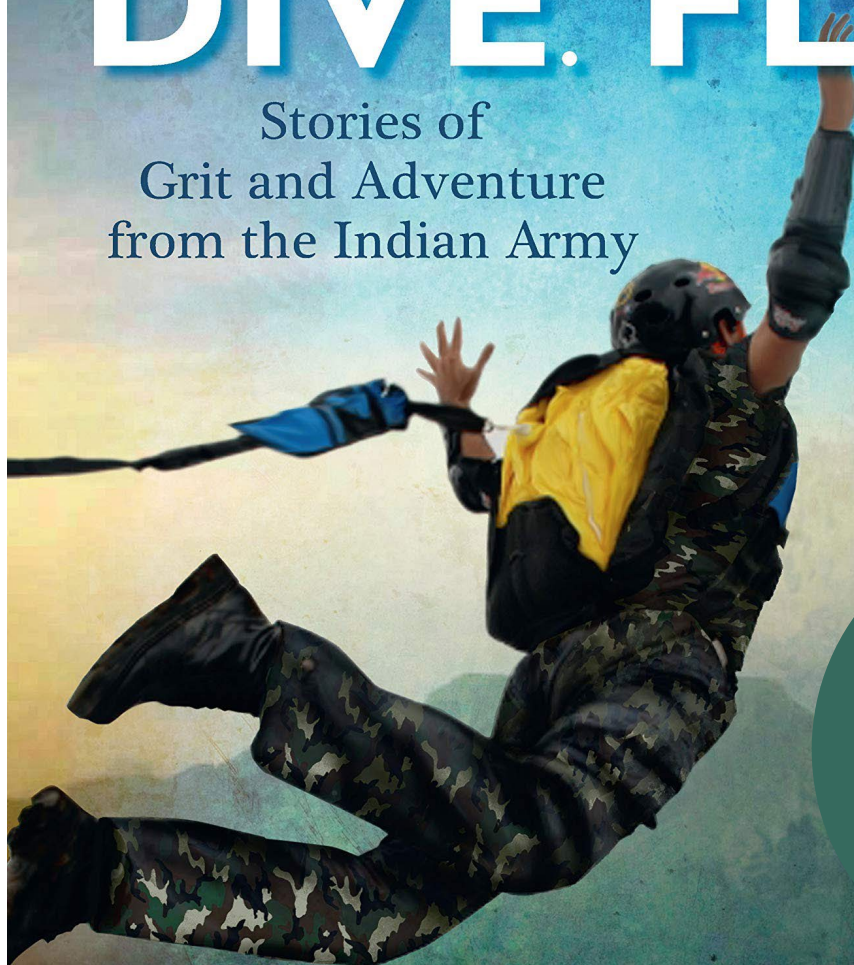
They would hurriedly draft un-researched competencies needed in their managers for the assessment teams to probe. This form of testing in respect of Indian corporates is a recent phenomenon to stay in line with the foreign corporates who are already well organized. They call this form of testing 'assessment centers,' and we in India have borrowed the idea.

Corporates conduct only discussion and unstructured interviews before shortlisting candidates for employment. We have nothing to learn from them. Only agencies that can provide valuable inputs in revising our system in armed forces are the tests and procedures presently in use in the modern western armies. 

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RACHNA BISHT RAWAT
Foreword by M.S. Dhoni



Political Bogeys the Military Can Do Without

“‘Indian State has an Army, In Pakistan the Army has a State!’”

by Lieutenant General Bhopinder Singh (Retd)

Post the clearly political and fiscal move of ‘demonetisation’, the extreme inconvenience felt by the citizenry was sought to be placated by “our brave soldiers stand bravely on the borders, shame on you that you can’t even stand for some time....you demoralise our brave soldiers”. Later, probing and uncomfortable questions on Pulwama-Balakot, AFSPA, Kashmir, Surgical Strikes right up to the recent Galwan incident which certainly had militaristic underpinnings, were blocked and deflected by manufactured-incredulity that suggested ‘demoralising the military’, which axiomatically implied ‘anti-national’ attributes onto any questioner.

The solid ‘defense’ afforded by the military is now no longer restrained to the cartographical borders, but also in the political realm, though unintentionally. The soldier rightfully remains sacrosanct in the national consciousness and imagination, and therefore

any related or even unrelated executive decision (e.g. ‘demonetisation’) which can be creatively contextualised to the soldier’s ‘morale’, is pure political gold. Whereas, the institution of the Military remains steadfastly ‘voiceless’ about its own opinions, as mandated by its traditional, constitutional, and moral ethos that has increasingly found unsolicited ‘voices’ (all political), for the historically apolitical institution.

Earlier in a hard-hitting observation, Supreme Court rejected the view that remarks made by judges of the lower courts had ‘demoralised’ the Armed Forces - “Officers and personnel of the Indian Army, Paramilitary Forces and the State Police are made of sterner stuff than is sought to be projected, and they can hardly be demoralised by observations said to have been made by anybody. It is unfortunate that a bogey of demoralization of the

Indian Army, Paramilitary Forces and the State Police is being raised”.

