

U.S.I. JOURNAL

INDIA'S OLDEST JOURNAL ON DEFENCE AFFAIRS



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Modern Positional Warfare and How to Win it: A Logistician's Perspective	Lieutenant General (Dr) Sanjay Sethi, AVSM, VSM
Conflict Areas in India: Lessons Learnt	Jayanto N Choudhury, IPS (Retd)
Fake News as a Method of Warfare	Wing Commander (Dr) UC Jha (Retd) Group Captain Kishore Kumar Khera, VM (Retd)
Trump 2.0: The Implications on Global Flashpoints	Vinayak Sharma

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USI

USI LATEST PUBLICATIONS; 2023-2024

Pub Code	Type	Title of Publication and Author	Price '₹'	Year
Adm/SYB-2024*	Year Book	Strategic Year Book 2024 Editor-in-Chief: Maj Gen BK Sharma, AVSM, SM** (Retd), edited by Maj Gen Sanjeev Chowdhry (Retd), Ms Komal Chaudhary, Mr Vinayak Sharma and Mr Mihir S M/s Vij Books of India Pvt Ltd	2750	2024
P-39/ 2023*	National Security Paper -2023	The Indo-Pacific Construct-India's Maritime Highway to Great Power Status by Vice Adm (Dr) Anil Kumar Chawla, PVSM, AVSM, NM, VSM (Retd) M/s Vij Books of India Pvt Ltd	395	2024
OP-8/2024*	Occasional Paper	Bloodshed in Balochistan: Pakistan's Festering Wound by Maj Gen Jagatbir Singh, VSM (Retd) M/s Vij Books of India Pvt Ltd	250	2024
OP-7/2024*	Occasional Paper	Spectrum, Telecommunication Network for Spectrum, and Defence Communication Network of the Indian Armed Forces by Air Mshl (Dr) Rajeev Sachdeva, AVSM (Retd) M/s Vij Books of India Pvt Ltd	350	2024
OP-6/2024*	Occasional Paper	Relevance of Geoeconomics: Emergence of India as a Geoeconomics Power, Challenges, Opportunities and the Way Ahead by Col Dheeraj Kumar M/s Vij Books of India Pvt Ltd	350	2024
OP-5/2024*	Occasional Paper	International Humanitarian Law in Contemporary Peacekeeping Operations: Challenges and Opportunities by Wg Cdr (Dr) UC Jha (Retd) M/s Vij Books of India Pvt Ltd	250	2024
OP-4/2024*	Occasional Paper	Protection of Cultural Property in Armed Conflict by Wg Cdr (Dr) UC Jha (Retd) M/s Vij Books of India Pvt Ltd	250	2024
OP-3/2024*	Occasional Paper	Impact of Technology Enabled Cognitive Operations in Hybrid Warfare by Lt Gen (Dr) RS Panwar, AVSM, SM, VSM (Retd) M/s Vij Books of India Pvt Ltd	350	2024
OP-2/2024*	Occasional Paper	Political and Economic Instability in Myanmar: Implications for India's Act East Policy by Mr Subir Bhaumik M/s Vij Books of India Pvt Ltd	250	2024
OP-1/2024*	Occasional Paper	Optimisation Of Professional Wargaming with Board and Tabletop Wargames Which Really Are Qualitative Agent-Based Models by Lt Gen (Dr) SK Gadeock, AVSM (Retd) and Col Saikat K Bose M/s Vij Books of India Pvt Ltd	350	2024
M-6/2024*	Monograph	Ground Realities, Gaps and Challenges in Access to Entitlements and Benefits for War Wounded Disabled Soldiers and Disabled Cadets by Mrs Meghna Girish	-	2024
M-5/2024*	Monograph	Future Employment of Air Power – Strategic Inferences for India by Air Mshl (Dr) Diptendu Choudhury, PVSM, AVSM, VM, VSM (Retd) M/s Vij Books of India Pvt Ltd	395	2024
M-4/2024*	Monograph	Chinese and Russian Military Artificial Intelligence: Drivers of National Goals by Brig Pawan Bhardwaj M/s Vij Books of India Pvt Ltd	395	2024
M-3/ 2024*	Monograph	Fifth General KV Krishna Rao Memorial Lecture India's Strategic Autonomy Opportunities and Challenges in the Emerging World Order, Manekshaw Centre: 05 Oct 2023 by Gen Anil Chauhan, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM, VSM, Chief of Defence Staff, Amb Sujan R Chinoy (Retd) Director General, Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Study and Analyses, and Lt Gen Ata Hasnain, VSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM, VSM** (Retd) edited by Maj Gen Sanjeev Chowdhry (Retd), Ms Komal Chaudhary and Mr Vinayak Sharma M/s Vij Books of India Pvt Ltd	295	2024
M-2/ 2024*	Monograph	Protection of Civilians in Modern Conflicts and International Humanitarian Law edited by Maj Gen PK Goswami, VSM (Retd), Maj Gen (Dr) AK Bardalai (Retd) and Ms Kompal Zinta M/s Vij Books of India Pvt Ltd	395	2024
M-1/ 2024*	Monograph	Present and Emerging Threats to National Security in Digital and Cyber Space – An Analysis of Security And Legal Issues by Lt Cdr Bharat Singh (Retd) and Gp Capt Raja Singh (Retd) M/s Vij Books of India Pvt Ltd	395	2024
Adm-1/2024*	Book	India's Strategic Thought and Multi-Domain Warfare Perspectives edited by Maj Gen Sanjeev Chowdhry (Retd), Ms Komal Chaudhary, Mr Vinayak Sharma M/s Pentagon Press	995	2024
R-119/ 2024*	Book	Enhancing Offensive Cyber Capability at National Level by Col Suraksh Vir M/s Vij Books of India Pvt Ltd	850	2024
R-118/ 2024*	Book	Saliency of Social Media in Hybrid Operations by Col Dheeraj Kumar M/s Vij Books of India Pvt Ltd	1450	2024

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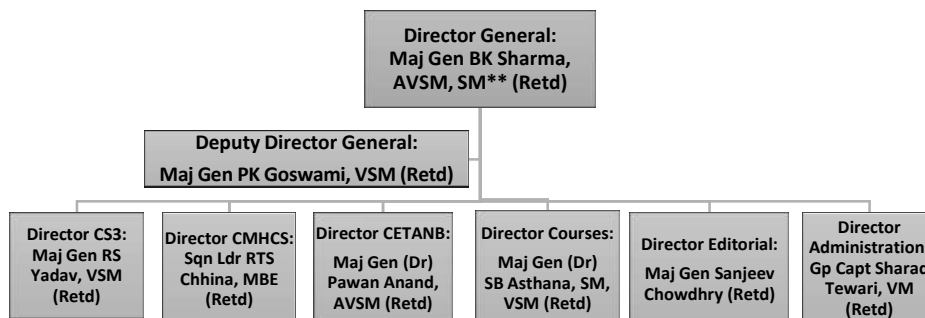
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1. The USI of India conducts Correspondence Course for Entrance Examination to Defence Service Staff College (DSSC) - Army, Navy and Air Force (IAF), Defence Services Technical Staff College (DSTSC) - Army and Promotion Examinations Part B and D. It also conducts Contact Programme (CP) for DSSC/DSTSC - Army and Online Pre-Staff Course (OPSC) for DSSC - Army and IAF.
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4. Schedule and Fees of Correspondence Courses 2024-25 are given below:

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DSSC (Navy)	Second Week of Jan 2025 Registration open for 2025	Jul 2025	-	Paper 1 – ₹ 3,000/- (Current Affairs, Military/Naval History and Maritime Strategy)
DSSC (IAF)	Second Week of Nov 2024 Registration open for 2025	Jul 2025	-	Correspondence Course • Military History – ₹ 3,000/- • Current Affairs – ₹ 3,000/-
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- The USI welcomes original researched articles pertaining to national security, defence matters and military history for publication in the USI Journal. Articles should preferably not exceed 3,000 words. Along with the article, the author should forward abstract of the article not exceeding ten per cent of the total words. These should be forwarded as a word document on e-mail to the Editor, United Service Institution of India, on direditorial@usiofindia.org. In the e-mail, the author should state that "the article titled (Title of Article) has neither been previously published in print or online, nor has it been offered to any other agency for publication. The Editor reserves the right to make alterations".
- It is mandatory that the author furnishes complete details of the book/journal referred to in the article as endnotes. A guide to writing endnotes is given on the next page. Besides endnotes, if the author so desires, a bibliography may also be included, though it is not mandatory.
- The article should be in Arial Font, size 12 and English (UK). Avoid use of symbols like %, & and so on unless unavoidable to explain a point. The date style should be 24 Jun 2020. Abbreviations, if any, should be used in their expanded form the first time and indicated in brackets.
- The full name and address of the author along with a brief Curriculum Vitae should be given. Serving officers are advised to follow the prevailing Services instructions for publications of their articles.
- The author will receive a copy of the issue of the Journal in which his/her article appears along with three offprints. A suitable honorarium will also be paid after the article is published.

Guide to Writing Endnotes

- Endnotes are notes added to the main body of a paper or an article, in which the author directs readers to sources referred to or to add extra comments of his or her own. Endnotes are placed at the end of the paper/article. A superscript number (1,2,3,4) at the end of the sentence signals the reader to look for the corresponding endnote at the end of the article. The endnotes should be numbered consecutively, starting from '1'. Citations should include the author's name, title of the book, publishing information (in parenthesis) and pages consulted, all separated by commas. Citations should be in the Chicago Manual of Style (CMS) format. A quick reference is available at: https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html.

- Some examples are given below:

¹ Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy : A Prime in the Social History of Pictorial Style*, (Oxford University Press, London, 1988), p. 45.

² Lina Bolzoni and Pietri Coral, *The Culture Memory*,(Bologna : Societa editrice Il Mulino, 1992), p. 45.

Use of *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, and *loc. cit.*

Ibid. refers to the immediate preceding reference; *op. cit.* refers to the prior reference by the same author and *loc. cit.* is used instead of *op. cit.* when reference is made to a work previously cited and to the same page in that work. For example :-

⁴ R Polrer, *Learning Physics*, (Academic, New York, 1993), p. 4.

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 9.

⁶ T Eliot, *Astrophysics*, (Springer, Berlin, 1989), p.141.

⁷ R Millan, *Art of Latin Grammar*, (Academic, New York, 1997), p.23.

⁸ Eliot, *op cit.*, p148.

⁹ Eliot, *loc, cit.*

- Where websites have been used to access information, the complete web address of the website should be cited, followed by the date the website was accessed by the author e.g. Accessed 24 Jun 2020 from <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1947degana.html>.

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During this period a total of 45 new books have been added. Details of the new books are available on the USI Website.

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Members interested in undertaking research projects may submit research proposals to the USI (CS3/CMHCS). At present, ten Chairs of Excellence have been instituted in CS3; namely, Field Marshal KM Cariappa Chair, Admiral RD Katari Chair, Air Marshal Subroto Mukherjee Chair, Professor DS Kothari Chair, Ministry of External Affairs Chair, Flying Officer Amandeep Singh Gill Chair, General Bipin Rawat Chair, Lieutenant General PS Bhagat Chair, Bhawanipur Education Society College Chair, Assam Rifles Chair and three Chairs in CMHCS; namely, Maharana Pratap Chair, Chhatrapati Shivaji Chair and USI-War Wounded Foundation Chair. Copies of the Rules for Award of Fellowship Grants and Conduct of Research are available on the USI Website.

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COURSE MEMBERS

During Oct-Dec 2024, 86 Officers registered for Course Membership.

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From the Director General's Desk

Dear members,

At the outset, I take this opportunity to convey our greetings and best wishes for the year 2025. During the year 2024, the Institution witnessed a marked increase in its activities despite organisational constraints. It was with the unstinted support of the United Service Institution (USI) Council, USI members, and the dedication of the staff that we were able to overcome the challenges, adapt, and grow. The USI remains well-poised to navigate significant geopolitical shifts in the year 2025.

The world has entered an era of contested multi-polarity. The United States (US)-led so-called free and liberal world order is challenged by China and Russia. American-centric alliances and organisations such as Euro-Atlantic alliance, East Asian Alliance, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, and the trilateral security partnership among Australia, the United Kingdom, and the US (AUKUS) are being challenged by CRINK (China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea). The emergence of the Global South, a vast conglomerate of developing nations, is asserting for its rightful position in the evolving balance of power. Among the multitude of drivers of contested multi-polarity, standout factors include new generation conflicts, disruptive technologies, and the rise in the number of failing states. The 'Grey Rhino' of climate change and 'Black Swans' like pandemics continue to pose existential threats to humankind. The security landscape has never been so changed since the end of the Second World War.

In the aforesaid strategic environment, characterised by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity, the biggest imponderable is the policies and strategic behaviour of America under the Trump Administration. In this scenario of gloom and doom, multilateralism has become virtually defunct.

As far as India is concerned, the country has embarked on a positive trajectory of *Viksit Bharat@2047*. While the nation's resolve for comprehensive national development remains steadfast, its security challenges are profound. Collusive hybrid threats, grey

zone conflicts, and a hostile nuclear environment remain constant features of India's threat spectrum. The strategic milieu demands critical thinking and multi-domain skill sets to assess and strategise for new security challenges and opportunities.

As for the update on the USI activities during the year 2024:

We had an extremely busy but fruitful year replete with events and discussions which focused on various geopolitical and national security issues.

In 2024, the Centre for Strategic Studies and Simulation (CS3) advanced military research and strategic thought through scenario-based games, workshops, and a Combined Operational and Review Programme for senior military leaders. It expanded global outreach with Memoranda of Understanding with various multilateral institutes and universities, Track 1.5 dialogues, and participation in international conferences, while hosting seminars and discussions on national security and multi-domain warfare. CS3 also supported research via net assessment studies, strategic gaming exercises, and Chairs of Excellence, alongside publishing scholarly works. Annual memorial lectures addressed key topics like Jointmanship and transformation of the Indian Army, highlighting CS3's role in enhancing military preparedness and international collaboration.

The Centre for Military History and Conflict Studies (CMHCS) had a notable year with impactful initiatives to preserve and promote India's military heritage. Highlights include hosting the second edition of the Indian Military Heritage Festival and USI-National Army Museum Curators' Course, commemorating the 25th Anniversary of the Kargil War and the Indian Air Force's role in the 1971 War. It advanced archival efforts with a Digital Archive for the Indian Air Force and launched Project *Veer Gatha* and Project *Shaurya Gatha* to inspire and preserve military legacies. The Centre also introduced a Master of Arts programme in International Conflict Studies with the University of Ladakh and represented India's military legacy at international events. With ten publications and successful essay competitions, CMHCS continues to foster military scholarship and heritage on national and global platforms.

The USI Centre for Emerging Technologies for Atma Nirbhar Bharat (CETANB) established in Jan 2024, promotes indigenisation and self-reliance in defence by bridging gaps between stakeholders and advancing disruptive technologies like cybersecurity, Artificial Intelligence, and unmanned aerial vehicles. Key achievements include establishing a Cyber Centre of Excellence with the Cyber Peace Foundation, launching the Cyber Responder Programme, and hosting events such as the Aerospace and Defence Capability Roadmap 2030 Conclave. CETANB also trains army officers and law enforcement agencies on cybersecurity and misinformation and participates in global forums, including the United Nations (UN) and bilateral platforms, to enhance digital infrastructure resilience. Through its initiatives, CETANB has become a pivotal driver of India's strategic and technological progress.

The Centre for Courses, a key pillar of the Institution since 1903, advanced professional training for serving officers in 2024 through an Online Pre-Staff Course for Defence Services Staff College (DSSC) army aspirants and introducing a Pre-Staff Course for Air Force and Navy officers. It continued correspondence and hybrid-mode programmes for competitive and promotion exams (Part B and Part D) and was designated a node of excellence by Army Training Command of the Indian Army for conducting command pre-staff courses and precis writing. Training over 1,500 officers, with 75 per cent achieving competitive vacancies and DSSC merit list positions, the Centre maintained its high standards of success.

The USI Annual UN Forum 2024, held in collaboration with International Committee of the Red Cross and Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping (CUNPK), focused on 'Changing Character of Conflicts: Challenges to Peace Operations and International Humanitarian Law'. Key discussions included civilian and peacekeeper protection, climate change impacts, and women's roles in UN operations. Earlier in May, a seminar addressed civilian protection in modern conflicts. Dec featured lectures by the Ambassadors of Brazil and the European Union on strategic partnerships and a Japanese roundtable on defence cooperation. With CUNPK now a part of the Indian Army, USI has shifted focus to UN peacekeeping policies and was nominated to the Advisory Committee of the Challenges Forum, reinforcing its role in global dialogue and partnerships.

The Editorial Section of the USI upheld its tradition of excellence with notable achievements, including the continued success of the USI Journal, established in 1871, and the release of the USI Strategic Year Book 2024 and the USI-Army War College joint publication on 'India's Strategic Thought and Multi-domain Warfare,' launched by Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan. This year's outputs featured five monographs and eight occasional papers. Collaboration with the Eastern Air Command resulted in four articles published across two editions of the journal, and the USI significantly expanded its digital presence. The Editorial Section has also managed the social media handles of USI and has created YouTube videos on strategic issues, including the Global Heatmap, a weekly roundup of current affairs. Additionally, the Section hosted the second space domain course for Air Force officers and the USI Gold Medal Essay Competition on non-contact and non-kinetic warfare, with preparations underway for the inaugural USI-Chief of Air Staff Essay Competition in 2025. These efforts highlight the Section's commitment to advancing military scholarship and strategic discourse.

The USI Administration Section significantly enhanced operations and infrastructure in 2024. Key achievements included digitising accounts with the Tally system, introducing a rent-free Point of Sale system for convenient transactions, and securing a 30-year extension of the land lease, along with a 50 per cent reduction in property tax by reclassifying the property from commercial to private. Infrastructure upgrades featured new audio/video equipment, seminar room furniture, reverse osmosis systems, a water motor, and expanded library office space for scholars. Fire safety was improved with Auto Fire Balls. These initiatives underscore the Section's commitment to efficiency and improved facilities for members and staff.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the USI Council for their invaluable guidance and steadfast support during this transformative phase. I also thank our esteemed members and contributors who actively participated in various events and enriched our publications, including the USI Journal and the Strategic Year Book. I encourage everyone to continue supporting USI's initiatives, engage enthusiastically in events, and contribute to our literary pursuits.

I am deeply grateful to each member of the USI family for their exceptional work on both the academic and administrative fronts this past year. Their dedication, hard work, and commitment have greatly enhanced the Institution's reputation and advanced our shared mission of knowledge and excellence. My thanks also go to the USI support staff for their reliable efforts, ensuring smooth operations throughout the year.

As I conclude the Director General's page for 2024, I would like to acknowledge Residency Resorts for maintaining clean and comfortable accommodations, as well as high-class catering at the USI premises.

Looking forward, the coming year holds great promise for the USI. We stand ready for further innovation, impactful research, and significant contributions in the fields of literature and strategy. May 2025 bring fresh perspectives, inspiring achievements, and renewed purpose. Let us embrace every opportunity and together, make this a year of remarkable accomplishments, elevating the USI to new heights.

Wishing you and your loved ones a joyful, healthy, and prosperous New Year!

With best wishes,

Jai Hind

Major General BK Sharma, AVSM, SM** (Retd)

Editorial

Dear Readers,

It gives me great pleasure to present to you the United Service Institution's (USI) Journal for the 4th quarter of 2024. For the past 151 years, the USI has been committed to providing strategic insights on national security and geopolitics to its readers. This issue features 11 well-researched articles on diverse topics, including the logistics of war, the implications of the United States Presidential Elections, lessons that could be gleaned from various conflict areas in India, and fake news as a tool of warfare. Furthermore, there are two China-centric articles: the first focuses on the legal perspective of China's claim on Taiwan, and the second discusses the power dynamics of the Indo-Pacific and India-Taiwan relations with a focus on China. Another article examines the intersection of China, Pakistan, and India, and the three-way contestation for the Wakhan Corridor through Gilgit-Baltistan. The final Pakistan-centric article analyses their Army's recently launched operation, *Azm-e-Istehkam* (Resolve for Stability). Additionally, there are articles on the evolution of the British Indian Army, the potential of the BrahMos missile, and a comparison of Kautilya's *Arthashastra* and Sun Tzu's *Art of War*. The Journal also includes with the winning entries of the Lieutenant General SL Menzes Memorial and USI-War Wounded Foundation Joint Essay Competitions 2024. The journal concludes with review articles and short book reviews.

The lead article, titled 'Modern Positional Warfare and How to Win It: A Logistician's Perspective' by Lieutenant General (Dr) Sanjay Sethi, AVSM, VSM, examines Valerii Zaluzhnyi, the Former Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, and his analysis of the challenges faced by the Ukrainian forces. It discusses Zaluzhnyi's proposed solutions to overcome the stagnation inherent in positional warfare. This is followed by a contribution by Jayanto N Choudhury, IPS (Retd), titled 'Conflict Areas in India: Lessons Learnt', which focuses on the armed movements persisting across the length and breadth of India. He argues that the lessons learnt over the past 40 years could help frame a strategic approach to reduce the cost to national resources and human suffering.

The third article, by Wing Commander (Dr) UC Jha (Retd) and Group Captain Kishore Kumar Khera, VM (Retd), titled 'Fake News as a Method of Warfare', examines how fake news, particularly during conflicts, has evolved through advanced tools like artificial intelligence to create false narratives. The authors argue that combating disinformation requires regulating content, promoting digital literacy, enhancing public awareness, investing in fact-checking mechanisms, and fostering proactive international collaboration to counter its weaponisation. Vinayak Sharma's article, 'Trump 2.0: The Implications on Global Flashpoints', explores the potential impact of Donald Trump winning the White House for a second term on the Russo-Ukrainian War and the Middle East conflict. The article concludes by presenting possible outcomes of these two conflicts.

The fifth contribution, authored by Dr K Mansi, titled 'Evolving Power Dynamics in the Indian Ocean Region: Challenges and Opportunities for India-Taiwan Ties', examines the strategic opportunities for enhancing India-Taiwan ties in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) amidst growing geopolitical tensions. The article argues that India and Taiwan, despite traditionally maintaining limited diplomatic and security ties, could benefit from an informal yet strategic partnership in the IOR. Dr Beena's article discusses China's claim to Taiwan from an international law perspective, tracing its origins to the Qing Dynasty and its solidification post-1949 with the establishment of the People's Republic of China. The principle of non-intervention and China's potential use of force are assessed under the United Nations Charter, including the involvement of third parties such as the US and Japan.