Somewhere in the political spin-doctoring this instinctive ploy of convenient deflection started getting increasingly deployed, as politicians of all hues started scurrying under ‘demoralising the military’ to justify their own roles as the decision-making dispensation, or as the accusation-making opposition parties.

The Armed Forces remain oblivious to the ostensible ‘support’ on its behalf. The round ultimately goes to whomsoever posits a more emotional and stirring hullabaloo of ‘demoralising the military’.

The Indian Armed Forces are not a monolithic, majoritarian or politically-tilted cabal – on the contrary, the military celebrates the diversity of all possible denominations in a unique fashion as a combat ‘unit’. it is

The institution of the Military remains steadfastly ‘voiceless’ about its own opinions, as mandated by its traditional, constitutional, and moral ethos that has increasingly found unsolicited ‘voices’, for the historically apolitical institution.

insistently apolitical and wired inextricably to the ‘constitutional idea of India’, and not towards any partisan ideology.

To suggest otherwise and appropriate the imagery of the ‘Soldier’ to bolster portents of political muscularity is sheer misuse of its disciplined ‘voice lessness’. This does not mean that the barracks are ignorant or unopinionated on national urgencies – the combatants are allowed to express the substantive and relevant part in a mandated form, forum and style, but the same is wholly subservient to the ‘orders’, that are ultimately issued.

Tenures in the most remote, challenging and unrest-filled circumstances, naturally affords a unmatched sense of ‘ground-realities’ and perspectives, but the communication of the essence is left to the top-brass who are expected to sensitise the politico-bureaucrat domain of the circumstantial and institutional concerns, without any political attributions or preferences.

But expressing any individual opinion on behalf of the institution (even by its extended arm of Veterans) is not bereft of political nudges, hence an anathema to its inner health and culture that needs to be spared the societal wounds of polarisation, bigotry or politicisation.

It is without doubt the closest to perfection in terms of efficacy, propriety and conduct, and the most foremost reason for the same is the belief in constant corrections and improvements, and not living in denial, as willy-nilly postured by politicians to cover-up their own actions and inactions.

1971 Indo-Pak was arguably the Armed Forces ‘finest hour’, yet it did not spare the conduct of a few who were found compromising the exacting standards of the institution

– the ends never justify the means in the Armed Forces, as the means are inviolable.

Military acknowledges its missteps if any and is unforgiving on its personnel that need no misplaced protection of ‘demoralising the military’ - it is for this reason that in the long run, it remains the most trusted, revered and reassuringly humane institution of all.


Lessons of the inevitable-that-follow by positing the Military beyond questioning are across the Line-of-Control, as Rawalpindi (Pakistani Military Headquarters) holds the essential-reins of Islamabad (Political Capital) that readily allows the Pakistani Military to saunter into commercial projects, running cinemas, as also defining the ‘red lines’ of all internal and external governmental policies. For that farcical democracy it is said, ‘Indian State has an Army, In Pakistan the Army has a State’!

Questions of national security are everybody’s concern and it is only natural that the same are raised and addressed by the civilian government, as is the norm in participative democracy. While operational details that truly compromise the ‘security’ of the nation need not be shared, however the powers-that-be cannot be selective in

sharing what supports a political narrative and attribute ‘demoralising the military’, when cornered.

The Military is composed of extremely professional personnel who personify physical, mental and emotional strength that comes with the institutional turf, rigour and training – so to suggest the ‘demoralising of the military’ is actually demeaning the fine institution. There are enough known shortcomings in wares and weaponry, diminishment of precedence vis-à-vis other governance arms, work life conditions, institutional misuses and retiral concerns of Veterans that warrant soul-searching and introspection for those, who truly seek to remedy ‘demoralising the military’ – but that seems to be out of course.

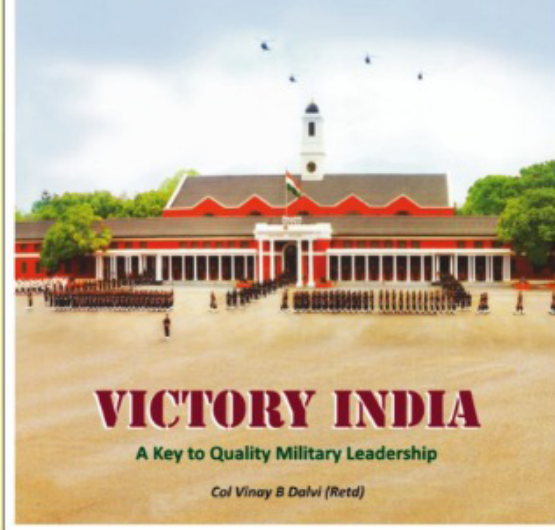
There is the unforgivable concern of propping some Veterans, and worse, even serving top-brass, to speak out publicly in lending credence to overtly political stances, that is misuse at its worst. The sword-arm of the nation has held its own, not because of what any political parties have ever done for it, but despite it. The condescending, puerile and seemingly-protectionist bogey of ‘demoralising the military’ is self-serving and wholly political. Let those who do or don’t do, what is expected of them to answer for themselves.