In the seventh entry, by Colonel PK Gautam (Retd), titled 'Comparison' of Select Maxims and Sutras: Sun Tzu's *Art of War* and Kautilya's *Arthashastra*', the article interprets and compares select maxims from the *Art of War* with corresponding *sutras* in *Arthashastra*. Rahul Wankhede's contribution, titled 'India's Defence Exports: Unravelling the Potential of the BrahMos Missile', explores the export potential of the BrahMos missile system. Highlighting its technical specifications and multi-platform versatility, the article analyses BrahMos variants, emphasising the indigenous advancements that have enhanced self-reliance. The author

argues that the BrahMos missile symbolises India's strategic prowess and its significant potential in contributing to global defence exports.

This is followed by Dr Narender Yadav's article, 'Evolution of the British Indian Army: An Overview', which examines the evolution of the British Indian Army and addresses questions related to Indianisation, uniform patterns, and expansion. In the tenth article, 'International Forces in Gilgit-Baltistan and How India Can Play a Defining Role', Colonel (Dr) Bhasker Gupta (Retd) identifies the key forces operating in the province of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). The article explores multiple options and scenarios for a peaceful and prosperous future for this resource-rich province, emphasising India's potential role, supported by international players such as the US and Europe, to prevent Pakistan from legitimising its continued illegal control over GB. The eleventh article, '*Al-Mizan to Azm-e-Istekham: Few Perceptible Dominant Trends*', by Colonel Varun Vijay Gidh, SM, summarises certain trends requiring attention from policymakers, academia, and the strategic community in the region. The article highlights geoeconomics as a key driver for Pakistan, alongside political compulsions, as it recently announced the launch of its latest operation, *Azm-e-Istekham*.

In the penultimate article of this edition, the winning entry of the Lieutenant General SL Menezes Memorial Essay Competition, titled 'China's Galwan Aggression and Military Lessons for India', Lieutenant Colonel Yogeshwer Rana examines China's strategic motives, including territorial expansion, historical claims, and geopolitical posturing, which have escalated tensions along the Line of Actual Control. By analysing the historical context, recent standoffs, and China's broader aggression towards multiple nations, the essay highlights critical military lessons for India. The final article, the winning entry of the USI-War Wounded Foundation Joint Essay Competition by Commander Anirudh Kumar Singh, titled 'Looking at the Disabled Soldier: Past, Present and Future: His Care, Career Prospects and Rehabilitation', explores the rehabilitation and career prospects of war-wounded soldiers. The article focuses on existing systems and identifies areas for improvement to better support disabled soldiers in their care and career development.

The Journal also includes reviews of some select books:

- The Untold Story of Everest 1985 by Colonel Ashok Tanwar; Reviewed by Major General Jagatbir Singh, VSM (Retd).
- Last of the Cavalrymen: Memoirs of Major-General Robert Harley Wordsworth edited by Ana Scarf and Charlotte Scarf; Reviewed by Major General Jagatbir Singh, VSM (Retd).
- *Aatma Nirbhar and Viksit Bharat @ 2047: Forging Ahead in Amrit Kaal* by Brigadier (Dr) Rajeev Bhutani; Reviewed by Colonel Ravinder Kumar Sharma (Retd).
- Military Operations: Legal Framework for Multi-Domain Warfare by Wing Commander (Dr) UC Jha (Retd) and Group Captain Kishore Kumar Khera, VM (Retd); Reviewed by Major General Nilendra Kumar, AVSM, VSM.

We welcome your feedback and suggestions.

Happy Reading!

Major General Sanjeev Chowdhry (Retd)
Director Editorial

Modern Positional Warfare and How to Win it: A Logistician's Perspective

Lieutenant General (Dr) Sanjay Sethi, AVSM, VSM®

Abstract

The protracted conflict in Ukraine has underscored the evolving nature of modern positional warfare and the critical role logistics play in achieving strategic objectives. This paper examines Valerii Zaluzhnyi's analysis of the challenges faced by Ukraine's armed forces and his proposed solutions to overcome the stagnation inherent in positional warfare. It highlights five operational aspects influencing this stalemate—air superiority, mine barrier breaching, counter-battery effectiveness, reserve creation and training, and electronic warfare capabilities—underscoring the need for technological innovation and adaptive strategies. The discussion pivots to the rational organisation of military logistics, a central theme in Zaluzhnyi's framework. Key factors include training investments, North Atlantic Treaty Organization interoperability, decentralised sustainment innovations, and seamless integration of international military assistance. Ukraine's ability to manage a diverse arsenal and sustain operations under contested conditions is remarkable but fraught with challenges. The article emphasises the significance of building war reserves, highlighting lessons from the war in Europe for recalibrating India's defence production and logistics paradigms. As logistics serve as the 'Oxygen of battle', the paper argues that adopting technologically advanced platforms, optimising information systems, and

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fostering rational logistics frameworks are imperative for modern militaries. It calls for an urgent review of existing paradigms to address the complexities of contested logistics, ensure readiness, and maintain competitive advantage in future conflicts. The insights drawn from Ukraine's experience resonate universally, providing a blueprint for enhancing military efficiency and resilience in an era defined by rapid technological shifts and asymmetric warfare.

Introduction

Valerii Zaluzhnyi, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, in his recent essay titled 'Modern Positional Warfare and How to Win it', has analysed the present state of the war his armed forces are involved in, and has suggested possible ways out of the stagnant situation.¹

The essay needs a critical analysis for a variety of reasons. Firstly, on account of its author's credentials, who has been in command of the Armed Forces of Ukraine since 27 Jul 2021. According to Politico, he epitomises the new generation of Ukrainian officers who have cut their teeth in the grinding eight-year war in Donbas, and when not on the front, trained across Europe with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces²; apart from their experience in the ongoing operations which commenced on 24 Feb 2022. Zaluzhnyi is popularly referred to as the 'Iron General', and perhaps has one of the most challenging military assignments on the planet. Secondly, in terms of intensity, scale, and particularly the duration of operations, the war stands out in contrast to the prevalent military axioms and has been a subject of intense study by all major powers. Thirdly, what Zaluzhnyi has written, both with respect to the challenges they face and the probable solutions, will have relevance in all future wars; even more so because the conflict has seen an accelerated technology creep. Fourthly, given the asymmetry between the two sides, the positional nature of the conflict gives rise to immense curiosity in any military mind. Lastly, but not the least, lessons from a prolonged war that has acquired a positional form are much relevant to India, notwithstanding the differences in terrain.

In an interview to the Economist, Zaluzhnyi admits that the war is at a stalemate.³ Five months into its counter-offensive, his army has advanced only 17 kms; by NATO standards, to which his army is more or less aligned, they should have been in and out of Crimea by now. Similarly, on the other side, the Russians fought for ten months around Bakhmut to take a town of size six square kms.

The main body of the essay is divided into three distinct parts: reasons for transition of hostilities to the positional form; ways to overcome the positional nature of hostilities; and essentials for implementing the proposed ways. In the first part of the essay, five operational aspects are analysed—gaining of air superiority, breaching of mine barriers in depth, effectiveness of counter-battery, creation and training of reserves, and build-up of electronic warfare capabilities. What emerges is that despite the glaring asymmetry between the opposing sides, the aforesaid aspects have acquired a neatly balanced parity which has stagnated movement on either side of the line of control. In the second part of the essay, technological solutions have been proposed with respect to these operational aspects. Zaluzhnyi believes that early adoption of technological solutions and innovative approaches in these operational aspects are necessary for changing the status quo. In the third part of the essay, essentials for implementing the proposed ways have been detailed. The first being the aspect of command and control, and the second being logistic support. With respect to command and control, the main recommendations are—widespread use of information technology, ensuring formation of a single information environment, fostering conditions for information superiority, and emphasis on the processes of organising communications, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance. What Zaluzhnyi has to say on logistics is the principal interest of the article and is discussed at length in the succeeding paragraphs.

Rational Organisation of Logistics

It has been explicitly stated that ‘One of the determining factors that significantly impacts the success of the implementation of the proposed ways to change the nature of the war and achieve goals is the rational organisation of logistics support for the state defence forces’. More conspicuously, the oft repeated peacetime stress on

reducing the 'Tail' and the trendy focus on 'Lean and Mean' is missing in the essay, even when human resources are the most premium commodity for the defence forces of Ukraine. Evidently, the necessity for rational organisation has larger significance and is being felt, even though the Ukrainian Armed Forces (UAF) have done exceedingly well in the field of logistics support. This is apparent from the following:

- Ukraine invested heavily in the training of its logistics workforce. A large fraction of it has been trained by the United Kingdom (UK) as a part of Operation Orbital and by other NATO states.
- Ukraine adopted centralised automated inventory solutions, reformed its procurement processes, and implemented a process termed 'Smart' or 'Tailored' procurement.⁴
- Ukraine implemented NATO standards and guideline documents within the framework of the NATO–Ukraine Partnership Goals, which has helped it become interoperable with the armed forces of the NATO member states.⁵
- Ukraine pioneered new forms of wartime sustainment, as desperation at the operational front proved to be the mother of invention. The 3-D printing of spare parts in buildings near the front has led to the decentralisation of its supply chain. It is also being used extensively to adapt commercial drones for military use. Over 200 drone start-ups are engaged in supporting the country's armed forces.⁶
- Ukraine built the capacity to absorb military assistance. As many as 30 flights a day land in Rzeszów, in eastern Poland, carrying military aid for Ukraine. The receipts are transported across land borders, with the state, private industry, and civil society participating seamlessly in the endeavour.
- Ukraine is supported by a 'Coalition of the willing', organised as the United States (US) European Command Control Centre, Ukraine/International Donor Coordination Centre (IDCC), which coordinates diverse needs, including resources, transportation, training, and funding. The IDCC has a unique ability to create workable combinations across

nations and geographies. For example, in one instance, the UK donated 105 mm howitzers, New Zealand provided training support conducted in the UK, and the US supplied ammunition and tactical vehicles to tow the howitzers.⁷

- Nico Lange, a former German defence official, says, “It is probably no exaggeration to state that no European NATO state would be capable of achieving the military logistical feats accomplished by Ukraine during this war”.

Reasons which may have prompted the need for demanding rational organisation are numerous and a few of them are appended in the following paragraphs:

- There is a large gap between the requirements and domestic production capabilities, particularly in the case of munitions. The imports are allocated and supplied based on operational priorities.
- Much of Ukraine’s storage locations have been targeted and destroyed in the operations.
- Managing the Soviet-era platforms along with the inventory supplied by partner nations is a massive challenge for any defence force. According to an estimate made in Apr 2023, if all the pledged military aid arrives in Ukraine, it would have 40 different tracked armoured personnel carriers or infantry fighting vehicles; 11 different main battle tanks; 21 different wheeled combat vehicles; 50 different types of artillery, rocket, and mortar systems; 32 different unmanned aerial vehicle systems; 19 different anti-tank weapons; seven different helicopters; 28 different air defence systems; and 18 different missiles.⁸
- A gross assessment suggests that Ukraine will need to have an inventory of no less than a million spare parts to support the systems it has and will acquire.
- Anecdotal data suggests that half of the equipment that have been received by Ukraine need spares or repairs at any given time, compared to the 95 per cent operational readiness rates achieved by the US in Iraq.⁹

The wartime challenges for military logistics are phenomenal and unpredictable. Logically, the necessity of being rational in organisation of logistics should dominate the discourse whenever any force is discussing or considering 'Transformation', 'Optimisation', or 'Mobilisation'. However, any further discussion on rationality in the organisation of logistics needs to be preceded by defining military logistics. The definition of military logistics has evolved over time. It has also seen a swing between 'Art', if one considers the qualitative aspects, and 'Science', if seen purely from a quantitative perspective. Even today, there are many definitions of logistics, and two of these, selected based on relevance to the context, are discussed below:

- Eccles, in his oft-quoted passage, has stated that "Logistics provides the means to create and support combat forces. Logistics is the bridge between national economy and the operation of combat forces. Thus, in its economic sense, it limits the combat forces which can be created; and in the operational sense, it limits the forces which can be deployed".¹⁰ What Eccles wrote was influenced by his experience of the Second World War and remains true for any modern war. Zaluzhnyi is seeking a rational organisation that acts as a bridge between his nation's economy (and the economies of partner nations) and the UAF, so that he has sufficient means to create and maintain the forces in combat. Axiomatically, it would only be prudent for us to evaluate the bridge that connects the three services to the national economy. The military organisation of the logistics and the core processes are fundamental to the efficiency and effectiveness of the bridge that brings in the means to create and support the combat forces and needs to be reviewed accordingly.
- The NATO Logistics Handbook defines logistics as 'The science of planning and carrying out the movement and maintenance of forces. In its most comprehensive sense, the aspects of military operations which deal with design and development, acquisition, storage, transport, distribution, maintenance, evacuation, and disposition of materiel; transport of personnel; acquisition or construction, maintenance, operation and disposition of facilities; acquisition or furnishing of services; and medical and health service support'.¹¹ How is NATO organised to deal with the aforesaid logistics

functions? The Joint Logistics Staff/General Staff Logistics (J4/G4) staff of all member nations at joint/service headquarters are organised under a single authority deal with these functions. The one-to-one relation between the scope of logistics as per their definition and the job profile of J4/G4 staff largely simplifies the organisational challenge. The Ukrainians have tried to emulate the model. In the Indian context, the definition of logistics, as contained in the relevant pamphlet, is almost similar to the NATO definition. However, functions contained, therein, are dealt by at least five different principal staff officers at the service headquarters, along with several line and staff directorates. Zaluzhnyi's argument has universal validity and ignoring it could be perilous in future conflicts.

War Reserves

The next area of emphasis by the Commander-in-Chief is reflected in the lines: 'At the same time, the experience of the Russian-Ukrainian war testifies to the renewed relevance of almost forgotten concepts, such as the accumulation of stocks of missiles, ammunition, and other logistical assets'. He is candid in admitting that post-Cold War, both side had given up on building war reserves, and their availability is now a grave concern for both Russia and Ukraine. The issue is far more serious for the defender and slightly less so for the aggressor, as the latter had the opportunity to address it first. On the issue of building capacity, the General states: 'According to various assessments, it takes at least a year to deploy large-scale production of weapons and equipment, missiles and ammunition, and other logistical assets, and for some types, up to two years'.

The adequacy of peacetime war reserves has since been analysed by all major military powers worldwide, considering the challenges posed by the war in Europe. The UK military ranks fifth most powerful in the world, and the following lines published in a Royal United Services Institute publication make an interesting reading – 'It is abundantly clear that the British military is woefully deficient in its stockpiles across domains. At the height of the fighting in Donbas, Russia was using more ammunition in two days than the entire British military has in stock. At Ukrainian rates of consumption, British stockpiles would potentially last a week. Of course, given that the UAF fielded more than 10 times

as many operational artillery pieces as the British Army at the beginning of the conflict, it might take more than a week for the British Army to expend all its available ammunition. All this demonstrates, however, is that the British Army lacks the firepower to deliver the kind of blunting effect that the UAF achieved north of Kyiv'.¹²

Similar concerns are also evident in the Pentagon, which is a big supplier of ammunition to Ukraine. An extract of communication from the US Department of Defense to the Speaker of the House¹³ is inserted below:

The other funding tool we need are those funds provided to replenish our military's inventories for the weapons and supplies we've provided to support Ukraine in their fight via dropdown. We have only USD 1.6 bn remaining of the USD 25.9 bn Congress has provided. We have already been forced to slow down the replenishment of our forces to hedge against an uncertain funding future. Failure to replenish our military services on a timely basis could harm our military's readiness.

On a different note, and more importantly, provisions exist in the US Defence Production Act of 1950 that let the administration guarantee private-sector loans 'For the purpose of expanding and accelerating the domestic production capability of critical weapons and equipment needed for national defence', which have been invoked by the Biden administration in Oct this year.

The need for ramping up investment in defence production goes beyond Ukraine, the US and the UK cited above. It is palpable all across—particularly in Russia, in Europe, NATO member states, and also in Iran and China. Quite clearly, the war is demanding a reverse shift. The end of the Cold War brought in emphasis on 'Velocity' rather than 'Mass', and the present conflict in Europe has highlighted the necessity for mass. Obviously, for India, the ideal solution lies somewhere between the two. The consumption pattern of the war is suggesting a re-calibration of our approach, the necessity of aligning it with the capability of domestic industry to meet a surge in requirements, and in terms of the quality of the country's arsenal. Case in point, the numbers required for precision guided munitions versus the ordinary—the higher the asymmetry, less the need for mass.

Zaluzhnyi also writes, "... when planning and organising logistics support, it is necessary to take into account the enemy's ability of fire effects on the mobile and stationary components of logistics support assets of troops (forces)".¹⁴ Realisation of this aspect in some form has always been there, but the way it is accounted for is the issue at hand. Western armies have recently focused on what is described as contested logistics, and all militaries need to quantify the impact of degradation and address it in a manner most relevant to their context.

Conclusion

Zaluzhnyi concludes his essay by reiterating the principal argument that a competitive advantage can be gained by acquiring technologically sophisticated platforms, exploiting information technology to the hilt, and organising logistics rationally. The war in Ukraine affords all militaries an opportunity to review their paradigms, and the necessity of doing so in the realm of military logistics stands out visibly. Historically, all military campaigns, the current being no exception, have thrown up enough facts to confirm that weakness in organisation of logistics support makes the war unwinnable, despite valour, high morale, tactical brilliance, and even technological superiority. It would be appropriate to end this perspective in the words of the commander of the US Army Pacific— "Logistics is (and will remain) the oxygen of battle, and how armies organise it is something which will continue to dictate outcomes in all wars".¹⁵

Endnotes

¹ V. Zaluzhnyi, "Modern positional warfare and how to win it", *The Economist*, 4 Nov 2023.

² D. M. Herszenhorn and P. Mcleary, "Ukraine's 'iron general' is a hero, but he's no star", *Politico*, 8 Apr 2022, accessed Dec 2023, <https://www.politico.com/news/2022/04/08/ukraines-iron-general-zaluzhnyy-00023901>

³ V. Zaluzhny, "Ukraine's commander-in-chief on the breakthrough he needs to beat Russia", *The Economist*, 4 Nov 2023

⁴ Deborah Sanders, "Ukraine's third wave of military reform 2016–2022 – building a military able to defend Ukraine against the Russian invasion", *Defense & Security Analysis*, vol. 39, no. 3, pp. 312-328, 2023.

⁵ Rusnak, "White Book 2021, Defence Policy of Ukraine", Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, Kyiv, 2022.

⁶ "3D printing and DIY: Ukraine's drone revolution", *The Economist*, 21st Sep 2023.

⁷ Vivienne Machi, "Inside the multinational logistics cell coordinating military aid for Ukraine", *Defense News*, 22 Jul 2022, accessed 06 Jul 2023, <https://www.defensenews.com/global/europe/2022/07/21/inside-the-multinational-logistics-cell-coordinating-military-aid-for-ukraine/>

⁸ Jeff Jager, "The long Ukraine war: It's time to transition to a more rational military assistance paradigm", Middle East Institute, 04 Apr 2023, accessed 05 Dec 2023, <https://mei.edu/publications/long-ukraine-war-its-time-transition-more-rational-military-assistance-paradigm>

⁹ Ibid.

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Conflict Areas in India: Lessons Learnt

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Abstract

78 years after Independence, armed movements continue across the country to address perceived grievances. Lessons learnt over the past 40 years could help frame a strategic approach to reduce the cost to national resources and human suffering. Key measures include improving governance, enhancing police capabilities to strengthen counter-insurgency capacity, emphasising intelligence, ensuring seamless coordination, deploying forces strategically, engaging with communities, minimising collateral damage, and working at multiple levels to deny the use of safe havens in neighbouring countries.

Introduction

The resurgence of terror attacks in the Jammu region in Jul 2024, followed by massive Counter-Insurgency/Counter-Terrorism (CI/CT) operations, underscores the complex internal conflict landscape across India. 78 years after Independence, armed movements persist across the country to advance diverse political, economic, and social agendas. Apart from obstructing the socio-economic progress of these conflict areas, a strategic concern is that adversaries could exploit these potential fault lines.

Different internal conflict scenarios have called for varied responses, most of which have been contained over time. While a 'One-size-fits-all' approach is unrealistic, lessons learnt from past experiences can help frame a strategic and operational approach that reduces the cost to national resources and human suffering. Internal conflicts over the past 40 years and effective responses are reviewed below, followed by a few lessons learnt.

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Past Experience

Since the 1980s, 45,000 people have died in terror incidents, including 15,000 civilians and 6,000 security personnel. Operation Blue Star, the 1993 serial bomb blasts in Mumbai, the hijacking of IC-814, the attack on Parliament in 2001, and the 26/11 attacks in Mumbai are merely the tip of the iceberg of repeated terror assaults, not just in conflict-prone states but also against iconic landmarks across the country.

The pro-Khalistan militant movement took 14 years to contain, with nearly 12,000 lives lost. This was the first militant movement equipped with weapons more sophisticated than those available in the police arsenal, cadres trained in military-style tactics, and the capability to attack targets globally, as demonstrated by the Kanishka Air India bombing. Serial bombings and the assassinations of even high-level leaders in the heart of the nation's capital highlighted the vulnerability of ordinary citizens and the inadequacy of the response capability. This marked the first salvo in the 'Proxy War', directly guided by controllers in Pakistan, who provided direction, training, military-grade weapons, and explosives.

The threat was met with a national consensus, improved police capabilities, better coordination, and a strengthened criminal justice system. The imperative to win public support was learned the hard way. Khalistani terrorists have been unable to carry out acts of violence for decades, but the embers of the movement persist, primarily in parts of Europe, Australia, and North America.

Armed movements have been integral to asserting political demands in the North-East Region (NER) since Independence, beginning with the Naga Hills in the 1950s, followed by the Lushai Hills; the Meitei outfits in the Imphal Valley of Manipur; the tribal areas of Tripura in the 1960s and 1970s; Assam from the late 1980s; and finally, in Meghalaya, both the Hynniewtrep (Khasi Hills) and Achik (Garo Hills) ethnic militant movements. Common features have included:

- Assertion of a separate socio-political identity reflected either in demands for secession or for a separate state.
- Older groups like the Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland, United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), and People's Liberation Army of Manipur provided training, sanctuary, and arms to emerging outfits.

- Sanctuaries in Myanmar, Bangladesh, and Bhutan, with transit routes through Nepal. ULFA, and earlier the Naga, Mizo, and Manipur insurgencies, received some support from Pakistan's agencies and, indirectly, from China.

The governments of the Centre and the northeastern states deserve much of the credit for the improved situation. After initial setbacks, Security Forces (SF) built the necessary capacity, while the government kept its doors open for talks. In Mizoram, the UnderGround (UG) outfit Mizo National Front joined the political mainstream. In Assam, the Unified Headquarters evolved as an enabling platform for effective coordination. The ceasefire in Nagaland has brought unprecedented peace for almost three decades. The denial of sanctuaries in Bhutan, Bangladesh, and, to an extent, Myanmar exerted significant pressure on the UG outfits. The erosion of public support for militants, reinforced by a focus on development, also played a key role. Today, valley-based groups in Manipur account for most of the violence in the region, though the ongoing Kuki-Meitei conflict requires a different perspective. Militant groups in Manipur are now embedded within their ethnic communities. Unfortunately, the state police are on the back foot, with thousands of arms looted and the force deeply divided along ethnic lines. In both Nagaland and Manipur, armed militias enforce a parallel administrations in some areas.

Maoist militancy has resulted in nearly 7,500 fatalities over the past decade, including 3,000 civilians and approximately 2,000 police personnel. States like undivided Andhra Pradesh have effectively neutralised the threat. However, 35 districts across central Indian states are still classified by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) as 'Affected', with 25 districts accounting for 90 per cent of Maoist violence.

The response of the Centre and Maoist-affected states has been multi-sectoral. The MHA's National Action Plan provided an overall strategy that has improved coordination, streamlined deployment, incorporated technological multipliers such as unmanned aerial vehicles, and prioritised infrastructure development. Other initiatives include enhanced surrender policies, creation of specially trained state police units, and recruitment of local tribal youth.

The Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), heavily deployed in Maoist-affected states, are well-organised and equipped. However, limited tenures exacerbate the unfamiliarity of their personnel with the local population and terrain. Their effectiveness is further hindered by the inability to operate seamlessly across state borders. Adopting a more localised operational doctrine and raising specialised units such as the Commando Battalion for Resolute Action have yielded positive outcomes. These efforts, along with special anti-Maoist units of state police, have achieved tactical successes against the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army.

National economic priorities necessitate large-scale mining in the forest reserves of Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Jharkhand, and Odisha, resulting in the displacement of Adivasi tribal communities. Rehabilitation schemes are often inadequate, leaving youth vulnerable to recruitment as Maoist foot soldiers. The challenge is to build confidence among these communities, ensuring they also benefit from the intended economic transformation.

There have been ups and downs over the past three decades in the counter-militancy campaign in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). This remains the main battleground of Pakistan's proxy war, driven primarily by its 'Deep State'. Support for militancy has persisted regardless of regime changes, with every possible method employed to sustain violence. While militancy in the Kashmir Valley has been contained, a conflict theatre has reopened in the Jammu region. Pakistan's 'State-within-a-state' continues its efforts to stoke violence and deepen communal divides. While both central SF and the J&K Police have developed effective CI/CT capabilities, the prime need now is to craft a counter-narrative that resonates with the public.

Efforts to recruit local youth from other parts of India for Islamist movements, even if limited in scale, cannot be ignored. Terrorism in the hinterland remains a potential threat, particularly from Pakistan-sponsored groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed. So far, Islamist terror incidents in India have borne a Pakistan footprint. Even in the case of the Indian Mujahideen, its apex leadership operated out of Pakistan. However, the effort was to conceal this 'Smoking Gun' by projecting an 'Indian' identity.

India has a challenging neighbourhood. Festering internal conflicts could escalate into the threat of 'Two-and-a-half Fronts' in the event of war with its main adversaries. Pakistan's deep state continues to use terror as an instrument of statecraft and a low-cost weapon of 'Grey-zone Warfare'. The denial of sanctuaries in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh and contiguous locations in Myanmar was critical in containing violence in the NER. Similarly, the bold actions by the Royal Government of Bhutan played a significant role. Nepal and the porous terrain along the Indo-Bangladesh frontier have been exploited for infiltration by terrorists. The regime changes in Bangladesh and the disturbed conditions in Myanmar require close monitoring to prevent efforts to re-establish camps by outfits like the ULFA (Independent), which have remained outside negotiations. Border management must be enhanced by adding depth to systemic measures to thwart crossings along these porous frontiers. This includes leveraging the support of border communities, deploying technological multipliers, ensuring seamless coordination with state police, and strengthening infrastructure through careful deployment of Border Guarding Forces (BGFs). China's intentions also warrant monitoring, though there is currently little evidence of direct support to separatist groups in the NER, as was the case earlier.

Beyond India's immediate neighbourhood, Pakistan-based terror groups have attempted to raise funds and mobilise support in the Middle East. Moreover, global Islamic groups are perceived to be at the forefront of contemporary global terrorism. Most global terrorism-related fatalities each year occur in six or seven countries, where these groups operate. With terror networks exploiting global information and communication technology, as well as social media platforms, India continues to collaborate with friendly governments to monitor these groups.

Lessons Learnt

Strengthening Counter-Insurgency and Counter-Terrorism Response Capacity. Police stations are the foundation of India's internal security architecture. However, state police forces are often the weakest link in the initial phase of a CI response—being understaffed, poorly trained, and lacking motivation. Police organisations and training, designed primarily for public order, conventional crime, and traffic management, are often outmatched

by motivated, well-trained, and better-armed militants. Furthermore, the poor public image of the police undermines their ability to enlist public support. Under India's Constitution, policing is a state subject. As a result, the Centre funds schemes such as raising India Reserve Battalions, but rarely focuses on strengthening the capacity of the civil police. Even today, the Centre's Modernisation of Police Forces scheme is primarily allocated to weapons, fortified buildings, and similar infrastructure, rather than expanding the network of police stations, establishing civil police specialist units, or developing the skills and attitudes essential for modern policing.

Strengthening Legal and Forensic Frameworks. Special laws, such as the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) are necessary to augment the regular legal framework, but their application requires rigorous oversight to minimise abuse. The capacity of state and central forensic facilities must be upgraded, with simplified evidence requirements for admissibility in terror cases, particularly those involving firearms, explosives, or financing. Special courts and trained prosecutors are essential to ensure speedy trials. A robust Witness Protection Scheme is crucial to safeguard individuals who agree to testify as prosecution witnesses. Additionally, streamlined procedures for securing digital evidence from servers located abroad and strengthening Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties and Memorandums of Understanding with selected countries will enhance the capability to investigate cross-border terrorist offences. Prisons often become recruitment grounds, where hardened terrorists influence petty criminals. A comprehensive prison policy is required to segregate inmates effectively, with staff trained to manage and rehabilitate terrorist prisoners.

Optimising Central Armed Police Forces and Border Guarding Forces. The CAPFs, now a million-strong, support state police but require reorganisation, specialised training, and equipment for effective CI/CT roles. BGFs serve as the first line of defence along India's 15,000 km of land frontiers and 7,500 km of coastline. In addition to physical barriers and infrastructure, such as lighting and roads, better utilisation of technology, enhanced coordination with state police, and investment in border communities can significantly strengthen border surveillance.

Balancing Army and Police Roles in Internal Security. Similarly, the Indian Army, in an Internal Security (IS) role, has provided significant support in internal conflicts, whether in Punjab or the NER, and remains on the front lines in J&K. The decision to keep the Army away from the counter-Maoist campaign demonstrates that, with a clear mandate, strong leadership, and appropriate training, state police forces, supported by CAPFs, can shoulder much of the CI role. Moreover, the prolonged diversion of the Army for IS threats could adversely affect its warfighting capabilities—something India cannot afford, with two potentially hostile fronts.

Specialised Units for Counter-Terrorism and Counter-Insurgency. State armed police often lack CT/CI capabilities in the initial stages, but several states have since raised specialised units. Force One (Maharashtra), Garuda (Karnataka), and Octopus (Andhra Pradesh and Telangana) are trained and equipped for urban interventions. Other specialised units are trained to address jungle and rural insurgencies, such as the Greyhounds (Andhra Pradesh and Telangana), the Special Operations Group of J&K, Assam Police Rangers, C-60 in Maharashtra, and the Special Task Unit (Odisha). The National Security Guard (NSG) has occasionally conducted annual exercises for these Special Weapons and Tactics units to review preparedness and has undertaken field visits to a few states. However, this process needs to be systematised to ensure that state special units have the required capacity in terms of personnel, weapons and equipment, individual and team skills, and training facilities.

Intelligence as the Cornerstone of Counter-Insurgency. Intelligence should be the first line of defence in any CI operation, but it is often lacking in the initial stages. Anonymity acts as a shield for insurgents and terrorists, who appear capable of striking anyone, anywhere. Clarity about the insurgent organisation, identifying and tracking individuals of interest and their overground networks, and locating arms caches and hideouts—all contribute to building the capability for precise, intelligence-led operations. Additionally, insights into internal differences within insurgent or terrorist outfits, whether related to their use of violence or the end goals of their movement—are critical. Generating strategic intelligence becomes particularly challenging when multiple outfits are involved, some with headquarters located beyond India's

borders. A combination of techniques—technical intelligence, human intelligence, systematic interrogation of arrested individuals, motivating surrendered cadres, and leveraging local information through the state police—plays a vital role in addressing this challenge.

Cutting Off Terror Financing. Funds are the lifeblood of insurgent and terrorist outfits, often raised through trafficking in narcotics, arms, and fake Indian currency notes, as well as extortion, looting, and kidnapping for ransom. Countering this requires measures to reduce access to *hawala* (an informal money transfer system) and money laundering channels, as well as tightening banking procedures. Sections 3 and 4 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act specifically address terrorist financing, with offences under the UAPA included.

Evolving Central Counter-Terrorism Capabilities. Central CT capabilities have continuously evolved. The NSG was raised after Operation Blue Star in 1984, as a purely military response was seen as leading to unacceptable social costs. The National Investigation Agency was established following the 26/11 attacks, recognising that offences like terrorism transcend the territorial jurisdictions of individual states. Intelligence coordination mechanisms, such as the Multi-Agency Centre and its subsidiary State Multi-Agency Centres, were also introduced to break down the silos in which different agencies operate.

Engaging with Communities. Time and again, not just in India but globally, public support has been recognised as the ‘Centre of gravity’ of any effective CI strategy. Consistently engaging communities in rural and jungle areas has proven to be a force multiplier, but such engagement needs to go beyond mere ‘Civic Action’ and become an integral part of CI capacity-building. The heroic role of the staff at the hotel Taj Mahal Palace, Mumbai, during the 26/11 attacks demonstrates the potential of engaging the public in creating a CT *kavach* (shield), even in urban areas. Often, a lack of trust in government institutions must be overcome, as well as the inability to meet even the basic needs of the people. Yet, with efforts to motivate and instil a sense of security, rural communities have shown tremendous support in conflict areas, even at great personal risk. Most of the population in such areas is usually fence-sitters, simply wishing to avoid trouble for

themselves and their families, whether from SF or militants. By engaging and winning over this majority, the small minority committed to the insurgent cause can be effectively isolated.

Engaging Vulnerable Youth. A comprehensive approach to engage with vulnerable youth is essential. This includes liberal surrender and amnesty policies, as well as livelihood opportunities for those who have joined insurgent or terrorist groups due to misguided emotions, threats, or peer pressure. Community involvement and the active engagement of social power centres are critical to making such initiatives more effective. Furthermore, an imaginative yet credible narrative that effectively counters insurgent or terrorist propaganda is indispensable.

Human Rights/Collateral Damage. It is often said that “You can not make an omelette without breaking eggs”, and collateral damage was viewed as unavoidable in counter-militant operations. Sometimes, uninvolved civilians do get killed. However, what is unacceptable is a disregard for civilian lives, the use of disproportionate force, or treating the entire population as hostile with the aim of intimidating locals against supporting militants. In such situations, collateral damage is counterproductive to achieving CI and CT objectives. It has been learned the hard way that respecting human rights is not just a moral imperative but also an indispensable component of an effective CI strategy. Too often, aggrieved youth have joined militant or terrorist ranks seeking revenge for family members killed or allegedly tortured during interrogation, or even for personal humiliation at the hands of the SF. Similarly, entire communities have been driven to support militants out of anger. As the United States discovered in Vietnam, it is possible to ‘Win most battles yet lose the war’.

Coordination. Effective coordination mechanisms are essential when multiple forces are inducted. Platforms that have proven effective include the Unified Headquarters at the apex level and District-level Coordination Committees. However, there is a risk of these becoming mere bureaucratic exercises. Individual egos, differing assessments of the situation, conflicting priorities, unhealthy competition, and variations in organisational culture can render these mechanisms dysfunctional. The military culture emphasises defining clear objectives, following an unambiguous chain of command, and implementing a systematic campaign plan.

In contrast, the socio-political environment of a state is more ambiguous. Political leadership operates with a broader agenda that can impact CI priorities, while multiple centres of influence exist. State police, being part of the state's governance ecosystem, tend to look to political leadership for direction. Side-lining civil governance is counterproductive, as the political apparatus often has the closest ground-level connections, even if perceived as flawed. Coordination forums are most effective when the apex level focuses on the macro perspective, works toward consensus on an overall assessment of the situation, sets broad objectives with clearly identified outcomes, builds the necessary capacity, and develops an effective counter-narrative alongside other non-kinetic measures. Within this strategic framework, detailed operational planning is better achieved by smaller operational sub-groups, with tactical implementation carried out at the unit or district level.

Deployment. When conditions in conflict areas deteriorate to 'Ground Zero' and governance collapses, central forces are often rushed in, usually without adequate orientation or training specific to the situation. To outside personnel, all 'Locals' may appear sympathetic to insurgents—a perception worsened by incomplete intelligence. At this stage, organising CI grids on a geographical basis becomes unavoidable, along with general area operations. Measures such as checkpoints, armed pickets for area domination, constant patrolling, and cordon-and-search operations aim to deny freedom of movement to militants and insurgents but are often perceived as harassment by the public. Additionally, the saturation deployment of external armed forces projects an image of 'Occupation', characterised by heavily fortified bunkers and personnel unfamiliar with the local culture and terrain. This not only alienates the population but also provides militants with more targets to attack, bolstering their image as being capable of challenging the government.

Transitioning Counter-Insurgency from Defence to Consolidation. This defensive phase should transition forward as soon as intelligence provides a clearer picture of 'Hotspots' and the militant order of battle. The grid should then differentiate between more secure and less secure areas, with emphasis on intelligence-led operations. Moreover, measuring success solely by the 'Body Counts' of killed militants or weapons recovered is

inadequate. The deployment of armed pickets should be carefully calibrated to avoid projecting an overbearing presence and instead focus on reassuring the population, with personnel trained to engage constructively with local communities. The bulk of the available forces can be kept in strategically located reserves, where personnel can continue their familiarisation and training. In more secure areas, local communities can be organised for sustained self-defence. The objectives of a CI campaign in its later stages must be to consolidate and expand secure areas, while isolating the hotspots and regions where militants have a stronger support base. Building the capacity of the local police and securing the support of local communities is indispensable to achieving a long-term security solution. Otherwise, militants are likely to return as soon as central forces withdraw.

Conclusion

Internal conflicts are likely to persist in India in the foreseeable future, but effective containment can significantly reduce their negative impact on national aspirations. Achieving this requires better governance in affected states, including strengthening policing capacity by raising specialised CT and CI units, while avoiding the over-militarisation of the civil police. A CI strategy must adopt not only a 'Whole-of-government' approach but also an 'All-of-society' approach, finding innovative ways to engage the community. Simultaneously, denying support to militants and terrorists from neighbouring countries may require efforts beyond engaging governments. It is equally important to influence public opinion in these countries through systematic people-to-people engagement, as well as strategic investments and trade, especially when formal power centres act against India's interests.

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Fake News as a Method of Warfare

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Abstract

The use of fake news in warfare is not new, but its impact has grown significantly in the digital age due to unregulated social media platforms. This article highlights how fake news, particularly in conflicts, has evolved through advanced tools like artificial intelligence to create false narratives. For instance, in Sep 2024, misinformation campaigns used doctored videos to falsely implicate the Israeli Defence Forces, illustrating the destructive power of disinformation. In conflicts such as those between Russia and Ukraine, and Israel and Hamas, fake news has included inflated body counts and mislabelled photographs, fostering mistrust and influencing public opinion. Disinformation, once a tactical warfare tool, now threatens stability by misdirecting civilians and exacerbating conflicts. While International Humanitarian Law allows certain disinformation as a 'Ruse of war', the unchecked spread of fake news via platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp raises significant concerns. In India, adversaries have leveraged these platforms

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to spread anti-government propaganda, prompting the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to block several channels spreading fake news. This article concludes that combating disinformation requires regulating content, promoting digital literacy, enhancing public awareness, and investing in fact-checking mechanisms. Proactive international collaboration is vital to counter its weaponisation and safeguard public trust.

Introduction

In Sep 2024, it was reported that pagers belonging to members of Hezbollah were simultaneously detonated. The next day, walkie-talkies all over Lebanon began exploding. These explosions killed at least 26 people and wounded thousands of others. Hezbollah accused Israel of these blasts.¹ The next day, a video with the logo of the American news channel Cable News Network (CNN) featuring journalist Jake Tapper hosting a show was shared on social media platforms. In the clip, the host spoke about the recent pager attack in Lebanon and mentioned that after using pagers and walkie-talkies, another attack took place where the rectum of goats exploded, killing an additional 1,800 people, injuring thousands of others as well as killing countless goats. Lastly, the anchor added, “People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals has just issued a statement denouncing the actions of the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) for the senseless killing of all those goats”. On fact-checking, it revealed that the voice of the anchor in the video has been manipulated using Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools. The reporter’s real name is Danny Polishchuk, a Toronto-based comedian and actor, and the video was created in a satirical take on the situation in Lebanon.

Information empowers. Therefore, its two incarnations, misinformation and disinformation², are potent. Misinformation and disinformation have become unique features of the ‘Information’ or ‘Digital’ age. They refer to a range of ways in which sharing information causes harm, including as a method of warfare. Disinformation is weaponised, but unlike kinetic weapons that indiscriminately devastate every entity within its ‘Mean effectiveness area’, the impact of disinformation is based on perceived, notional or actual power wielded by the receiver and is time-critical. In

2002, the-then United States (US) President George W Bush and a few top government officials made fake allegations that the Iraqi Government was preparing Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) — nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons. As a result of this false campaign, a multinational US-led coalition invaded Iraq on 19 Mar 2003, without any mandate from the United Nations. Within weeks, the US achieved the primary objective of Operation Iraqi Freedom, as the military operation was called, ousting the regime of Saddam Hussein.³ In reality, there was no threat of WMD because they did not exist. When the war in Iraq ended in 2011 with the-then US president Barack Obama declaring the withdrawal of troops, a deeply traumatised country was left behind with a bankrupt economy.⁴ Since the 2003 invasion, Iraqis have been subjected to genocide, terrorism, poverty, and the displacement of millions of people; and the killing continues to this day.

The current traction of disinformation is due to fast and nearly unchecked communication flow. Everyone with a smartphone and internet connection can ‘Create’ news and, without any verification tools, the masses can fall prey to it. Mass communication, which was broadly based on government-controlled broadcast and telecast, and independent publishing houses in the last century, has now shifted into the hands of common people. Based on the intentions, news is being ‘Created’ by all entities and, of late, smart tools like AI have come into play.⁵

Mis/Disinformation in Armed Conflict

Disinformation: A Timeless Weapon in Warfare. The use of mis/disinformation as a military tactic is not a modern concept. Sun Tzu maintained that all warfare is based on deception. In the last century, Mao Zedong’s assertion that the Chinese Communist Party “Can only defeat the enemy by holding propaganda leaflets in the left hand and bullets in the right”⁶, makes the role of disinformation clear. Fake news or rumours of tallow and lard-greased cartridges played an important role in the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 in India. Many sepoys believed that the cartridges issued with the new rifle were greased with lard (pork fat), regarded as unclean by Muslim sepoys, and tallow (cow fat), which angered the Hindu sepoys, as cow is considered a manifestation of a goddess to them. The Mahabharata, an ancient Indian epic, also

contains the story of Ashwathama's death resulting from the use of disinformation as under:

- During the war, Dronacharya was plundering through the Pandava troops, wreaking havoc, and was needed to be stopped. However, he was a formidable warrior, and his only weakness was his affection for his son, Ashwathama.
- Krishna, therefore, told Yudhisthira to lie and tell Dronacharya that his son, Ashwathama, is dead. Yudhisthira, who was widely renowned for never telling a lie, of course, refused. However, Krishna explained that this was a war that must be won and, therefore, lying about Ashwathama was the right thing to do in the larger context.
- As Yudhisthira ponders this, Bhima killed an elephant named Ashwathama and roared, "Ashwathama is dead"!
- Dronacharya approached Yudhisthira and asked him, "Is Ashwathama dead"?
- Yudhisthira replied, "Yes, Ashwathama is dead". He paused and added, "*Ashwathama hathaha iti narova kunjaro*va (Ashwathama is dead, but I do not know whether it is a man or an elephant)". His last words, deliberately ambiguous, were lost in the noise of war.
- Dronacharya, trusting that Yudhisthira could never lie, believed that his son was dead. Heartbroken, he bowed his head in grief and was eventually killed, changing the tide of the war.

Disinformation in Modern Conflicts: A Weapon of Influence.