The Armed Forces believe in ‘service before self’ and they do so frequently by ‘paying the ultimate price’, for such a noble institution, such a patronising tone is unrequired and political exploitation. 



Lieutenant General Bhopinder Singh (Retd)

Commissioned in and subsequently commanded 17th Rajput, the author fought in the 1965 & 1971 wars and various counter-insurgency operations in J&K and North East. He was the Military, Naval & Air Attaché for the East & South Africa Region. Later he was the Military Secretary to Presidents, KR Narayanan & APJ Abdul Kalam. He was the ‘Colonel of the Regiment’ of the Rajput Regiment, President’s Bodyguards, and the Army Physical Training Corps. He retired as the Director General of Military Training. He is currently a columnist for leading publications. Views expressed are the authors own, and do not reflect the editorial policy of ‘MVI’



BOOK REVIEW:
Victory India
A Key to Quality Military Leadership (2013)

By Lt Col B S Barge, 15 Maratha LI, 1965 & 1971 War Veteran

'Victory India - A Key to Quality Military leadership' Edited & Authored by Col Vinay B Dalvi is a precious and thoughtful presentation of honest architectural work. This book reveals meticulous work and exhaustive study in depth with aim and purpose of nation building. It is a rare example of thematic excellence.

The subject matter 'A key to quality military leadership' has been very systematically laid out with noble intention and purpose; the aim clearly being to reshape and restructure 1. The selection process of officer candidates for the Indian Armed Forces at the Services Selection Boards (SSBs), and 2. the training of selected trainees at their respective training academies. The intended change envisaged is due to fast changing developments, environment, changing concepts of warfare, advance technologies and overall mental makeup of human resources in the prevailing socio-economic environment.

Briefly, it is intended to achieve fresh and renewed look for attainment of better and pragmatic results.

A careful handling of men and material resources has been accorded paramount importance. Hence, the book has spelt out the urgent requirement of fresh review of system, by a group of experts, applicable to various training establishments like NDA, IMA, OTA, Air Force and Naval Academies-a welcome step in right direction. The book appropriately projects the various viable methods for selection by Group Testing Officers (GTO), Interviewing Officer (IO), Psychologists/Technical Officers, sufficiently qualified to assess the inner potentials of the candidates. It also suggests the meaningful methods and work outs to eradicate the mismatch in selection and training processes build up the necessary character qualities and conduct periodic reviews to ensure pragmatic continuity.

The author, Col Vinay B Dalvi, very articulately launches and promotes a useful campaign for inducting quality candidates as potential officer leaders as intended; a crusade for pragmatic and meaningful selection system; a firm commitment to introspect on improving the training of military academies; an inspiration to enlightened students of leadership in other spheres of life for similar initiatives and an information depository for candidates, guardians, selectors and mentors on selection and training.

It is unanimously felt that having seen the ground realities there is an urgent need to review the systems all over in the best interest of the nation.

This valuable, creative and constructive book consists of precious articles, responses from numerous renowned veterans, defence experts, analysts, writers, military experts and professionals in the field of Psychology, Sports medicine, Technology and Academics. All of them have acknowledged, applauded and welcomed the idea and theme of the subject matter-a healthy and progressive sign. Hence, the far-sight and foresight of the author deserves appreciation and attention of concerned authorities for implementation.

The theme and nucleus of 'Victory India - A Key to Quality Military Leadership' is adorned by nine (9) Golden Contents:

- 1) The Primer and Booster' which sets the thought process in motion,
- 2) Selection and Training Technicalities' covering various organisations of the process;
- 3) NDA amidst Budding Crises', giving out the ground realities of NDA,
- 4) NDA- Transformation Call', throws light on Academics, Physical Training and the importance of qualities and requirements of sports & games at NDA and basic steps for leadership,
- 5) Selection & Training Process' for institutions,
- 6) Scientific Training, Injury Prevention and Sports Medicine',
- 7) Military Leadership Models' discusses models of various countries,
- 8) Inspirational' section giving out Human Levels of Consciousness, Understanding of Motivation and Seven Key Competencies for Successful Leadership in today's environment and
- 9) Current National Scenario' depicting Indian National Leadership Crises, A Culture of leadership and Consensus for Action.

Finally, the Excerpts from Various Articles are collectively an eye opener for the SSBs and Academies.

In sum, this book has projected the stark realities and recommended pragmatic solutions to work on by the training establishments and allied support systems for the betterment of armed forces and nation, which would certainly make the nation strong and resilient to face any eventuality.

The book, through the collective and combined efforts of dedicated and devoted veterans & academicians has aimed to strengthen our military leadership at the early, formative stages of selection, training and grooming. It has also highlighted the imperative need for a strong and well bonded political leadership, especially at the vital apex levels with the overall aim of 'Victory India' for the Indian Armed Forces and Nation!