Since the beginning of the Russia-Ukraine war, false and misleading information has been spread on social platforms by many media outlets. Even though Romania is not directly involved in the war between Ukraine and Russia, its people have dedicated themselves to helping refugees, especially through voluntary action. According to official border police figures, by the beginning of Dec 2022, over 98,000 Ukrainians had crossed the border into Romania. However, even among Romanians, an increasing amount of information has been circulating via social media, causing a certain degree of hysteria, anxiety, and uncertainty about the future.⁷ The 2023 Israel-Hamas conflict, which began in early Oct 2023, saw

various instances of fake news spreading worldwide. Hamas's use of disinformation was engineered by well-trained individuals exploiting vulnerabilities in social media and communication channels, including doctoring videos and flooding social media with thousands of fake pro-Hamas bots. Hamas used psychological and information warfare to supplement its kinetic warfare, aiming to weaken Israel both militarily and in the court of public opinion while subverting its international legitimacy and damaging Israeli morale and confidence.⁸

Attack on Al-Ahli Hospital. On 17 Oct 2023, a blast struck Al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza, killing more than 500 civilians. Immediately, Palestinian authorities blamed Israel for the attack. Public opinion in the Arab world largely sided with the Palestinians, condemning Israel for committing war crimes. However, the Israeli government firmly denied any involvement with the bombing, claiming that, for unknown reasons, Hamas struck its own hospital. According to the IDF's analysis of footage, the crater created by the blast was too small to be caused by Israeli weapons. Moreover, the IDF released a conversation, presumably between two Hamas militants, in which they appeared to acknowledge striking Al-Ahli Hospital.⁹

Kharkiv, Ukraine. In early Apr 2024, some residents of Kharkiv received a series of chilling text messages from government officials telling them to flee the city before the Russian forces surrounded it. One alert stated, "Due to the threat of enemy encirclement, we urge the civilian population of Kharkiv to leave the city by 22 Apr". This alert bore the logo of the State Emergencies Service of Ukraine and mapped out safe escape routes on a slick infographic. However, it was fake. A Ukrainian security official stated that the Russians frequently sent large numbers of text messages from devices (Leer-3 systems) attached to Orlan-10 long-range reconnaissance drone which can penetrate dozens of kilometres into Ukrainian airspace. The devices imitate cellular base stations to which phones automatically connect in search of coverage.¹⁰

Fake News: A Weapon of Conflict. During 'Grey-zone Conflict' or 'Armed Conflict', fake news can lead to death, injury, imprisonment, discrimination, or displacement. It can directly or indirectly fuel vicious cycles of violence. Propaganda, misinformation, and fake news have the potential to polarise public opinion, promote violent extremism and hate speech, and ultimately

undermine democracies and erode trust in democratic processes. According to Claudia (2012), the dissemination of false and misleading information has been enabled by two main factors: The complexity of assessing the truthfulness of facts during war, and media outlets are often inclined to lower the bar of the fact-checking process to deliver information as quickly as possible.¹¹

The Viral Threat of Mis/Disinformation. Although the phenomena of mis/disinformation are not new, they have recently gained significance recently with the widespread availability of sophisticated digital media. Today, the Internet is the primary vehicle for spreading messages to the masses. The sharing of text, images, videos, or links online, for example, allows information to go viral within hours. Once 'Such' information is believed by the receiver, it is difficult to undo for two reasons: first, people persuaded by false information very rarely encounter the truth themselves; and second, even if they later encounter the truth, they are reluctant to adjust their beliefs.¹²

Impact during Armed Conflict

Disinformation can have a devastating impact during armed conflicts. Unreliable information can prevent people from accessing safe places, causing them to withdraw from certain areas through dangerous passages or hindering access to essential services or humanitarian assistance. These are as follows:

- **Humanitarian Consequences on the Population.** Such information can harm people's physical, psychological, economic, and social well-being. People may be misdirected away from life-saving information or lead them to make decisions that cause physical harm. They may become targets of violence, harassment, or intimidation.
- **Developing Hatred and Violence.** Fake news can fuel hatred and unrest, encouraging violence. During armed conflict, it may undermine people's protection and any opportunity for conflict resolution.
- **Violation of International Humanitarian Law (IHL).** The dissemination of false/harmful information may influence the behaviour of combatants or arms bearers, leading to avoidable violence against adversaries, thus, violating IHL.

- **Undermining Trust Toward Humanitarian Organisations.** The spread of false and manipulated information about humanitarian organisations erodes people's trust in their activities, including their neutrality and independence. This damages their reputation and hinders relief operations. IHL prohibits inciting violence against humanitarian organisations and their personnel.

International Law and Fake Information

International law does not prohibit states from spreading misinformation or disinformation. IHL permits acts to confuse or mislead an enemy as a 'Ruse of war', provided these actions comply, as far as these actions comply with other applicable rules of international law.¹³ Belligerents have long exploited the military value of disinformation as ruses of war to deceive their enemies. Ruses of war are methods, resources, and techniques that can be used to convey false information or deny information to opposing forces. They can include physical, technical, or administrative means, such as electronic warfare measures, false intelligence information, utilisation of enemy codes, passwords, and countersigns, and the transmission of false or misleading radio or telephone messages, among other methods. However, clandestine or treacherous attempts to injure the enemy are prohibited under IHL. It is explicitly prohibited to kill, injure, or capture an adversary by resorting to perfidy.¹⁴

According to the International Committee of the Red Cross, 'Circulating misleading messages' is a form of ruse.¹⁵ Several national military manuals endorse the use of 'Misinformation', 'Disinformation', 'False Information', 'Psychological Operations' or 'Bogus dispatches and newspapers'.¹⁶ The Tallinn Manual on the International Law Applicable to Cyber Warfare also provides examples of acceptable ruses including 'Psychological warfare activities' such as 'Dropping leaflets or making propaganda broadcasts'.¹⁷

The United Nations General Assembly Resolution 36/103 states that states must abstain from any defamatory campaigns, vilification or hostile propaganda aimed at intervening or interfering in the internal affairs of others. It prohibits states from exploiting and distorting human rights issues as a means of interference in the internal affairs of states, exerting pressure on other States or

creating distrust and disorder within and among states or groups of states.¹⁸

According to Katz (2021), disinformation in armed conflict may cause serious harm to civilians, including severe mental suffering. Modern disinformation operations disproportionately target civilian populations and circulate at unprecedented speeds and scales and cannot be considered as a ruse of war. The concept of 'Ruse' is the practice of an era when deception was supposed to yield tactical gains without harming the civilians.¹⁹

Action by the States

Mis/disinformation can affect a broad range of human rights and increase tensions during an armed conflict or public emergencies. Instead of imposing restrictions, states must promote and protect free and independent media and access to information. Doing so will build trust in public institutions and governance. States should also undertake digital and media literacy programmes to enable more resilient and meaningful participation online. In Europe, Stopfake.org was launched in 2014 to combat fake news spreading across the internet during Ukraine's crisis in Crimea. This site checks facts, verifies information, and refutes inaccurate reports and propaganda about events in Crimea. In Qatar, 'Lift the Blockade' is a government website set up in Sep 2017 to counter what Qatar regards as fake news distributed by geopolitical rivals to justify the imposition of economic sanctions amid the Gulf crisis. Several states have taken regulatory measures to combat misinformation and disinformation on the grounds of protecting national security, public order, public health, or morals. Additionally, many states have established government fact-checking departments.²⁰

In India, Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp are particularly vulnerable to fake news. There is no specific law against fake news in India.²¹ Free publication of news flows from Article 19 of the Constitution guaranteeing freedom of speech.²² The Indian police, over the last few years, have opened investigations against numerous individuals for allegedly spreading misinformation and fake news. Spreading fake news and mis/disinformation is considered a crime under the Bharat Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, the Disaster Management Act, 2005, and the Information Technology Act, 2000. The Press Information Bureau (PIB) Fact Check Unit in India takes up queries related to the Government of India, its

ministries, departments, and public sector entities. Any matter that does not pertain to the Union Government is not taken up for evaluation/fact-checking by the PIB Unit.

Conclusion

Information empowers, and its two incarnations, misinformation and disinformation, are potent and often weaponised. Fake news refers to the intentional release of fabricated information designed to mislead its audience. In today's digital age, unregulated social media platforms have facilitated the widespread dissemination of fake news. In India, prominent social media platforms are Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and WhatsApp. The country's adversaries use these platforms to spread false news and misleading reports against it. Such content is generally created with malicious intent to cause harm by both state and non-state actors. It can be used to damage the reputations and integrity of individuals and organisations and is often employed as a means of swaying public opinion. The impact of social media platforms on the prevalence of fake news during conflicts, such as the Russia–Ukraine war and the Israeli-Hamas/Hezbollah war, has raised serious concerns. For the armed forces, the best strategy to counter fake news will be to create a 'Digital Army' to combat mis/disinformation on social media networks.

Endnotes

¹ Jonathan Yerushalmy and Dan Milmo, "Hezbollah device blasts: how did pagers and walkie-talkies explode and what do we know about the attacks"? *The Guardian*, 18 Sep 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/sep/18/hezbollah-pagers-what-do-we-know-about-how-the-attack-happened>

² The terms, "disinformation" and "misinformation" both refer to false information but are separated by an element of intentionality in the former: disinformation is "deliberately misleading or biased". "Fake news" is often a form of disinformation or misinformation, though has not been defined correctly. Other related concepts, such as "propaganda", "psychological operations", "influence operations", "information operations", "information warfare" and "cognitive warfare", may also feature some combination of disinformation, misinformation, misleading information and accurate information. Katz Elan, *Liar's War: Protecting civilians from disinformation during armed conflict*, *International Review of the Red Cross*, Vol. 102, No. 914, 2020, pp. 659-682.

³ In the year 2002, US President Bush and senior members of his administration outlined the dangers that they claimed Iraq posed to the US and its allies. Two of the administration's arguments proved especially powerful, given the public's mood: first, that Hussein's regime possessed "weapons of mass destruction;" and second, that it supported terrorism and had close ties to terrorist groups, including al-Qaida, which had attacked the US on 9/11. Several investigations by independent and governmental commissions subsequently found there was no factual basis for either of these assertions. Carroll Doherty and Jocelyn Kiley, *A Look Back at How Fear and False Beliefs Bolstered US Public Support for War in Iraq*, Pew Research Centre, 14 Mar, 2023.

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¹¹ Padovani Claudia, et.al., "Italy: A highly regulated system in search of equality", *The Media for Democracy Monitor* 2021, pp. 315–386.

¹² Chema Suarez-Serrano, "The Limits of Fake News as Methods of Warfare", in Pablo Antonio Fernandez-Sanchez (ed.), 2022, *The*

Limitations of the Law of Armed Conflicts: New Means and Methods of Warfare, The Netherlands: Brill, pp. 231-253.

¹³ Article 37(2) of the 1977 Additional Protocol I explicitly permits “ruses of war” – “acts which are intended to mislead an adversary or induce him to act recklessly but which infringe no rule of international law applicable in armed conflict and which are not perfidious.”

¹⁴ Rule 57, Jean-Marie Henckaerts and Louise Doswald-Beck (eds.), 2005, *Customary International Humanitarian Law*, Vol. 1, Rules, Cambridge University Press/ International Committee of the Red Cross.

¹⁵ Jean-Marie Henckaerts and Louise Doswald-Beck (eds), 2005, *Customary International Humanitarian Law*, Vol. 2: Practice, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁶ For instance, the US Law of War Manual provides, “Ruses of war are considered permissible. In general, a belligerent may resort to those measures for mystifying or misleading the enemy against which the enemy ought to take measures to protect itself. Ruses of war are methods, resources, and techniques that can be used either to convey false information or deny information to opposing forces”, *Department of Defence—Law of War Manual*, Office of the Counsel, US Department of Defence, Jun 2015 (updated Jul 2023), pp. 334-335.

¹⁷ Tallinn Manual on the International Law Applicable to Cyber Warfare, 2013, *Cambridge University Press*, Cambridge, Rule 61, para. 2; Rule 31, para. 5.

¹⁸ Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Intervention and Interference in the Internal Affairs of States, GA Res 36/103, UN Doc A/RES/36/103, 09 Dec 1981.

¹⁹ The gravity of these harms, along with the modern nature of wartime disinformation, is out of keeping with the traditional classification of disinformation in IHL as a permissible ruse of war. Elan Katz, Liar’s war: Protecting civilians from disinformation during armed conflict, *International Review of the Red Cross*, Vol. 102, No. 914, 2020, pp. 659-682.

²⁰ Strongwater Ali, Combating Disinformation Through International Law, *International Law and Politics*, Vol. 55, 2023, pp. 33-41.

²¹ In India, the government recently passed a policy that bans members of the military from using social networking platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter etc. Further, the government ordered the military members to delete their social media accounts. Delhi High Court in the case of *Lt Col Pk Choudhary v. Union of India* (decided on 05 Aug 2020) held, “.... if the government, after complete assessment, has concluded that permitting the use of certain social networking websites by personnel

of its defence forces is enabling the enemy countries to gain an edge, the Courts would be loath to interfere”.

²² On 02 Apr 2018, the Indian Government amended the ‘Guidelines for Accreditation of Journalists’, to tackle fake news across media by providing for cancellation of accreditation of journalists even before the completion of the proposed 15-day inquiry. It was withdrawn in 15 hours after protests by the media.

Trump 2.0: The Implications on Global Flashpoints

Vinayak Sharma[®]

Abstract

On 05 Nov 2024, the United States held its Presidential Elections, culminating in the election of Republican candidate Donald Trump and his running mate, James David Vance. With the Republican Party poised to gain a majority in both the Senate and the House of Representatives, the article explores the implications of this political shift, particularly on foreign policy and global conflict engagements. The focus is on two major flashpoints: the Russo-Ukrainian War and the Israel-Hamas conflict. In Ukraine, Trump's anti-war rhetoric and proposed peace strategies, as detailed in the article, align closely with Kremlin's demands, raising the possibility of a ceasefire and a negotiated settlement. Conversely, the Biden Administration's recent escalations, including the use of Army Tactical Missile System on Russian territory, have heightened tensions, leaving the situation volatile. In the Middle East, Trump's staunchly pro-Israel stance signals unwavering support for the Jewish state amidst its ongoing conflict with Hamas and the broader Axis of Resistance. However, his ability to mediate or influence outcomes remains uncertain due to deep-rooted hostilities.

Introduction

On 05 Nov 2024, the United States (US) held its Presidential Elections following a contentious campaign. With the eyes of the world upon it, the US elected Republican candidate Donald

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Trump and his running mate, James David Vance, to the White House. Within the next few days, the Republican Party gained a majority in the Senate and the House of Representatives, completing a sweep of the elections. With a majority across the board and President-Elect Trump having promised a complete overhaul of the US government, there is an expected churn in the US, including, but not limited to, its foreign policy and its involvement in the multitude of ongoing wars worldwide.

Having spent the majority of his campaign arguing for a US that refrains from participating in wars, Trump garnered massive support from both the American populace and international stakeholders who wanted Washington to stop funding wars. The domestic population supported this stance for reasons related to internal development, while global actors aligned with it on myriad grounds, depending on their calibration on the international stage. This article is written to address the implications of Donald Trump winning the Presidential Election, focusing on major flashpoints, the various actors on the global stage, and their potential alignments in the wake of Trump potentially fulfilling the promises that led to his re-election to the Oval Office.

Written in the latter half of Nov 2024, following Trump's electoral victory, this article reflects the geopolitical realities at the time of writing in a rapidly evolving global climate.

The Russo-Ukrainian War

The Russian invasion of Ukraine, referred to as a 'Special Operation' by Moscow, has been ongoing for nearly three years, since the full-scale invasion in Feb 2022. The Russians have made gains in capturing Ukrainian territory, while Ukrainian forces have managed to slow the advances, going back and forth in certain regions. In Aug 2024, Kyiv stunned Moscow by launching a surprise offensive on the Ukraine bordering Kursk, advancing up to 30 kms into the Russian region, forcing President Vladimir Putin to evacuate nearly 2,00,000 from along the border and instituting a state of emergency in the regions of Kursk and Belgorod.¹ A fortnight later, Ukraine claimed to have control over nearly 1,200 sq kms of Russian land. Some of which has been retained by Moscow, however, Kyiv still has military presence within the region.² Russia, according to the BBC, lacking the

manpower to fight the Ukrainians on multiple fronts, countered by deploying an unconfirmed number of North Korean troops in the same region.³

The issues in eastern Ukraine remain as complex and unresolved as those in neighbouring western Russia. Fighting is ongoing on multiple fronts, although Russian forces currently hold the clear upper hand. As of this writing, Moscow maintains control over parts of the highly contested regions of Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk, and Luhansk, in addition to Crimea, which was annexed in 2014 (Map 1).



Map 1

Source: Institute for the Study of War⁴

Such is the prevailing condition as Donald Trump assumes the role of President-Elect and waits for 20 Jan 2025 to be formally sworn in as the 47th President of the United States (POTUS). The anti-war Trump has promised to end the war in one day.⁵ Though it can be dismissed as a hyperbolic election promise but it is, regardless, antithetical to the US policy of funding the Ukrainian war effort, having given USD 175 bn as war aid to Kyiv.⁶ Although Trump has not detailed the 'How' of his peace plan for the war in Ukraine, Vice President-Elect Vance, in Sep 2024, had stated that Trump would tell Moscow, Kyiv and the Europeans that "You guys need to figure out what a peaceful settlement looks like".⁷ He further elaborated on a possible plan for peace to prevail, wherein, he stated that such a deal could be along the lines of Russia keeping the territory they have captured through the course of the war, along with a demilitarised zone drawn along the battlelines as of the date of the ceasefire. To assuage Kyiv's concerns about future Russian aggression, the Ukrainian side would be heavily fortified.⁸ Vance finished by stating that while Ukraine would retain its sovereignty, Moscow will get a 'Guarantee of neutrality' from Kyiv and that the latter would not join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) or any such allied institutions.⁹

The Trump 'One-day' guarantee to end the war may be far-fetched but it has the potential to be realised, albeit in a greater time-frame. The plan proposed by Vance is akin to the demands put forward by Putin. The Kremlin's demands for ending the war included that Ukrainian troops leave the entire regions of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia, and that they be declared Russian by international agreement. "As soon as Kyiv says it is ready to make this decision, begins the actual pull-out of forces from those regions, and formally declares the abandonment of its plans to join NATO, we will instantly, that very second, order a ceasefire and begin negotiations", Putin said.¹⁰ He further put forward the demand for the removal of all financial sanctions imposed upon Russia.¹¹ Even this demand of Moscow aligns with Trump's vision of a peace deal who has categorically stated that he would remove all sanctions placed upon Russia, citing that sanctions hurt the US Dollar's dominance. He said, "You're losing Iran; you're losing Russia. China is out there trying to get their currency to be the dominant one. You're going to lose the dominance of the dollar".¹²

Trump's stance may be motivated by the BRICS nations' desire to establish their own currency. Such an eventuality, if it comes to pass, devalues the dollar, the outcome of which has been likened by Trump, "The equivalent of losing a war. That would make us (the US) a third world country".¹³ Furthermore, the President-Elect has been long critical of the NATO for not carrying its weight. The cornerstone of NATO alliance is the Article 5, which essentially commits each member state to treat an attack on an alliance ally as an attack against every NATO country.¹⁴ In 2006, NATO Defence Ministers agreed to commit a minimum of 2 per cent of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to defence spending to continue to ensure the alliance's military readiness.¹⁵ Herein, lies the source of Trump's indignation with the NATO, the refusal of individual member states to commit at least 2 per cent of their GDP towards defence expenditure, forcing the US to make-up the deficit.¹⁶ The President-Elect has gone to the length of even threatening to leave the alliance if this trend continues.¹⁷ At the same time, Putin has had his own gripes with the NATO, whose never-ending eastward expansion has been a thorn in the side of Moscow. The Kremlin's decision of invading Ukraine arose as a result of Ukraine possibly joining NATO, which would have resulted in western troops being stationed on Russia's doorstep.

All things considered, Trump's win augurs well for those seeking peace in the region. Putin's demands for peace align with the Trump's concessions and plans. The outgoing presidency has long insisted that those demands amount to capitulation, not negotiation. Victoria J Nuland, a former senior State Department official, who helped shape the Biden administration's Ukraine policy, said Vance's plan was very similar to what Putin had repeatedly offered as peace terms.¹⁸ The stance of the Biden Presidency came to a boil in the early stages of the interregnum when President Biden allowed the use of US-made Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS) to be targeted into Russia.¹⁹ Putin would respond by threatening to breach the nuclear threshold²⁰, which as of this writing has not occurred.

Israel-Hamas War

The war for Jerusalem—a city considered divine by the Jews, Christians, and Muslims—has been waged for, perhaps, longer than any war in human history. Hundreds of thousands of soldiers,

mercenaries, and civilians have perished in the region, some for the Cross, some for the Crescent, and others for the Star, the latest iteration of which came unexpectedly for everyone but the Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya (Hamas) on 07 Oct 2023. A shell-shocked Israel launched an unprecedented war against the aggressing Palestinian elected party. More than a year later, before the US Presidential Election, thousands have perished. Even though the Hamas appears to be on the backfoot, the end to the war seems as distant as the dream of spring in an Arctic winter.

Throughout the course of his campaign, Trump had unequivocally condemned the 07 Oct attack on Israel which resulted in more than 1,100 casualties, persistently backed Israel in eradicating the Hamas. The President-Elect's stance has been to support the Jewish state's right to pursue its goals in the region, further stating that "We're going to make Israel great again".²¹ He has also said that he would be the "Best friend Jewish Americans have ever had in the White House".²² Trump's approach contradicts Biden's who had delayed the delivery of weapons to Israel. The President-Elect's support for Israel through his speeches when canvassing coupled with the decision to support Israel's claim over the Golan Heights²³ and trebled with him, in his first Presidency (2016-20), having shifted the US Embassy in Israel to the city of Jerusalem²⁴, shows a clear alignment with the Jewish state. It would be prudent to assume that the US will adopt a more pro-Israel stance.

The 'Axis of Resistance' (AoR) is an Iran-backed, loosely coordinated coalition comprising groups such as the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, the Popular Mobilisation Forces, the Syrian government, Lebanese Hezbollah, the Yemeni Houthi movement, and other smaller factions. Over years, and in some cases decades, this coalition has been built through substantial Iranian financial, military, and ideological support. It describes itself as a unified front opposing the hegemonic influence of Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the US in the Middle East. Although not a formal member, Hamas liaises with the AoR periodically, particularly during times of heightened tensions. Following the events of 07 Oct, Israel has found itself in direct or indirect conflict with nearly all major constituents of the AoR.

Hamas, considering Trump's pro-Israel stance, seems to have recognised which way the wind is blowing. The US designated terrorist body²⁵ has, through a senior official, said that the group is "Ready for ceasefire". The statement also 'Urged' Trump to 'Pressure' the Jewish state for the same. Bassem Naim, a political bureau member of the Hamas, said that "Hamas is ready to reach a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip if a ceasefire proposal is presented and on the condition that it is respected".²⁶ The statement in question comes a week after Qatar, which houses much of the self-styled resistance group's leadership including its political bureau, officially stepped down from its role as mediator between the two belligerents stating that it would only "Resume its efforts.... when the parties show their willingness and seriousness".²⁷

In the middle of the hostilities between the warring states lies the Hezbollah, the Lebanese Shia Islamist political party and paramilitary group, which despite ostensibly lacking a direct stake in the conflict willingly stepped in of its own accord by launching guided rockets and artillery onto three posts in the Shebaa Farms, a region on the Lebanese-Syrian border which is currently under Israeli occupation, 'In solidarity' with the Palestinian people.²⁸ As of this writing, a US and France-brokered ceasefire agreement has been signed by both Israel and Lebanon. According to whose terms, Israeli troops are required to withdraw from southern Lebanon, and Hezbollah pull back north of the Litani River, ending its presence in the south. For achieving the stated objectives, 60 days have been given to both sides and the Lebanese army, which has largely remained a bystander in the current war, will deploy to the south to monitor the ceasefire.²⁹

The Houthis have gone to the extent of attacking trade ships in the Red Sea (a critical passage for 30 per cent of the world's container traffic), thereby, causing the Red Sea Crisis. Launching missiles and armed drones at Israel, demanding an end to the invasion of the Gaza Strip.³⁰ Trump had, in his first presidency, designated the Yemeni militant group as a 'Terrorist' body and has been critical of its actions in West Asia. The Houthis, according to rumours on social media, on 06 Nov 2024 appeared to be ordering an immediate ceasefire as Trump's victory loomed large. However, on the very next day, perhaps to dispel the scuttlebutt, Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, the leader of Houthi movement, while talking about Trump, stated that, "He did not end any wars, he did not end the war in Yemen, in Syria, in Iran, he did not do anything —

he's incapable...".³¹ Essentially stating that Trump is bound to fail, Malik further added, "Our operations at sea continue... and other operations in the depth of the Israeli-occupied Palestine".³²

The Israel-Hamas conflict has already proven to be a seemingly never-ending war. Hamas in Article 1 of its charter titled, 'Hamas Covenant 1988' claims that, "Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it".³³ On the other hand, Israel asserts that the conflict is a matter of its survival. This assertion of the Jewish state is perhaps best described by Golda Meir, former Prime Minister of Israel, who once stated that, "We Jews have a secret weapon in our struggle with the Arabs; we have no place to go" and that "The Egyptians could run to Egypt, the Syrians into Syria. The only place we (the Jews) could run was into the sea, and before we did that, we might as well fight". Herein lies the rub. One side is acting on a religious diktat and for the other, it is a matter of its survival, though for them (Israel), it is also the ancestral home of their religion. Therefore, it can be assumed with some certainty that neither is truly backing out of the hostilities for good. And then lies the bigger issue of the AoR. The current iteration of the Israel's troubles in the region might have started with the Hamas but they are certainly not limited to the Palestinian organisation. Even if Israel were to somehow finish-off the Hamas, their problems would not end. The constituents of the AoR are all Islamic states (of different denominations) who, much like the Hamas, have based their aim of annihilation of Israel on Islamic religious practice.³⁴

The pertinent question here is: When and under what circumstances can a short-lived armistice be achieved?

Possible Outcomes

As the date of the swearing-in draws ever closer, the situation in both conflicts is still developing. President Putin has responded harshly to the use of the American-made ATACMS being used to target Russian territory, having begun the process of using (according to a CNN report) nuclear-capable missiles to strike Western targets.³⁵ Two of the three anti-Israel factions mentioned above have called for a ceasefire. One of them, the Hezbollah, has even fully agreed to one. However, the détente was short-lived as Israel has already fired missiles into Lebanon citing overstepping of the terms of the ceasefire agreement by the Hezbollah.³⁶

For the Russo-Ukrainian War, the path ahead seems to be very clear. For the Russians, it is a game of time. Wait out the leftover period of the Biden Administration, which as of this writing is a little more than a month and 20 days, and get the peace deal signed which, as mentioned above, both the parties are willing to sign. However, nearly a month and a half in geopolitics and strategic affairs is a long time, especially in a situation that is developing as fast as the one in question. Therefore, the situation devolves into prognostication of eventualities.

There are four possible outcomes before the swearing in of Donald Trump as the 47th POTUS. The first, if President Biden, in the time he has left, decides to escalate further, his counterpart in Moscow will have no choice but to retaliate in kind. Russia is a nation that does not take kindly to weakness of those in power.³⁷ This will leave Putin with no option but to respond with at least equal force in the theatre of war. The other European nations have already begun taking the brunt of this latest escalation. The Russian forces have blown up a train in Ukraine that came from Romania with British Storm Shadow missiles and ATACMS.³⁸ In this scenario, the scope of escalation is limitless. Other European nations, threatened by the targeting of their infrastructure, may respond in kind. President Putin has threatened breaching the nuclear threshold if Russian territory is threatened and has begun the use of nuclear-capable weapons in combat.³⁹ However, the use of nuclear warheads seems to be mere scare tactic on the part of the Kremlin as the fallout of such an eventuality far outweighs the benefits to Russia. Because even Donald Trump, who has advocated for not being in conflict with Russia, would have to reverse his stance in such a case. Second, the Biden Administration makes no more attempts at escalating the situation and quietly passes the time it has left in power. In both the above cases, there is a common element of preparing for the coming negotiations. As one unnamed western official on condition of anonymity has claimed, "Everyone is assuming that there is a negotiation to come and both the Ukrainians and Russians want to be in the best place for it".⁴⁰ Though it must be, for the sake of objectivity, pointed out that escalations from the Russian side only have come in response to Washington allowing the use of ATACMS against targets within the Russian territory.

The third possible outcome is the most obvious of all, wherein, Trump is sworn in as president and follows on the promises made in the lead-up to the election as elucidated in this article. This eventuality works in favour of those wanting peace to prevail, though the Ukrainians are sure to bristle at the loss of territory. Kyiv, however, will not have any recourse without the backing of the US-led West. The fourth and final probability is that Trump gets sworn-in and refuses to follow up on the promises he has made in regard to the Russo-Ukrainian War. Highly unlikely though it may be, it needs to be entertained. In this case, the war would resume with renewed ferocity and escalation would be certainly guaranteed, though even in this case the nuclear threshold would not be breached.

While on the Middle-Eastern front, President-Elect Trump faces a tough task in dealing with the AoR. However, the complications are not merely limited to the West Asian alliance. There is also the issue of the US' domestic discourse. On the political front, he faces virtually no opposition as the Republicans have the majority in both the Senate and the House of Representatives. On the other hand, Trump faces the challenge of managing the perception of being pro-Israel and the purported genocide affected by the Jewish state on Palestinian people. The history of the American discourse in dealing with non-American and European issues often boils down to navel-gazing. Where any and all 'Resistance' movements irrespective of their drawbacks are praised to the high-heavens, while brushing under the carpet the more questionable aspects of the movements in question.⁴¹ Case in point, the support garnered for the Palestinian cause in the American zeitgeist. Wherein, the US universities erupted in large-scale protests against Israel, citing the deaths of women, children and the non-combatant men at the hands of the Israel Defense Forces missile strikes and bombs, while conveniently ignoring the lengths that the Hamas goes to maximise civilian casualties.⁴²

Trump, in his first tenure, had been aligned with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and had even approved an arms package to counter the Yemeni Houthis.⁴³ While KSA is upset at the devastation wrought by Israel's wars in Gaza and Lebanon, it is not shedding a tear for the weakening of Hamas and Hezbollah, according to people familiar with the leadership's thinking.⁴⁴ It,

however, has categorically stated that a new Abraham Accords cannot be reached without the Palestinians having a secure home in the region. A careful perusal of Trump's utterances on the war in West Asia points to a similar stance of being against militant groups, such as the Hamas and Hezbollah, and not the Palestinian people. Israel's Prime Minister has also claimed that the Hamas must be completely destroyed before Israel will agree to end its war in Gaza. These conditions, at least on the face of it and as of this writing, do not appear to be mutually exclusive. Therefore, at least in theory, a truce may be in the offing. However, the Hamas, Hezbollah, and Houthis have proven to be endlessly belligerent and, considering their history, will try to create a barrier to a possible *détente*.

Conclusion

As the global community stands at a pivotal moment, the election of Donald Trump as the next US President introduces a complex interplay of challenges and opportunities in the Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Hamas conflicts. In the Russo-Ukrainian War, Trump's proposed approach aligns closely with Russia's demands, potentially paving the way for peace. However, the next few weeks will be crucial in determining whether the outgoing Biden administration opts for further escalation or refrains from complicating the impending transition.

In the Middle East, Trump's pro-Israel stance signals a shift in the US' policy that could embolden Israel while potentially alienating factions within the AoR. The possibility of a ceasefire remains tenuous, as entrenched ideological divisions and historical grievances continue to drive hostilities. While Trump's leadership may offer new avenues for diplomacy, the path to lasting peace will require careful navigation of domestic and international pressures.

At this point, for both the conflicts mentioned in this article, Donald Trump's Presidency does seem to have a positive effect for those hoping for peace to prevail. What matters is in what situation the President-Elect will assume the Presidency. Will the outgoing Biden Presidency cause substantial changes to take place in the time it has left or will it reduce its meddling in the two conflicts. Only time will tell.

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Evolving Power Dynamics in the Indian Ocean Region: Challenges and Opportunities for India-Taiwan Ties

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Abstract

This article examines the strategic opportunities for enhancing India-Taiwan ties in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) amidst growing geopolitical tensions. Historically, a hub of maritime trade and contestation, the IOR has become increasingly important in global economic and security considerations. China's rising influence in the region, coupled with India's growing strategic and economic presence, has sparked competition for dominance, particularly in areas like energy security and control of the critical sea lanes. Taiwan, strategically located in the Western Pacific Ocean and dependent on energy imports via the Indian Ocean, also has significant stakes in the region. The article argues that India and Taiwan, while traditionally maintaining limited diplomatic and security ties, could benefit from an informal yet strategic partnership in the IOR. This collaboration could focus on maritime law enforcement, cyber-enabled maritime domain awareness, and addressing non-traditional security challenges, such as climate change and piracy. Additionally, areas such as the blue economy, semiconductor cooperation, and space collaboration present opportunities for mutual growth. The article suggests that, while formal security alliances may not be feasible due to the One-China Policy, India and Taiwan can still explore deeper cooperation

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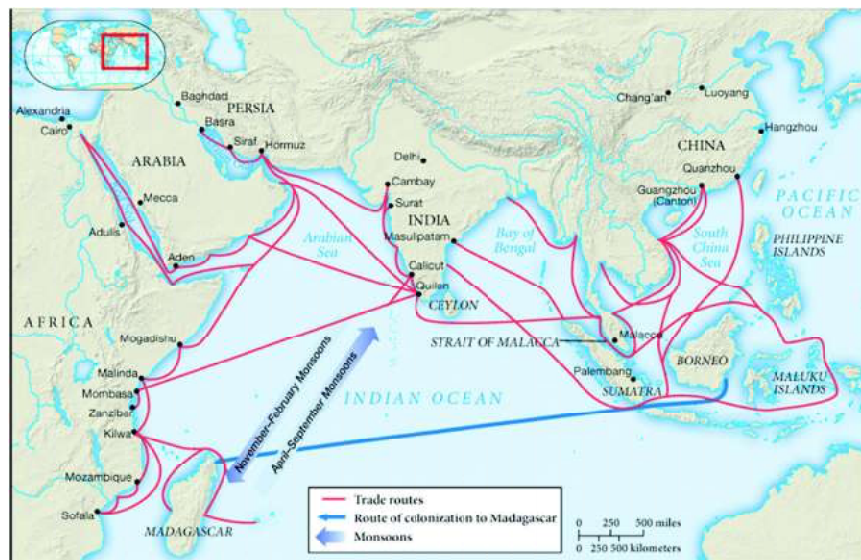
through backdoor channels and Track 1.5 diplomacy, ultimately contributing to peace and stability in the broader Indo-Pacific region.

Introduction

Even before the inclusion of the Indian Ocean in the lexicon of Asia-Pacific to become the new geopolitical construct called 'Indo-Pacific', the ocean has historically been a theatre of human interaction via maritime trade and a space full of contestation between regional and extra-regional powers. The third largest of the world's five oceans, the Indian Ocean covers 68.556 million sq kms (CIA World Factbook)¹ and it is one of the world's key lines of communication which connects East to the West. It is both a critical global trade route and the source of more than 20 per cent of world petroleum exports.² The Indian Ocean Region (IOR) is extremely crucial as it is the most heavily trafficked and strategically important trade corridor, containing three of the world's seven major maritime chokepoints: the Malacca Strait, the Strait of Hormuz, and the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait. India is the key player situated at the crossroads of the Indian Ocean, however, India competes with China in the region. Due to its growing criticality for economic and geo-strategic reasons, the IOR has become an arena for competing influence and rivalry primarily between the United States (US), China, and India—summed up as Chinese pearls, US diamonds and Indian nuggets. This competition reflects concerns over energy security and secure access to Sea Lines Of Communication (SLOCs).

The Indian Ocean accounts for 50 per cent of the global container traffic. Additionally, 70 per cent of all petroleum product shipments transit through the Indian Ocean as they travel from the Middle East to the Pacific. 40 per cent of world trade passes through the Strait of Malacca; while the Strait of Hormuz sees 40 per cent of the world's traded crude oil. 80 per cent of China's oil and 65 per cent of India's oil pass through the Indian Ocean. 90 per cent of India's foreign trade by volume and 70 per cent by value are routed through the Indian Ocean, representing over a third of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). For Taiwan, some 98 per cent of the energy is imported, and that import mix depends especially on fossil fuels, which comprise 93 per cent of Taiwan's overall energy supply. Close to 76 per cent of Taiwan's

oil came from the Middle East in 2018.³ As of Sep 2019, Saudi Arabia alone accounted for some 30 per cent of crude purchases by Formosa Petrochemical⁴, one of Taiwan’s two leading oil refining companies. Since IOR is rife with traditional and non-traditional security threats, any slowdown or disruption in tanker traffic—whether from diplomatic standoff, piracy or war, could cripple these countries, sending global shockwaves. RD Kaplan, the American author, aptly argues that the “Indian Ocean will become ‘Centre Stage’ in the 21st Century, the place where many global struggles will be played out including conflicts over energy, clashes between Islam and the West, and rivalry between a rising China and India”.⁵



Map 1: Trade Routes Passing Through the Indian Ocean⁶

Indian Ocean Region Power Dynamics

In the context of the Asian century, the ‘Rise of China’ and ‘Rise of India’ have become commonly used. Although the exact levels of their power and whether they can be classified as ‘Great Powers’ may be debated, their relationship has become consequential for the region as they expand their geopolitical reach and compete for influence in the same geopolitical spaces of continental and maritime regions of South Asia and the Indo-Pacific. Geopolitics is important for understanding Sino-Indian dynamics.⁷ General geopolitical concept of great powers’, ‘Pursuit of primacy’ is in

play between India and China, official rhetoric notwithstanding.⁸ Their pursuit of primacy lies and intersects in the same 'Strategic Space' of Asia-Pacific, South Asia and the Indian Ocean, where both the countries are thriving to assert their influence, authority and even hegemony.

The strategic location and economic potential of the IOR make it a volatile and troublesome region in the world. The growing influence of China in the region has led to emerging power dynamics in the region and a competition for influence, resources, and dominance, making this area one of the most dangerous conflict zones with the possibility of nuclearisation of the region. The IOR has historically been a critical theatre for engagement and interest for India, as it constitutes India's immediate as well as extended neighbourhood, and has the potential to impact its security environment. India enjoys a strategically advantageous location in the Indian Ocean and considers itself a key regional and security player. Ensuring a secure and stable Indian Ocean is, therefore, central to India's security and prosperity. The increasing Chinese belligerence in India's neighbourhood, both maritime and territorial, has engendered new security challenges for India which requires an 'Out-of-box' approach.

It is evident from China's behaviour that its expansion as a great power is global, not limited to the Eastern Pacific, Taiwan, and the South China Sea. China's maritime renaissance and its 'Oceanic Offensive', drive for a blue-water fleet and Mahanian view have brought her into the Indian Ocean after more than five centuries. Since 2008, Chinese flag has been ubiquitous in IOR and this time China intends to stay. There is an overlap of contestation for primacy, power, prestige, influence, authority, and even hegemony between India and China, as both strive to stamp their authority on the same region, the same spatial arena—and in Asia, the interests of both India and China intersect⁹ in the IOR. The two nations share the same strategic space and a new 'Great Game'; geopolitical rivalry, seems to be at play between these two rising powers, likened to 19th Century geopolitical rivalry between Russia and British Empire. The general theme underlying this concept is competition for influence, whether at political, economic or cultural levels, quite visible in the IOR. China's increasing presence¹⁰, not just in terms of naval vessels in the IOR, but also in the IOR countries like Maldives and Sri Lanka

(under the Belt and Road Initiative [BRI]), its investments, use of United Public Front Department in India's neighbourhood to exert influence, or create favourable public opinion is a cause for concern. The recent spat between India and Maldives (anti-India vs pro-China narrative) is one such example.



Map 2: China's BRI¹¹

However, there is a key geopolitical distinction between the original great game (between Russia and the British Empire) and the new great game (India and China). The former was primarily land-based, focusing on the overland threat to the British India from Central Asia, whereas, the latter has an oceanic dimension. It evokes the Mahanian concept of 'Sea Power' and control of 'SLOCs'. Alfred Thayer Mahan predicted in 1897, "Whoever controls the Indian Ocean will dominate Asia. This ocean will be the key to the seven seas in the 21st Century. The destiny of the world will be decided on its waters", and rightly so.

The sea-based component of the BRI, the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road serves as a tool in China's grand strategy. It has economic (development of USD 1.2 tn blue economy), military (place-and-base approach for permanent access to the Indian Ocean), and political dimensions (enhancing China's international discourse power). It challenges India's own SLOCs and its general

influence in the region. China is trying to build resilience to economic or diplomatic isolation that could negatively impact its economy and subsequently its domestic stability.¹² India, on the other hand, has pronounced its vision for the Indian Ocean through Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR)¹³ and its maritime 'Panchamrit' or five-fold framework for India's engagement in the IOR¹⁴ and the idea of a Blue Revolution. India's trade and economic relations with East Asia are acquiring greater weight and Delhi's stake in the political stability and security of the Western Pacific has steadily grown. China's increasing reliance on the Indian Ocean and the acceleration of India's economic growth and strategic interests in the Pacific appear to intersect, and Taiwan cannot be ignored in this dynamic.

Situating Taiwan in the Indian Ocean Region Dynamics

Situated in the Western Pacific between Japan and the Philippines, at the junction of the East and South China Seas, around 4,580 nautical miles from the Port of Diego Garcia (considered to be the middle of the Indian ocean), and 4,729 nautical miles from the Port of Mumbai, Taiwan also has considerable stakes in the Indian Ocean as one of the world's largest distant-water fishing fleets. It is the world's sixth largest fishing nation in terms of hauls from international waters and it catches more albacore tuna in the Indian Ocean than any other nation. The annual catch by Taiwanese fishing boats operating in the Indian Ocean is estimated to be around 17,000 metric tons. It adds to the blue economy of Taiwan which constituted approximately 3.3 per cent of its annual GDP in 2019.¹⁵

Despite China's steady strategy to isolate Taiwan diplomatically and constrain its international space, Taiwan has managed to remain internationally relevant. Its international stature has increased, contrary to Chinese attempts to demoralise it by strangulating it diplomatically. The most recent instance of diplomatic poaching was that of the Pacific island nation of Nauru, just two days after the Jan 2024 Presidential elections, which gave mandate to the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) for the third time in a row. China considers DPP secessionist and has warned of consequences if it wins the election. China maintains that Taiwan is a renegade province that must be reunified with the mainland and under Xi's national rejuvenation dream, China asserts



Map 3: Strategic Location of Taiwan¹⁶

that it can use force to achieve reunification with Taiwan, if necessary.

Interestingly, Taiwan entered into an official relationship with Somaliland, another country that remains unrecognised by most of the world. Dr Mohamed Hagi, the Chief Representative of the Republic of Somaliland Representative Office in Taiwan, draws parallels between the geopolitical realities of Somaliland and Taiwan, such as their non-affiliation with multilateral organisations like the United Nations or the lack of diplomatic recognition.¹⁷ However, he claims that both Taiwan and Somaliland still exert significant influence within and beyond their borders. This move was inspired by the TAIPEI Act (2020), introduced by the US to encourage nations to strengthen their ties with Taiwan. This relationship has economic, political, and strategic dimensions. It provides an opportunity for Taiwan to expand its influence and tap

into the growing markets in Africa.¹⁸ With this, Taiwan formally re-entered the IOR after more than two decades, following the end of formal diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia (1990) and South Africa (1998). Situated in East Africa, Somaliland's strategic geographical location offers Taiwan the potential to establish a 'Forward Base' either for diplomatic or strategic purposes (Jacob and Liu 2020).¹⁹ The port of Berbera in Somaliland is located just 250 km southeast of Djibouti, where China has established its naval base, further intensifying the regional security dilemma.

However, the question remains whether Taiwan has the capability to achieve this outcome and whether India can assist Taiwan in its quest in any meaningful way? Taiwan may have the intent to undertake this ambitious project but lacks the capability. India, on the other hand, has the capability but lacks the intent to enter into any formal or diplomatic arrangements that may be perceived as provocative or contrary to the One-China Policy. The security facet of India-Taiwan relations is a significant 'No', yet, the existence of informal and unofficial exchanges under the radar cannot be ruled out. This is evident from the increasing prominence of the Taiwan Strait security situation in Indian strategic and military circles. In late Jul 2023, India's Chief of Defence Staff, General Anil Chauhan, ordered a study group to assess India's possible options if Taiwan were to be attacked by China.²⁰ The idea was to develop a Taiwan contingency plan. This was ordered during a conclave of senior military commanders with an objective to prepare contingency plans in the event of a conflict over Taiwan. Obviously, the Indian defence and strategic community has been deliberating about Taiwan's security and its possible fallout for India, which underscores the need for increased India-Taiwan security information sharing, potentially facilitated through a third party.

In another significant gesture, former Chiefs of India's three military branches—former Air Chief, RKS Bhadauria, former Naval Chief, Karambir Singh, and former Army Chief, MM Naravane—participated in the Ketagalan Forum on Indo-Pacific Security Dialogue in Taipei in Aug 2023. Admiral Singh was among the key speakers at the event. He categorically mentioned during his speech that India does not want South China Sea playbook of the People's Republic of China to be replicated in the IOR.²¹ This marked the first occasion on which three ex-tri-service chiefs were present in Taiwan simultaneously, and they also took part in closed-

door discussions at the Institute for National Defense and Security Research (INDSR), a think tank operated by Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Although they maintained that they were not part of any study group and were visiting Taiwan in a personal capacity, their presence in Taipei provoked significant fury in China. Various table top exercises simulating Chinese attack on Taiwan are organised regularly in Taiwan, the US and Japan to prepare for a Taiwan contingency, however, in May 2023, Indian military think tank, United Services Institution of India²², in collaboration with the INDSR, held workshop in New Delhi simulating the potential effects of tensions in the Taiwan Strait on the Sino-Indian border. The panel, which included experts from Taiwan and the US, deliberated upon the likely scenario in broader Indo-Pacific Region with a focus on Taiwan Strait and possible implications for India. Similar exercises in India cannot be ruled out, highlighting the seriousness of Taiwan's security issue for India's own security and military calculations. This points out the seriousness of Taiwan security issue for India's own security and its military calculations. Such interactions at Track 1.5 diplomacy have become a regular feature in India-Taiwan relations.

Conclusion

India and Taiwan, two vibrant democracies in the Indo-Pacific region, maintain limited diplomatic and security cooperation. Their relationship has been largely transactional: India views Taiwan as a source of Mandarin expertise and intelligence on China, while Taiwan seeks to tap into India's vast market and diplomatic influence. Although economic, educational, and people-to-people ties have grown over the past decade, India's delicate and critical relationship with Beijing significantly influences its engagement with Taiwan. However, China's aggressive foreign and economic policies, coupled with security concerns for both India and Taiwan, necessitate a re-evaluation of India's traditional stance and the exploration of innovative engagement strategies that avoid antagonising China.

The evolving power dynamics in the IOR present opportunities for enhanced India-Taiwan cooperation, fostering a coherent Indo-Pacific framework. Both nations, given their geostrategic locations, have the potential to collaborate with regional and extra-regional actors to address mutual interests and challenges. Taiwan's compatibility with such an approach is evident, especially in light

of global geopolitical uncertainties, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the US withdrawal from Afghanistan, the ongoing war in Ukraine, and the Israel-Hamas conflict. These events have plunged the world into flux, amplifying concerns about China's potential annexation of Taiwan, inspired by Russia's actions in Ukraine.

The global geopolitical divide increasingly contrasts a rule-based liberal democratic order, led by the US, with an authoritarian bloc championed by China and Russia. India and Taiwan, aligning with the democratic bloc, share economic and security concerns as well as untapped potential for collaboration. Their respective Act East and New Southbound policies converge significantly, particularly in maritime spaces within the IOR. Cooperation could encompass maritime law enforcement, advocacy for freedom of navigation, and addressing non-traditional maritime security threats. Taiwan's expertise in blue economy activities, such as aquaculture, aligns with India's SAGAR vision and *Amrit Kaal* (Golden Era) Vision 2047, creating mutual opportunities for growth.

On a tactical level, cyber-enabled technologies for maritime domain awareness and India's support for Taiwan's inclusion in the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) are promising areas of collaboration. Taiwan's proven track record in maritime safety, fisheries management, science, trade, disaster risk management, and tourism underscore its value. India's advocacy for Taiwan in IORA, despite past hesitations, could strengthen the Indo-Pacific architecture without framing it as an anti-China strategy.

The dynamic maritime space of the IOR offers a platform for both traditional and non-traditional security collaborations. India-Taiwan ties could encompass addressing climate change, ensuring technological and economic security, and countering Chinese aggression. Recent developments, such as supply chain disruptions, the Galwan Valley clash, and potential semiconductor collaborations, provide fresh momentum to bilateral ties. Taiwan's intelligence on Chinese naval activities, shared through the US and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue frameworks, is particularly valuable. Similarly, India's insights into Russian arms systems could aid Taiwan in preparing for potential conflicts with China.

The India-China rivalry, coupled with Russia's role as a major arms supplier to both nations, further complicates regional

dynamics. Nonetheless, private-sector cooperation in military vessel and aircraft maintenance between India and Taiwan remains feasible. A stronger Indian presence in the IOR benefits Taiwan strategically, as does potential Taiwanese participation in the Indian Navy's Information Fusion Centre for the IOR.

India's evolving approach toward China is evident in measures such as renaming Tibetan locations and signing a labour agreement with Taiwan, signalling a subtle shift in its policy. These actions pave the way for deeper people-to-people connections and economic engagement, setting the stage for enhanced security cooperation.

India and Taiwan can innovate and expand their partnership in areas such as search and rescue at sea, combating illegal fishing, maritime domain awareness, counterterrorism, counter-piracy, human trafficking, cybersecurity, space cooperation, and technological development. Semiconductor manufacturing remains a priority, but other sectors, such as electric vehicles, healthcare, food processing, and aquaculture offer immense potential. Leveraging Taiwan's expertise in these areas aligns with India's developmental goals, including the Blue Revolution under SAGAR.

The convergence of India's Act East Policy and Taiwan's New Southbound Policy provides a robust framework for collaboration in these areas, fostering peace, security, and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

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China's Claim on Taiwan: An International Law Perspective

Dr Beena®

Abstract

This article explores China's claim to Taiwan from an international law perspective, tracing its origins to the Qing Dynasty and its solidification post-1949 with the establishment of the People's Republic of China. China views Taiwan as part of its territory, but Taiwan's de facto independence challenges this claim. The article examines the conflict between China's One-China Policy and Taiwan's right to self-determination, analysing Taiwan's statehood under the Montevideo Convention despite limited recognition. The principle of non-intervention and China's potential use of force are assessed under the United Nations Charter, including the involvement of third parties such as the United States and Japan. The viability of legal arbitration is discussed, noting China's reluctance, while Article 51 on self-defence is explored in the context of military escalation and international peacekeeping.

Introduction

China's claim over Taiwan is a complex issue rooted in historical, political, and legal arguments. Beijing asserts that Taiwan is an inseparable part of China, a viewpoint embedded in national policy and upheld by domestic laws and international statements. Taiwan, however, maintains a distinct identity, functioning independently with its own government, military, and economy. Taiwan's status remains a significant point of international debate, testing the principles of sovereignty, self-determination, and non-interference in international law. This analysis explores treaties,

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diplomatic agreements, and customary laws framing China's claim while also examining Taiwan's right to self-determination and its implications for the international order.

Historical Foundations of Sovereignty Claims: China and Taiwan

China's claim to Taiwan originates from the Qing Dynasty's annexation of the island in 1683 after defeating Ming loyalist Koxinga. However, Taiwan remained a peripheral region under limited Qing control. The key shift came in 1895, when the Qing ceded Taiwan to Japan after the First Sino-Japanese War, marking Taiwan as a Japanese colony for 50 years.¹ After Japan's defeat in World War II, Taiwan was returned to Chinese control, but the sovereignty transfer was not formalised. In 1949, the Chinese Civil War resulted in the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) on the mainland, while the Republic of China (ROC) retreated to Taiwan, asserting its claim to govern all of China.² This led to dual sovereignty claims: the PRC over the mainland and the ROC over Taiwan. Taiwan has operated as a *de facto* independent state but has avoided declaring formal independence to prevent military conflict with the PRC.

The conflict between the One-China Policy and the principle of self-determination lies at the heart of this dispute. The One-China Policy³, promoted by the PRC, asserts that there is only one China and Taiwan is its province. This policy was solidified internationally with the United Nations (UN) General Assembly Resolution 2758 in 1971, which recognised the PRC as the legitimate government of China. As a result, Taiwan was diplomatically isolated, with most nations and international organisations adhering to this principle.⁴

The principle of self-determination, enshrined in the UN Charter, grants people the right to determine their political status. Taiwan, with its democratic government, could invoke this principle to claim independence. However, Taiwan's lack of widespread diplomatic recognition, heavily influenced by Beijing's pressure, complicates its legal status despite meeting the criteria for statehood.

Taiwan's Legal Status in International Law

Taiwan's legal status under international law is one of the most debated topics in global geopolitics. Although Taiwan operates as a de facto independent state with its own government, military, and economy, its status as a sovereign entity remains legally ambiguous due to a lack of widespread diplomatic recognition. To determine whether Taiwan qualifies as a sovereign state under international law, it is essential to evaluate its situation against the widely accepted criteria for statehood.

The most widely accepted framework for determining statehood under international law is the Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States (1933). According to the convention, a state must meet four criteria: a permanent population, a defined territory, a government, and the capacity to enter into relations with other states. These criteria serve as the legal standard by which entities are recognised as states under international law.⁵

Taiwan meets all four criteria for statehood. It has a permanent population of around 23 million people⁶ who primarily identify as Taiwanese, distinct from mainland China. Its territory includes the main island of Taiwan and smaller islands, under the control of the Taipei government since 1949. Taiwan has a functioning, democratically elected government that exercises effective control over its territory, with its legal system, military, and administrative institutions, establishing it as a sovereign entity.⁷ Taiwan also maintains informal diplomatic relations with numerous countries and participates in international organisations as 'Chinese Taipei', while maintaining formal ties with 13 states, including major powers like the United States (US) and Japan.⁸

While Taiwan fulfils the Montevideo criteria, its situation is complicated due to the lack of formal recognition from most countries and international organisations. Taiwan operates as a de facto independent state, meaning that while it functions autonomously in all respects, it is not formally recognised as such by the international community. This stems from the influence of the One-China Policy, which dictates that countries seeking diplomatic relations with the PRC must recognise the PRC as the sole legal government of China, thereby, excluding Taiwan.⁹

Despite its diplomatic isolation, Taiwan demonstrates *de facto* independence through its robust economy, democratic governance, and military self-sufficiency. It plays a key role in global trade, particularly in the semiconductor industry, and maintains significant economic ties worldwide. However, Taiwan's lack of formal recognition and exclusion from the UN complicates its claim to full sovereignty. While statehood traditionally requires recognition, international law allows for the possibility of statehood based on functional independence and engagement in international relations. Taiwan's ability to function as an independent entity strengthens its case for *de facto* statehood, despite its political challenges.

Application of the Principle of Non-Intervention

The principle of non-intervention, enshrined in Article 2(4) of the UN Charter, prohibits states from interfering in the internal or external affairs of other sovereign states.¹⁰ It emphasises the prohibition of force, protects territorial integrity and political independence, and is central to state sovereignty as well as international peace and security.

The UN Charter sets the foundation for international relations by affirming state sovereignty and prohibiting foreign interference in domestic affairs. Article 2(4) prohibits the use of force except in self-defence or when authorised by the UN Security Council under Chapter VII to maintain peace.¹¹ Article 2(7) further enforces non-intervention, preventing the UN from intervening in matters within a state's domestic jurisdiction¹², although enforcement actions authorised by the Security Council are permitted. This principle reflects the Westphalian notion of state sovereignty, which has been challenged in cases involving humanitarian crises or territorial disputes.

China's stance on Taiwan is rooted in its One-China Policy, claiming Taiwan as an inalienable part of its territory. Beijing views any movement toward Taiwan's independence as an internal matter and reserves the right to use force if Taiwan seeks formal independence.¹³ This position is enshrined in China's Anti-Secession Law of 2005, which authorises 'Non-peaceful Means' to prevent Taiwan's secession from China.

In the event of a military conflict between China and Taiwan, the legality of China's use of force would be contentious. China could argue that its actions are justified under the principle of non-

intervention, viewing Taiwan as a domestic issue, and any foreign support for Taiwan could be considered a violation. However, under international law, such use of force would likely violate Article 2(4) of the UN Charter, which prohibits force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state. Taiwan operates as a de facto independent state, so China's military actions could be seen as a breach of Taiwan's sovereignty.

The possibility of foreign intervention further complicates this issue. The US, under the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) of 1979, maintains a policy of 'Strategic Ambiguity', not committing to defend Taiwan but reserving the right to intervene if Taiwan is attacked. This serves to deter both Taiwan from declaring independence and China from using force.

Article 51 of the UN Charter permits military intervention in cases of self-defence. Taiwan could invoke its right to self-defence if China initiates military action, potentially justifying foreign intervention, including from the US or Japan, both of which view Taiwan's security as crucial to regional stability.¹⁴

International Court of Justice (ICJ) Jurisprudence on Territorial Disputes

The ICJ has developed substantial jurisprudence on territorial disputes, offering legal clarity in cases like *Temple of Preah Vihear (Cambodia v. Thailand)*¹⁵ and *Nicaragua v. Colombia*¹⁶. Its approach to interpreting treaties, historical claims, and effective control is well-established. In theory, the ICJ could resolve the Taiwan-China conflict by considering historical treaties, self-determination, and international recognition. Taiwan's de facto independence and China's territorial claims would be central to the case. Although the ICJ could provide a legal solution, its jurisdiction remains uncertain, and political realities often overshadow legal mechanisms in high-stakes conflicts like the Taiwan issue.

The likelihood of China submitting to ICJ jurisdiction is highly improbable. As a permanent UN Security Council member and a global power, China has historically avoided international arbitration on sovereignty issues, particularly territorial disputes. This was evident in the *South China Sea Arbitration (Philippines v. China, 2016)*¹⁷, where China refused to participate in proceedings before the Permanent Court of Arbitration. Taiwan's status is a core

national interest for Beijing, enshrined in laws such as the Anti-Secession Law. Given the sensitivity of the issue, China is unlikely to accept a legal resolution through the ICJ, as any adverse ruling could undermine its claims to Taiwan.

Taiwan's lack of UN membership poses a significant challenge to its ability to bring a case before the ICJ, which primarily hears disputes between states. ICJ jurisdiction depends on the consent of all parties involved, and without China's agreement, the court cannot intervene. While the ICJ provides a legal framework for resolving territorial disputes, its involvement in the Taiwan-China conflict appears unlikely. China's longstanding refusal to engage in international arbitration on sovereignty issues, combined with the political sensitivity surrounding Taiwan, significantly reduces the likelihood of the ICJ's involvement in resolving this dispute.

United Nations Charter and Self-Defence Clauses¹⁸

Article 51 of the United Nations Charter provides the framework for the right of self-defence, a principle crucial in scenarios involving potential armed conflict between states, such as a hypothetical military confrontation between China and Taiwan. This article is fundamental to understanding how international law justifies or restricts military action in cases of self-defence.

Article 51 of the United Nations Charter

Article 51 of the UN Charter states:

“Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security”.¹⁹

Article 51 affirms states' right to self-defence against armed attacks, individually or collectively, before UN intervention occurs.

Application to the Taiwan-China Scenario

If China initiates military action against Taiwan, Taiwan could invoke Article 51 of the UN Charter, which affirms the right to self-defence in response to an armed attack. International law supports Taiwan's right to defend its territory and people, and allied states might provide military aid or strategic support, guided by their legal obligations and interests.

Taiwan's response must align with the principles of necessity and proportionality, ensuring actions are directly aimed at repelling aggression without exceeding the required measures. Overreactions could violate international law, undermining Taiwan's legitimacy. Notably, Article 51 does not permit pre-emptive strikes or preventive wars; any defensive action must counter an actual attack.

The legality of pre-emptive self-defence, where an attack is anticipated but has not occurred, remains contentious. The ICJ has emphasised that self-defence must respond to an actual or imminent threat. In *Nicaragua v. United States* (1986), the ICJ ruled that self-defence must not rely on speculative threats. Thus, while Taiwan could prepare for an imminent attack, its actions would need to meet stringent legal criteria to justify pre-emptive measures, ensuring compliance with international norms and maintaining international support amidst escalating tensions in the Taiwan Strait.

Similarly, if Taiwan initiates military action without provocation, it risks being labelled an aggressor under international law, as the UN Charter permits force only in self-defence or with Security Council authorisation.²⁰ Article 51 allows collective self-defence, enabling allies like the US or Japan to assist Taiwan, if attacked. However, such support must comply with international law, ensuring proportionality and focusing on repelling aggression rather than escalating conflict.²¹ While Article 51 safeguards the right to self-defence, it imposes strict limits to ensure military actions, uphold peace and security, emphasising the importance of lawful and measured responses to aggression.

Beijing's approach to Taiwan hinges on its political and strategic objectives. A survey of US and Taiwan experts explored potential Chinese actions over the next five years to pressure or punish Taiwan without forcing unification. Both groups agreed that a quarantine is the most likely tactic. However, 65 per cent of US experts believed that China might target outlying islands like Kinmen and Matsu, a view shared by 66 per cent of Taiwan experts. Conversely, 71 per cent of Taiwan experts anticipated a quarantine of Taiwan's main island, compared to fewer US experts.²²

Taiwan experts generally considered aggressive actions more likely. For example, 51 per cent of Taiwan experts foresaw a distant blockade compared to 23 per cent of US experts, while three times as many Taiwan experts expected a highly kinetic blockade. Though an invasion was deemed unlikely, Taiwan experts assessed the possibility as higher. Interestingly, more US experts believed that China might seize offshore islands.

If unification were the goal, 80 per cent of both groups saw a highly kinetic blockade as the most probable action, with Taiwan experts expressing greater confidence. These differing perspectives reveal contrasting assessments of China's potential strategies.²³

Beijing's actions toward Taiwan will be shaped by political and strategic goals, with military capabilities also influencing decisions. Experts assessed China's ability to execute three actions: a law enforcement-led quarantine, a People's Liberation Army (PLA)-led blockade, and an amphibious invasion.²⁴

Around 90 per cent of US experts and 62 per cent of Taiwan experts believed that China could carry out a law enforcement-led quarantine, while 80 per cent of US experts and 60 per cent of Taiwan experts thought China could execute a PLA-led blockade. Although Xi Jinping set a 2027 deadline for military modernisation, only 13 per cent of US and 6 per cent of Taiwan experts believed this would influence China's actions. The consensus is that political factors, not military capabilities, will guide Beijing's decisions regarding Taiwan.

Role of Third-Party States and International Organisations in the Taiwan-China Dispute

The Taiwan-China dispute extends beyond bilateral tensions, involving global powers like the US and Japan, and international bodies such as the UN. The US, under the TRA of 1979, provides Taiwan with military support while maintaining strategic ambiguity to deter unilateral actions by Taiwan or China. This policy ensures Taiwan's defence capabilities without guaranteeing direct US military intervention. The dispute also draws attention to international peacekeeping, diplomacy, and the enforcement of global treaties, emphasising Taiwan's geostrategic importance and the delicate balance of power in maintaining stability in the region.²⁵

The US also conducts regular arms sales to Taiwan, which China views as a provocative act, potentially escalating tensions across the Taiwan Strait. Furthermore, the US has engaged in diplomatic efforts to bolster Taiwan's international presence, supporting its participation in international organisations under the name Chinese Taipei in line with the One-China Policy.²⁶ The US also conducts freedom of navigation operations in the Taiwan Strait, reaffirming its commitment to maintaining open international sea lanes.

Some experts are questioning whether the US should stop its long-standing policy of strategic ambiguity regarding Taiwan. This policy intentionally keeps China and Taiwan uncertain about whether the US would defend Taiwan if China attacked. The goal has been to deter both sides from making moves that could provoke conflict. For Taiwan, this means avoiding a declaration of independence or other provocative actions, while for China, it means refraining from attacking Taiwan to force reunification.²⁷

The US policy of strategic ambiguity regarding Taiwan has long been a cornerstone of its foreign strategy, but growing Chinese power has prompted calls for a shift. Many US scholars argue that the risk of a Chinese attack now outweighs the danger of Taiwan recklessly declaring independence. They suggest that clarifying the US' commitments could enhance deterrence against China.

Japan, a vital US ally and regional power, is equally invested in Taiwan's stability. Its geographic proximity and economic ties make Taiwan's security crucial for regional stability and prosperity. While Japan lacks a formal military alliance with Taiwan, it supports Taiwan's democratic system through diplomatic and economic engagement. Japan also participates in regional dialogues advocating democracy and peace in the Taiwan Strait. However, its approach remains cautious due to its reliance on China for trade and constitutional limitations on military actions, reflecting a delicate balance in regional dynamics.

In Jan 2024, the Centre for Strategic and International Studies released a survey of US and Taiwanese experts, indicating a high likelihood of a crisis, such as an invasion or blockade by China in 2024 amid Taiwan's presidential election. Japan, recognising Taiwan's security as integral to its own, is closely monitoring the

situation. Former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and current Japanese leaders have emphasised Taiwan's stability as vital, prompting Japan to increase its defence budget and strengthen its military presence, particularly in the southwest islands, in response to China's growing assertiveness.

Japan's approach to a potential Taiwan conflict is shaped by key factors. The 1972 Japan-China Joint Communiqué supports peaceful unification, but any use of force by China could prompt Japan to reconsider its position. The US commitment to Taiwan under the TRA might compel Japan to assist US military efforts or defend US bases in Japan, if they are attacked. Additionally, the evolving strategic nuclear balance between the US and China could influence Japan's response, particularly if the US intervention wanes. Taiwan's geostrategic importance further underscores its role in maintaining critical maritime routes and countering Chinese expansion. Japan is likely to engage indirectly through the US, participating in military planning and joint exercises to bolster deterrence and regional stability.²⁸

Influence of International Organisations

The UN's role in the Taiwan-China dispute is intricate, shaped by Taiwan's exclusion due to the One-China Policy. Taiwan is not a UN member, and the UN General Assembly Resolution 2758 (1971) recognises the PRC as the 'Only legitimate representative' of China. As a result, Taiwan is excluded from UN peacekeeping missions and diplomatic forums. China further opposes Taiwan's participation in UN agencies and other international organisations limited to sovereign states. Despite these restrictions, Taiwan continues to protest its exclusion while the US advocates for its inclusion in global bodies.

Taiwan actively engages in the international arena through membership in over 40 intergovernmental organisations, such as the World Trade Organisation, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, the World Organisation for Animal Health, and the Central American Bank for Economic Integration. It also holds observer status in other key organisations. While only 12 countries maintain formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan, it has substantive ties with nations such as Australia, Canada, European Union members, Japan, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the US. This extensive network highlights Taiwan's efforts to remain visible globally,

showcasing its commitment to international cooperation despite diplomatic challenges stemming from China's objections.²⁹

The global landscape shifted in 2022 as Russia's invasion of Ukraine drew parallels to Taiwan's situation, emphasising territorial sovereignty and self-determination. The conflict underscored the fragile balance in the Taiwan Strait, heightening concerns about the geopolitical implications of any instability in the region. Taiwan's position gained prominence as a focal point for international security, with countries closely monitoring developments and their potential ripple effects.

In May 2024, Taiwan's political landscape attracted global attention during William Lai Ching-te's inauguration as the fifth elected president. Despite Beijing branding him a 'Separatist' and opposing the event, 508 foreign delegates attended, symbolising strong international support for Taiwan's democracy.

These events highlight Taiwan's growing strategic significance and its rising recognition on the global stage. However, the UN and its specialised agencies influence the Taiwan-China dispute only indirectly. While Taiwan lacks formal recognition, the UN's principles of sovereignty and peacekeeping frameworks support Taiwan's de facto status. Additionally, treaties like the UN Charter and TRA guide third-party actions, emphasising peaceful resolution and diplomacy. Yet, the UN's effectiveness remains constrained by the geopolitical realities of the Taiwan-China issue, reflecting the complexities of balancing regional stability with international legal principles.

Alliances like the US-Japan Security Treaty play a vital role in maintaining the strategic balance in the Taiwan-China dispute by deterring aggression and ensuring regional stability. The US provides military aid and diplomatic support to Taiwan, adopting strategic ambiguity to manage tensions, while Japan supports Taiwan's democracy and stability more cautiously. International organisations, though limited by Taiwan's lack of formal membership, influence the situation through frameworks promoting peace and security. The combined efforts of these actors reflect the complexity of the Taiwan-China conflict, balancing regional security dynamics with the challenges posed by international legal and geopolitical principles.

Conclusion

In conclusion, China's claim to Taiwan under international law remains a contentious issue, deeply rooted in historical context and bolstered by evolving geopolitical interests. While China asserts a right to reunification based on the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, Taiwan's de facto independence and distinct political system raise important questions about self-determination under international law. This examination of China's claim within the framework of treaties, customary international law, and diplomatic precedents highlights the ambiguities and challenges of enforcing a singular interpretation of sovereignty in cases like Taiwan. The international community's varied stances on Taiwan reveal the complexities of applying international law uniformly, especially in matters involving powerful state interests. As tensions over Taiwan's status continue to shape East Asian and global stability, this article underscores the need for a nuanced understanding of sovereignty, self-determination, and the role of international law in addressing such disputes. Through this perspective, we gain a deeper appreciation of the legal and diplomatic hurdles that define China's claim on Taiwan and anticipate the potential implications for future peace and security in the region.

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Comparison of Select Maxims and Sutras: Sun Tzu's *Art of War*¹ and Kautilya's *Arthashastra*²

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Abstract

The comparison of literatures of the two ancient texts on strategy and warfare, Sun Tzu's Art of War (China) and Kautilya's Arthashastra (India), is a challenging and worthwhile exercise. This article attempts the interpretation and comparison of select maxims or aphorisms of Sun Tzu's Art of War where it matches with a sutra (a statement or a set of rules) in Kautilya's Arthashastra. The maxims are condensed and coded aphorisms and their enduring essence is clearly applicable today. The article has selected maxims from Sun Tzu's Art of War's Chapters 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 10, 11, and 13 to include aspects of military factors in appreciations and tactics, humane treatment of prisoners, issues of stratagems, civil-military relations, morale, calamities to avoid, and intelligence.

Introduction

According to the Chinese academic Professor Yan Xuetong: 'Indian scholars view both Sun Tzu and Kautilya as strategists and have done many comparative studies about their thoughts on strategies'.³ Surely, the comparison of literatures of the two ancient texts on strategy and warfare, that is Sun Tzu's *Art of War* (China) and Kautilya's *Arthashastra* (KA) (India), is a challenging and

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worthwhile exercise. As the saying goes that 'The devil is in details', this article attempts the interpretation and comparison of select maxims or aphorisms of Sun Tzu's *Art of War* where it matches with *sutras* (a statement or a set of rules) in KA. The maxims are condensed and coded aphorisms and are clearly applicable today, as their essence endures. The article has selected maxims from Sun Tzu's *Art of War's* Chapters 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 10, and 11.

***Art of War* Chapter 1: Laying Plans**

***Art of War* 1.3-11.** 'The art of war... is governed by five constant factors...Moral Law (which causes the people to be in complete accord with their ruler, so that they will follow him regardless of their lives, undismayed by any danger); Heaven (night and day, cold and heat, times and seasons); Earth (distances, great and small, danger and security, open ground and narrow passes, the chances of life and death); The Commander (who stands for the virtue of wisdom, sincerely, benevolence, courage, and strictness); Method and Discipline (military organisation, logistics, troop control, and control of military expenditure)'.

'The Moral Law causes the people to be in complete accord with their ruler, so that they will follow him regardless of their lives, undismayed by any danger'.

'Heaven signifies night and day, cold and heat, times and seasons'.

'Earth comprises distances, great and small; danger and security; open ground and narrow passes; the chances of life and death'.

'The Commander stands for the virtues of wisdom, sincerely, benevolence, courage, and strictness'.

'By method and discipline are to be understood the marshalling of the army in its proper subdivisions, the graduation of ranks among the officers, the maintenance of roads by which supplies may reach the army, and the control of military expenditure'.

'These five heads should be familiar to every general: he who knows them will be victorious; he who knows them not, will fail'.

For KA, in comparison to Sun Tzu's *Art of War's* factors on moral law, is the fundamental aspect of *dharma* or ethics and legitimacy. This is implicit in KA. Heaven and Earth of *Art of War* can be compared with KA, which has the three factors to be kept in mind, that is *Desh* (Terrain), *Kaal* (Time), and *Shakti* (Power). For the commander, KA *sutra* 6.2.33 has given the need for an individual to possess *utsah-shakti*, i.e., '... The power of valour is power of energy'.

KA has a section on the activity of the commandant of the army in Book 2, which is quite similar to what Sun Tzu prescribes. KA *sutra* 2.33.9-10 describes it:

2.33.9. The Commandant of the Army, trained in the sciences of all (kinds of) fights and weapons, (and) renowned for riding on elephants, horses or in chariots, should be conversant with the same, (and) with the direction of the work carried out by the four-fold troops.

2.33.10. He should look out for suitable ground for one's side (suitable season for fighting), arraying a force against (enemy arrays), breaking unbroken ranks, reforming broken ranks, breaking compact ranks, destroying broken ranks, destroying the fort, and the season for an expedition.

Art of War Chapter 2: Waging War

Art of War 2.17. '...The captured soldiers should be kindly treated and kept'.

For KA, *sutra* 13.4.52 is comparable with *Art of War 2.17*:

When attacking the enemy's fort or camp, they should grant safety to those fallen down, those turning their back, those surrendering, those who's with loose hair (as a mark of submission), those without weapons, those disfigured by terror, and those not fighting.

Art of War Chapter 3: Attack by Stratagem

Art of War 3.2. 'Hence to fight and conquer in all your battles is not supreme excellence, supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting'.

Art of War 3.3. 'Thus, the highest form of generalship is to balk the enemy's plans; the next best is to prevent the junction of the enemy's forces; the next in order is to attack the enemy's army in the field; and the worst policy of all is to besiege walled cities'.

KA also gives top priority to *Mantra-shakti* (power of counsel and diplomacy) to gain victory without a fight. On generalship, Kautilya likewise presses for a similar proactive argument based on intellect and his famous *sutras* at the conclusion of his Book 7 on The Six Measures of Foreign Policy (7.18.43-44):

7.18.43. He, who is well-versed in the science of politics, should employ all the means, viz., advancement, decline, and stable conditions, as well weakening and extermination.

7.18.44. He who sees the six measures of policy as being interdependent in this manner, plays, as he pleases, with kings tied by the chains of his intellect.

Art of War 3.9. 'If equally matched, we can offer battle, if slightly inferior in number, we can avoid the enemy, if quite unequal in every way, we can flee from him'.

However, in KA, 'Fleeing' when attacked by strong king is not found, but instead taking shelter with another king is the norm in Book 12, Concerning a Weaker King, in *sutras* 12.1.7-9:

12.1.7. One submissive everywhere lives despairing of life like a ram (strayed) from the herd.

12.1.8. And one fighting with only a small army perishes like one plunging in the ocean without a boat.

12.1.9. He should, however, act finding shelter with a king superior to him or in an unassailable fort.

Interestingly on fleeing, Kautilya's *Niti Darpana*, 3.19 counsels:

'From fearful famines and epidemics,
from attacks by the enemy,
and from contacts with the wicked,
to stay alive, one has to flee'.⁴

Kanad Sinha in *From Dasarajna to Kuruksetra: Making of a Historical Tradition* (2021)⁵ has an episode about the strategy of fleeing in combat by Krishna. In the first encounter, the combined forces of Krishna and Balram defeated Jarasamdha in Mathura region. But in further encounters, due to superiority of the foe, they flee to Dwarka. In Bhasa's play, Duryodhana mocks Krishna: 'Where was your bravery when you fled terrified from the king of Magadha (Jarasamdha) who was enraged at his son-in-law's (Kamsa) murder?' Krishna replies: 'Suyodhana, the wise man's bravery accords with the time, the place, and the situation'.⁶ Sinha then refers to *The Harivamsa* to give the logic of being practical: 'Krishna felt no shame in flying away from his enemy and declared that a wise person does not stay near a stronger foe. One must fight when capable and go away if not'.⁷ Not surprisingly, Krishna is also called *Ranchor* (one who abandons the battlefield).

- **Civil-Military Relations.** *Art of War* 3.17.5 has one of the most relevant aphorisms on civil-military relations as we understand today: 'He will win who has military capacity and is not interfered with by the sovereign'. This is analysed in Chapter 8 below.
- **On Intelligence.** Further, Sun Tzu in the last advice sums up at 3.18: 'Hence, the saying: If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained, you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle'.

In *Art of War* Chapter 10: Terrain, there is a similar aphorism. Sun Tzu at 10.31 says, '...If you know the enemy and know yourself, your victory will not stand in doubt; if you know Heaven and know Earth, you may make your victory complete'.

For Kautilya, the seven *prakrits* or the constituent elements of a state (all states including own) in the Mandala system needs to be known thoroughly through means of intelligence and with proper analysis. KA, in fact, is a manual of intelligence studies and thus, unlike *Art of War*, it does not find it necessary to lecture but rather provides a methodology of intelligence analysis.

***Art of War* Chapter 7: Manoeuvring**

Art of War 7.36. 'When you surround an army, leave an outlet free. Do not press a desperate foe too hard'.

KA 10.3.57. 'The vehemence of one returning again to fight and despairing of his life becomes irresistible; therefore, he should not harass a broken enemy'.

***Art of War* Chapter 8: Variations in Tactics**

Art of War 8.3. 'There are roads which must not be followed, armies which not be attacked, town which must not be besieged, positions which must not be contested, and commands of the sovereign which must not be obeyed'.

Art of War's last counsel 'Commands of the sovereign which must not be obeyed' is worth an analysis when read with *Art of War* Chapter 3: Attack by Stratagem at 3.17.5, which states, 'He will win who has military capacity and is not interfered with by the sovereign'.

While no example is quoted, Sun Tzu is raising a fundamental issue of civil-military relations at the strategic level on the civil control of the military, including operational and tactical matters in the military chain of command. Although KA does not include this aphorism (as the king himself participated in combat), some contemporary examples are of interest.

'Nelson's Eye' is a good example from Western maritime history.⁸ In the case of India, at the operational level, some historical examples in public domain are:

- In 1971 liberation of Bangladesh, Lieutenant General (Lt Gen) Sagat Singh as IV Corps Commander was told not to cross Meghna River by the Army Commander Lt Gen Jagjit Singh Aurora. Singh is known to have disregarded the instruction as he was convinced that he could reach Dhaka for a decisive victory when he viewed the terrain across Meghna River: only if his troops could cross the Meghna. He did it by improvised heliborne operations. In a YouTube podcast discussion, Lt Gen Raj Shukla narrated Singh's exploitive dash to Dacca—the decisive moment and was instrumental in the surrender.⁹ Another example of Singh uncanny propensity to seize an opportunity bypassing the

hierarchy in view of a ripe opportunity is in the biography *Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw* by Lt Gen Depinder Singh and also in Shukla's podcast. In 1967, Singh was the General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the division at Nathula, facing the Chinese. Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw was the-then officiating Chief Of Army Staff. At Nathula in Sep 1967, Singh retaliated with massive artillery. This was a first-of-its-kind successful encounter by India post the 1962 Sino-Indian war. Evidently, Singh on his own initiative took the action without taking permission from the higher echelons of command. When the-then Indian Prime Minister (PM) Indira Gandhi queried, Manekshaw is known to have remarked: 'I am afraid they are enacting Hamlet without the Prince'.¹⁰ Shukla, in the YouTube podcast, stressed on this innovative Shakespearean example. Manekshaw then explained the matter in detail to the PM and got it closed. This was the synergy, or we can say 'Chemistry', 'When Singh followed Sun Tzu and Manekshaw as the chief thought that he had done the right thing and never admonished him.

- Context does matter. In Dec 2001, Indian military mobilised in Operation Parakram in response to a Pakistan-sponsored terror attack on the Indian Parliament. Both nuclear-armed countries came very close to a war. In Jan 2002, a strike corps commander was removed from command as he nearly crossed the staging area and was, so it is said, to launch the strike corps as he found the ripe opportunity.
- In the Military Heritage Festival in Oct 2023, in session 6 titled 'Limited Conflict'¹¹, Lt Gen Ramesh Kulkarni, author of *Siachen 1987*, narrated his experience as GOC 28 Infantry Division, responsible for Siachen Glacier in 1987/1988. No flights were permitted by the government over enemy territory. But Kulkarni was keen to have some intelligence of enemy disposition and build up across the glacier. He requested Air Marshal MM Singh, Commandant Western Air Command, for assistance. Sure enough, an aerial photo was delivered, implying in the discussion that Singh ignored the order not to cross enemy air space.¹²
- In session 17 titled 'War Stories' in the Military Heritage Festival in Oct 2023¹³, Major General Ian Cardoza narrated his experience as GOC of 10 Infantry Division at Chamb in

a no-war-no-peace setting. Use of Re-coilless guns (RCL) was not permitted. However, when he was on a helicopter reconnaissance, RCL engaged and neutralised the Pakistani post which was trying to shoot down the helicopter.

- On the doctrine of command responsibility, legal scholar Wing Commander UC Jha in the United Service Institution Occasional Paper *Military Manual on Laws of War* argues that 'The Indian Army Act 1950 states that a subordinate is not bound to obey illegal orders of his superiors. However, the doctrine of superior responsibility is missing in the Indian military legal system'. He refers to only one provision in Army Act, 1950. Section 64(a) of the Act provides imprisonment of up to seven years in case a person being-in-command receives a complaint and does not report the case to proper authority.¹⁴

Lest Sun Tzu is misinterpreted as a disobedient general, Gerard Chaliand in his seminal work *The Art of War in World History* (1994) gives a good explanation in the introductory essay:

Sun Tzu adds that there should be no fear of disobeying the ruler's orders if the situation on ground so requires. With such a bold assertion, especially at a time when despotism was the rule, Sun Tzu was not questioning the political dimensions of the conflict ('Good rulers deliberate a plan, good generals execute them'), but the rigid directions of the rulers lacking the means to assess a concrete situation.¹⁵

***Art of War* Chapter 10: Terrain**

***Art of War* 10.14.** 'Now an army is exposed to six severe calamities, not arising from natural causes, but from faults for which the general is responsible. These are: Flight; Insubordination; Collapse; Ruin; Disorganisation; and Rout'.

KA Book 8 is solely on disasters and how to avoid them. KA classifies disasters as *manusham* (man-made) and caused due to *devam* (God-sent/beyond human control).

Two Types of Disasters. Book 8 of Kautilya's *Arthashastra* is about *vyasanas* (disasters) of two types—*manusham* and *devam*:

8.1.2. 'A calamity of a constituent, of a divine or human origin, springs from ill luck or wrong policy'.

8.4.1. 'Visitation from the gods are: Fire, Floods, Disease, Famine, and Epidemic'.

Note that above *sutras* are very clear about link of disasters with policy failure (wrong policy). The calamities of the army are in Chapter 5, Section 133, which contains *sutras* 1 to 21 covering 'The Group of Calamities of the Army'. The essence of the calamities corresponds much more to those limited five, spelt out by Sun Tzu. In contrast, KA *Sutra* 8.5.1 is more elaborate and details 33 types of calamities:

8.5.1. The calamities of the army are: (the state of being) unhonoured, dishonoured, unpaid, sick, newly arrived, came after a long march, exhausted, depleted, repulsed, broken in the first onslaught, caught in an unsuitable season, caught in an unsuitable terrain, despondent of hope, deserted, with women-folk inside, with 'Darts' inside, with a rebellious base, split inside, ran away, widely scattered, encamped near, completely absorbed, blocked, encircled, with supplies of grains and men cut off, dispersed in one's own land, dispersed in an ally's land, infested by treasonable men, with a hostile enemy in the rear, with its base denuded (of troops), not united with the master, with head broken, and blind.

Most of the calamities, barring being unhonoured and dishonoured, are operational matters of combat. However, the next *sutra* is an indication of how to treat the military. In issues of morale, *Sutra* 8.5.2 is the crux:

'Among these, as between an unhonoured and dishonoured (army), the unhonoured would fight when honoured with money, not the dishonoured, with resentment in its heart'.

As a precaution not to follow the disastrous situation in *sutra* 8.5.2, KA in *sutra* 8.5.21 suggest sensibly:

'The (king), ever diligent, should take steps right beforehand against that cause because of which he might suffer a calamity of the constituents'.

Art of War Chapter 11: The Nine Situations

Art of War 11.26. 'Prohibit the taking of omens and do away with superstitious doubts. Then, until death itself comes, no calamity need be feared'.

In KA, excellence of enemy is at 6.1.13, which relies on fate:

'...Trusting in fate... for an enemy of this type becomes easy to exterminate'.

Further in Book 9 (Activity of the King About to March), at 9.4.26, Kautilya reinforces his warning not to be superstitious:

'The object slips away from the foolish person, who continuously consults the stars; for an object is the (auspicious) constellation for (achieving) and object; what will the stars do?'

Art of War Chapter 13: The Use of Spies

Art of War 13.27. 'Hence it is only the enlightened ruler and the wise general who will use the highest intelligence of the army for purposes of spying and great results. Spies are the most important element in war, because on them depends an army's ability to move'.

KA is a manual on intelligence studies at the macro as well as micro level. It spells out the methodology and its application. Thus, it will be unfair to compare Kautilya's tome with Sun Tzu's terse aphorism.

Conclusion

Although both the ancient texts were coded in different cultures and civilisations, some common wisdom can be found in both, as indicated above. This is termed as co-variance. The common wisdom in the maxims and *sutras* of the two classics is enduring and relevant for contemporary times. Much more of this kind of comparison is needed to enrich the literature of the art of warfare and strategy.

Endnotes

¹ All references are from Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, (HarperCollins, London, 2011).

² All references are from R.P. Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthashastra, Part 2: An English Translation with Critical and Explanatory Notes*, (Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, Second Edition, 2010).

³ Yan Xuetong 'How Do Xunzi and Kautilya Ponder Interstate Politics' in, Amitav Acharya, Daniel A Bell, Rajeev Bhargava and Yan Xuetong (Eds.), *Bridging Two Worlds: Comparing Classical Political Thought and Statecraft*

in *India and China*, (University of California Press, California, 2023), p.77. For comparative study see Chapter 5 'Contemporary Use of Traditional Historical Knowledge in China and India: A Literature Survey' in Pradeep Kumar Gautam, *Kautilya's Arthashastra: Contemporary Issues and Comparison*, IDSA Monograph Series No.47, Oct 2015.

⁴ A.N.D. Haksar, *Chanakya Niti: Verses on Life and Living*, (Penguin Books, Gurugram 2020), p.24.

⁵ Kanad Sinha, *From Dasarajna to Kuruksetra: Making of a Historical Tradition*, (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2021), p.285.

⁶ Bhasa, *The Shattered Thigh and Other Plays*, tr. A.N.D. Haksar, (Penguin, New Delhi, 2008), p. 69.

⁷ Kanad Sinha, op cit, p.285.

⁸ The expression "Nelson's Eye" is derived from the exploits of Horatio Nelson (1758-1805) of the British Navy who had lost an arm and right eye in battle. In an attack on Danish ships off Copenhagen, Nelson was the second-in-command. The British found it difficult to fight the enemy. Nelson, when signaled to stop, placed the telescope to his blind eye and said that he could not "see" the signal and continued the battle which he won.

⁹ 027 - Sam Manekshaw and Sagat Singh, Gen Raj Shukla, *DOAP Podcast*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mwx7DEeGfEU> (accessed Aug 2024)

¹⁰ Lt Gen Depinder Singh, *Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw: Soldiering with Dignity*, (Natraj Publishers, Dehradun, 2002), p.14.

¹¹ MIL-FEST Session 6: Limited Conflicts, Indian Military Festival 2023 organised by the *United Service Institution of India*,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Joc3d3oYXps&list=PLkAXeZEGOaj3BWswl2o1ytpay4ZSEuiYz&index=7> (accessed Aug 2024).

¹² Lt Gen Ramesh Kulkarni and Anjali Karpe, *Siachen 1987: Battle for the Frozen Frontier*, (, HarperCollins, Gurugram ,2022), pp.102-108.

¹³ MIL-FEST Session 17: War Stories, Indian Military Festival 2023 organised by the *United Service Institution of India*,
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gwTI_EZ1aXc&list=PLkAXeZEGOaj3BWswl2o1ytpay4ZSEuiYz&index=19 (accessed Aug 2024).

¹⁴ Wing Commander UC Jha, *Military Manual on Laws of War*, USI Occasional Paper No.3, 2022, p.8 and note 18.

¹⁵ Gerard Chaliand, 'Warfare and Strategic Culture in History' in *The Art of War in World History*, (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, University of California Press,1994), pp.17-18.

India's Defence Exports: Unravelling the Potential of the BrahMos Missile

Rahul Wankhede[®]

Abstract

India's domestic defence industry is witnessing a significant transformation, evolving from an import-dependent structure to an indigenous and notable exporter of advanced military equipment. Central to this evolution is the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile, a product of Indo-Russian joint-venture collaboration. This article explores the export potential of the BrahMos missile system. Highlighting its technical specifications and multi-platform versatility, the article presents an analysis of BrahMos variants, emphasising the indigenous advancements that have increased its self-reliance. The export journey of BrahMos, particularly its landmark deal with the Philippines, underscores India's burgeoning role in the global arms market. Despite challenges such as geopolitical sensitivities and potential sanctions, the article argues that the BrahMos missile symbolises India's strategic prowess and its capacity to contribute significantly to global defence exports. The findings suggest that with continued innovation and strategic diplomacy, India can enhance its defence exports, bolstering both its economic growth and international strategic influence.

Introduction

Historically, India relied heavily on imports to meet its defence requirements in the post-independence era. Successive wars

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and geopolitical challenges compelled India to move towards defence modernisation via the indigenous route. In the 1980s, India launched the Indigenous Guided Missile Development Programme to acquire self-sufficiency in missile technology. A major spinoff of this programme was the decision to develop supersonic cruise missiles. Under the guidance of Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, an inter-government agreement between India and Russia was signed in Feb 1998, to that effect. The aim of the project was to design, develop, manufacture, and market the world's first supersonic cruise missile (and its associated systems). A joint venture company was, thus, setup, named BrahMos Aerospace, with India holding a share of 50.5 per cent and Russia 49.5 per cent in the company. Officially, the project work started in 1999 and the first launch of the missile was conducted in Jun 2001. The successful maiden launch and the display of the missile at an international exhibition in Moscow, in Aug 2001, brought it widespread attention. Since then, the BrahMos missile has been successfully tested multiple times and has been inducted in service by all three branches of the Indian Armed Forces.

Technical Specifications of the BrahMos Missile

Named after the Brahmaputra and Moskva rivers, the BrahMos missile is a symbol of Indo-Russian collaboration¹, combining Indian propulsion and guidance systems with Russian expertise in missile technology. What sets the BrahMos apart is its supersonic speed, precision targeting capabilities, and launch versatility across multiple platforms, including land, sea, and air. With a minimum range of 290 kms and speeds exceeding Mach 3, the BrahMos is among the fastest cruise missiles in the world², making it a formidable asset for both offensive and defensive operations. Initially, Russia supplied 65 per cent of the components, including its radar seekers and the ramjet engine. During the initial phases of the project, the missile was only 13 per cent indigenous, today it is 76 per cent.³ This was possible because of public-private partnership. More than 200 companies and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises today are vendors of the BrahMos Aerospace.⁴

The airframe, propulsion systems, and other important components have been indigenised – but this has increased the per unit cost of the missile. Currently, the BrahMos missile can function on the United States' (US) GPS, India's GAGAN and

Europe's GLONASS navigation systems. The missile can be launched from a ship, an aircraft, and also a surface-based launcher. On the other hand, the missile can hit any target based on land and in water. All the above variants of the missile are being upgraded for better range and accuracy, though the warhead capacity has been kept constant. Hypersonic version of the missile is under development.⁵

Despite these developments, India will not be exporting the advanced versions of the BrahMos. The variant sold to Philippines is the 290 kms variant, since India is now a member of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) whose members are not allowed to sell or share technologies which can carry a payload of 500 kg beyond the range of 300 kms, with non-members.⁶ Due to this conditionality, until India joined MTCR, it could not increase the range of the missile— since Russia is a project partner, as well as an MTCR member. The membership of this regime has now enabled India to get missile technology from other members and also upgrade the range and lethality of the missile.

The Indian military has successfully inducted, integrated and deployed multiple variants of the BrahMos missile. The following Table 1 mentions all the BrahMos variants:

Variant	Range	Speed	Warhead	Total Weight	Cost per unit (approximately USD)
BrahMos JP-10	290 kms 400 kms version developed	Mach 3	200-300 kg	3000 kg (land and ship-launched) 2650 kg (air-launched)	USD 3.2-3.5 mn (surface-launched) USD 5.5 mn (air-launched)
BrahMos-NG	290 kms	Mach 3.5	200-300 kg	1200-1500 kg 1330 kg (air-launched)	USD 2.6 mn
BrahMos-ER	800-900 kms (ship-launched)	Mach 2.8	200-300 kg	2650 kg (air-launched)	USD 4.85 mn (surface-launched) USD 11 mn (ship-launched)
BrahMos-II (under development)	1500 kms	Mach 6-8	-	-	USD 5.6 mn
BrahMos-A	300 kms	Mach 2.8	200-300 kg	2500 kg (air-launched)	-

Table 1

As mentioned elsewhere, there is always a trade-off among the price, range, warhead, fuel capacity, etc., when it comes to missiles.⁷ More range requires more fuel carrying capacity— this puts a limitation on the weight of other components. Similarly, more weight leads to lesser speed and reduced range. Due to these dynamics, multiple variants of a missile are made to cater for various missions and operational roles. For example, the most light-weight version of the BrahMos is the one launched from fighter jets, weighing around 1,330 kg so that the jet can carry other weapons and fuel. The heaviest variant is the BrahMos JP-10, which is surface-launched. Similarly, if the missile has to be fitted inside a submarine, its weight and length will have to be reduced. Completing the abovementioned processes indigenously takes a tremendous amount of time and effort. It also increases the per unit cost of the end product since cheaper imported components are sought to be replaced by indigenous ones. Nevertheless, the BrahMos missile is a formidable element in India's arsenal due to its 'Fire-and-forget' capability, requiring no additional input from the operator once the missile is launched. The high speed of the BrahMos likely gives it better target-penetration characteristics than lighter subsonic cruise-missiles like the Tomahawk. Being twice as heavy and almost four times as fast as Tomahawk, the BrahMos has more than 32 times the on-cruise kinetic energy of a Tomahawk missile, although it carries only 3/5th the payload and a fraction of the range. Also, due to high speeds and lower cruising altitude, the BrahMos technically cannot be intercepted by any existing missile defence systems, especially if fired in a salvo mode. Because of the low reaction time from the launch of BrahMos to its impact, it is difficult for any surface-to-air missile to intercept it.

Export Status and Potential of the BrahMos Missile

In Jan 2022, BrahMos Aerospace signed an export contract with the Philippines government for around USD 375 mn.⁸ In this case, it is interesting to note that the 'Request' for the procurement was made by the Philippine government to the Indian government, which then considered the proposal extensively before finalising the contract. The deal includes at least two missile batteries as part of the agreement. A battery will have three mobile firing units, plus attached command and control, radar, and support vehicles, and units. Each mobile firing unit has three ready-to-fire BrahMos

anti-ship supersonic missiles, with the export variant having a maximum range of around 290 kms. The batteries will be operated by the Shore-Based Anti-Ship Missile Battalion of the Philippine Marine Corps Coastal Defence Regiment.

India successfully delivered the last batch to the Philippines in Apr 2024. Philippine Marine Corps personnel have also completed their mandatory operator training under the supervision of BrahMos Aerospace and the Indian Navy. India had offered the Philippines a line of credit of USD 100 mn for defence purchases, a part of which may have been used to finance this deal. The following Table 2 gives a comparative overview of the same:

Missile	Range (kms)	Warhead Capacity	Speed	Launch Platform	Price (approximately in USD)
AGM-158 JASSM (USA)	370	450 kg	Subsonic	Land, Air	USD 0.5-1 mn
BrahMos	290	200-300 kg	Mach 2.8-3.0	Land, Sea, Air	USD 2-3 mn
Exocet (France)	180	165 kg	Mach 0.9	Sea, Air	USD 0.5-1 mn
Kh-35 (Russia)	130-260	145 kg	Mach 0.7-0.8	Land, Sea, Air	USD 0.5-1 mn
Tomahawk (USA)	1,600-2,500	450 kg	Mach 0.7	Land, Sea, Air	USD 1-1.5 mn
YJ-18 (China)	540	300-500 kg	Mach 2.5-3.0	Sea	USD 0.5-1 mn

Table 2

The BrahMos missile is a proven technology. It has been integrated onto Indian fighter jets, ships, and now submarines. Since it has received the best technologies from India and Russia, the product, per se, is efficient and reliable. The only remaining validation, if any, for the BrahMos, is its performance in actual combat—that is for the future. Today, no other cruise missile comes close to BrahMos, especially on the pricing and speed factor.

In Sep 2016, it was revealed that the Russian Defence Ministry is interested in purchasing the air-launched BrahMos to arm their Su-30SM fighters.⁹ But so far, Russia has not made any official request to that effect. The CEO and managing director of BrahMos Aerospace, mentioned in an interview, “The Company has been continuously looking at Russia as a potential market for the air-launched BrahMos supersonic cruise missile, since Russia has no equivalent currently in service”.¹⁰

The Philippine Army is also known to have shown interest in procuring two systems for its missile defence force. BrahMos Aerospace has mentioned on multiple occasions that many countries in Southeast Asia, West Asia, and Latin America have expressed interest in the system, especially in the naval and air versions.¹¹ The prospective buyer countries may include: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Egypt, Brunei, Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Oman, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Venezuela, etc. While the North Atlantic Treaty Organization countries have been eagerly watching the development of the missile, a procurement order from them is not expected. The BrahMos system is expensive; the buying country has to, therefore, deliberate whether it needs the weapon, and also decide on whether there is a need to show a bigger alignment with the selling country.

India's defence exports, including the BrahMos missile, hence, present a dual opportunity: it enhances India's strategic influence on the global stage and bolster the growth of its domestic defence industry. The export potential of the missile extends beyond India's traditional allies to include countries seeking advanced defence capabilities. Moreover, India's commitment to non-proliferation norms and responsible defence trade enhances the credibility of its exports, fostering trust among partner nations.

Challenges for India's Defence Exports

One of the major issues regarding exports of the missile is that the nations looking to buy it may have stressful relations with Russia. Since it is a joint venture project, every export case requires authorisation from India as well as Russia. Due to geopolitical compulsions, either country may hold back proposals for future exports.

The second challenge is China's perception of these trades. While India, as a sovereign nation, is fully justified in its export deals, such high value defence deals always create a 'Security Dilemma' for the adversaries. Pakistan and China share a common concern on BrahMos and may make moves to counter it by making a similar product. China may view the sale of these missiles as an act of belligerence and interference in its neighbourhood. The Philippines and Vietnam have been conscious of this factor while making the ask for the missile. Vietnam has been more apprehensive and this is one of the reasons behind its reluctance to sign a deal with India.

Thirdly, the ominous shadow of the US sanctions on Russian defence entities looms over India's plans to fast-track the export of BrahMos cruise missiles. The Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) of the US covers all major Russian defence entities including the NPO Mashinostroyeniya (NPOM), which has the BrahMos joint venture with the Defence Research and Development Organisation. Crucial systems like the ramjet engine and radar seekers are provided by NPOM and are, hence, technically liable to sanctions under CAATSA. "Enforcing CAATSA on the potential export of BrahMos by the US would be disastrous for the Ministry of Defence's plans, in addition to adversely impacting other critical aspects of bilateral ties strategic and security between Delhi and Washington", said Amit Cowshish, former Defence Ministry Acquisitions Advisor.¹² The potential buyers of the missile would also be concerned with the sanctions, especially those countries that have friendly relations with the US. This factor also constrains the export possibility of the missile to countries in Europe and Southeast Asia.

Lastly, India will also have to guard against the potential misuse of such sophisticated technologies from the end user's side. It has to be ensured that neither the end product nor any of its sub-systems or components are sold to any third-party or any other entity. Export contracts also need to factor in that such systems are dual-use and, hence, can be employed in an offensive role by the end user – probably against a third country with whom India has friendly relations. All such contingencies need to be accounted for while considering proposals for export orders. However, India's proactive engagement with potential buyers through defence exhibitions, joint exercises, and diplomatic channels can mitigate these challenges and pave the way for successful exports.

Conclusion

The BrahMos missile stands as a testament to India's growing capabilities in the defence sector, symbolising the nation's transition from a defence importer to an exporter of cutting-edge military technology. The missile's supersonic speed, precision, and versatile launch platforms make it a formidable weapon in modern warfare, enhancing India's strategic military strength and offering significant export potential.

Despite the inherent challenges, including geopolitical sensitivities, regulatory constraints, and the threat of sanctions, the successful export of BrahMos to the Philippines marks a significant milestone. It showcases India's ability to deliver advanced defence solutions and underscores the missile's attractiveness to countries seeking robust and reliable military assets.

The collaborative effort behind BrahMos, incorporating indigenous advancements and strategic international partnerships, exemplifies a successful model for future defence projects. By maintaining high standards of non-proliferation and responsible trade practices, India can further build trust and expand its market share in the global arms industry. Looking ahead, the potential for BrahMos exports is substantial, with interest from several countries. As India continues to innovate and upgrade the BrahMos system, including developing hypersonic versions, the missile's appeal is set to increase, positioning it as a cornerstone of India's defence export strategy.

The BrahMos missile not only strengthens India's defence capabilities but also contributes to its strategic and economic objectives. Through sustained efforts in innovation, collaboration, and strategic diplomacy, India can maximise the export potential of BrahMos, solidifying its position as a key player in the global defence market.

Endnotes

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Evolution of the British Indian Army: An Overview

Dr Narender Yadav[®]

Abstract

The British came to India for trade. With the expansion of trade, they made some security arrangements to protect their commercial interests. They initially engaged guards and armed them with local weapons to protect their trading posts. Commercial rivalry with the French led the East India Company to bring soldiers from Britain. However, the experience was found inconvenient and costly. The traders, therefore, recruited the locals and organised them in an European pattern. This laid the foundation for the future army of the Indians. The organisation gradually grew according to the needs of the time and developed into a full-fledged professional army. This article, thus, deals with the evolution of the British Indian Army, and tries to address some questions related to it including Indianisation, uniform patterns, and expansion.

Background

The Company of Merchants of London Trading unto East Indies¹, later known as the East India Company (EIC), was granted a charter by Queen Elizabeth I on 31 Dec 1600 to trade in the east. The Portuguese and Dutch were already in trading with India and Java, and a few British ships had also sailed through the Indian Ocean. The first vessel of the EIC, however, reached Surat in 1607 under Captain Hawkins and returned to London with glowing reports about the prospects of trade in India.² Captain Thomas Best, an EIC representative who came to India in 1612, persuaded the Mughal emperor Jahangir to grant a *firman* (edict) to the EIC to establish a factory at Surat in 1613. Subsequently, a *firman*

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granted by Shah Jehan in 1634 enabled the EIC to establish more factories in India.³

Soon, it became necessary to enlist guards to protect these factories. To begin with, these guards comprised small groups of ill-disciplined Europeans and poorly armed locals.⁴ As the number of these guards increased, rules were framed to monitor their conduct.⁵ There is a view that the evolution of the British Indian Army can be traced back to these guards.⁶

Dodwell, Curator of Madras Presidency Records, refers to a quasi-military force of Indians maintained at all major trading settlements on the Coromandel Coast by the Portuguese, Dutch, English, Danes, and French. These, called *poligar* (feudal chief) peons, were augmented during times of crisis. However, the European masters remained apprehensive of their desertion if they were mustered.⁷ These guards were, however, not trained, equipped, or armed like soldiers of the regular army. They worked as watchkeepers and could not be termed as soldiers. However, they can be regarded as the predecessors of the future army.

Genesis of the British Indian Army

According to some sources, the earliest forces that could be seriously regarded as the embryo of the later British Indian Army appear to have originated in Bombay.⁸ Amiya Barat, an early Indian military historian who conducted considerable research on the presidency army, also opines that the earliest sepoy units were formed in the Bombay Presidency. The Madras and Bengal Presidencies followed, recruiting a few local levies by 1757.⁹ Tracing the genesis, Ashima Kaul, who studied the Bengal Army, suggests that the first battalion of the Bengal Native Infantry, named the '*Lal Paltan*' for the red coats worn by its men, was raised in 1757.¹⁰

Recruiting Indians was indeed a necessity for the British traders. In the latter half of the 17th Century, the recruits brought to India from England for garrisoning faced enormous problems. Many perished due to wretched living conditions aboard the ships. Things did not improve much either on land, where an inclement climate and a miserable lifestyle, marred by drinking and brawling, took a heavy toll on the survivors.¹¹ As these losses could not be made good by further recruitment in Europe, the only option was

to recruit local troops. Topasses¹², the descendants of the early Portuguese in India, became the first choice. They came to form a significant part of English garrisons from an early date.¹³ Topasses were recruited due to their European cultural background and their adaptability to the Indian environment.

As Topasses could not meet the requirements of the EIC's garrisons, the employment of Indians became necessary. By 1673, the Madras garrison had engaged as many as 550 Indian auxiliaries.¹⁴ In 1681, the English factory at Hughly was reported to have engaged local auxiliaries. In 1683, the Bombay garrison was augmented by the enrolment of two companies of Rajputs, with one hundred men each and commanded by their own officers.¹⁵ These companies were permanent in nature and could, therefore, be regarded as the precursor of the Indian Army.¹⁶ Thus, the EIC Army in India in the late 17th Century comprised Europeans recruited from England or locally, half-caste Goanese Topasses and Indian Sepoys.

The sepoy were mainly armed with native weapons, wore their own dress, and were commanded by their own officers.¹⁷ According to Lieutenant General George MacMunn, it was only after 1746 that the non-descript armed retainers were first organised in companies of sepoy in Madras. Between 1746 and 1758, 11 companies of sepoy were raised and some of these accompanied Robert Clive to Bengal after the Black Hole incident¹⁸, a tragic event in which several British prisoners died in a small, poorly ventilated prison cell in Calcutta. This incident and the subsequent need for a stronger military presence led to the expansion and reorganisation of the British Indian Army. In fact, the commercial rivalry between the English and French in South India gave birth to the concept of a regular army of Indians.¹⁹ Joseph François Dupleix, the French Commander and later Governor-General of French Indian Territories, had realised at the outset that Indian troops were economical and equally valuable. When trained under European commanders, they could be formed into effective armies.²⁰

To begin with, the local troops were known by different titles. On the East Coast, the term 'Peon' was used, but in Bengal, they were called 'Bakserry'.²¹ The term 'Sepoy' came into use in the 18th Century.²² The employment and disbandment of these troops

largely depended on the threat perception of the EIC.²³ In the 18th Century, the growing military involvement of the EIC necessitated a significant expansion of the sepoy army. When the French with their companies of Indian troops captured Madras from the British in 1746, the British trade was severely affected.²⁴ The British realised the need for a regular army on a permanent footing.²⁵ The post of Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C), a senior officer responsible for the entire army, was created, and Major Stringer Lawrence was appointed the first C-in-C in 1748.²⁶ He began systematic recruitment and organised the local regiments in European patterns.²⁷ 39th Foot, the first British regiment in India, at Madras in 1754, strengthened the EIC's position.²⁸ However, the shortage of troops continued and as an alternative, Coffrees—African slaves—were brought to India for garrisoning. This, however, proved impractical, as transporting them from Madagascar, a faraway place, was difficult.²⁹ In the event, the EIC was left with no choice but to recruit more Indians.

Expansion and Reorganisation

Gradually, the strength of Indian troops began to increase. By 1756, the EIC had employed approximately 10,000 sepoys in Carnatic. Even before the Battle of Plassey, Clive had started organising Indian troops into regular battalions, with a small nucleus of British officers. He armed and dressed the sepoys in a uniform like that of the Europeans. As their coat was red, the battalions composed of local troops were called *Lal Paltan*.³⁰ This marked a new phase in the history of the EIC's army. So far, Indian companies have been under the command of their own officers, but now they are being placed under British officers.³¹ According to Lieutenant General MacMunn, this change began in 1772. He adds that after the Mysore War commenced, the sepoys were clothed in scarlet as a large stock of these clothes existed in the EIC godowns.³² In Bengal, 448 sepoys were recruited in Apr 1757, and their numbers rose to 2,100 (1,400 raised in Bengal) during the Plassey War.³³ Meanwhile, the Topasses, who had served the British for about a hundred years, were gradually phased out from the army.

After the successes of Plassey (1757) and Wandewash (1760), the EIC's power grew rapidly. The French were overthrown in 1761, and the EIC now concentrated on subjugating the Indian

states, which had mushroomed after the decline of the Mughal Empire.³⁴ The recruitment of Indian sepoys accelerated further in the wake of the Mysore and Maratha Wars. The increase in Indian troops was not only due to military commitments but also because of their relative economic worth.³⁵ The recruits, too, felt better in the service of the EIC as they got regular pay and could even earn a pension.³⁶ Sepoys' officers did the recruitment. *Jamadars* (Naib Subedars) and Havildars were sent out to raise the required numbers of men for the Bombay Army in 1768, and they were offered gratuity for every man enlisted. Promotions were also offered to them to raise a certain number of recruits.³⁷ The practice continued even after 1797. The Bengal Army also adopted the practice of sending *Jamadars* and Havildars in search of prospective recruits. During the Governor Generalship of Cornwallis, recruitment became more methodical, and recruiting parties consisting of a European officer, an Indian officer, and a doctor were sent to the villages. Serving sepoys were also encouraged to bring in their friends and relatives.³⁸ Meanwhile, the rampant corruption among EIC officers led to the enactment of the Regulating Act of 1773. Now, the affairs of the EIC were brought under the control of the British Parliament through the Court of Directors.

The conduct of operations by the three armies from their respective bases led to the creation of three separate administrations in India, called the three presidencies.³⁹ These armies functioned independently under a C-in-C, and there was little in common among them. However, the employment of the three presidential armies together in some campaigns brought home the need to organise them under a pattern. To this end, in 1785, an effort was made to reorganise the armies on a similar pattern in all three presidencies. The reorganisation aimed to complete the Europeanisation of all three presidencies' armies. Command of all local units was given to European officers and the post of native commandant was abolished.⁴⁰

For the administration of the army, each presidency had a Military department which looked after supply, transport, ordnance, and to record orders, maintain list of personnel, etc.⁴¹ On top stood the C-in-C and he was assisted at the headquarters by the principal staff officers like the Adjutant General, Quarter Master General, etc. All three Cs-in-C reported to their respective

Presidency Governor (previously Presidents), who were further placed under the control of the Government of India, as exercised by the Governor General of Bengal after the Regulating Act of 1772.⁴²

In the wake of the war with the Marathas, the Indian Army was greatly expanded. The defeat of Marathas in 1803 and 1817, and subsequently the settlement of 1818, marked the beginning of the paramountcy of the EIC. The Sikh rule in Punjab came to an end because of the Sikh War of 1848-49. The frontiers of British India, thus, extended to the borders of Afghanistan. To keep a watch on Northwestern India, inhabited by turbulent tribesmen, the Punjab Frontier Force was raised in 1848. The EIC gained control of Pegu (Lower Burma) in Dec 1852 and placed it under the responsibility of the Madras Army.⁴³ Meanwhile, the EIC's Nizam Force was redesignated as Hyderabad Contingent in 1853-54.⁴⁴

Presidencies Armies Unified

After the uprising of 1857, the administration of India was placed under the control of the British Crown, and the office of Viceroy-cum-Governor General of India was created. The Viceroy, thus, became the representative of the British Crown in India. He was responsible for Indian affairs to the Secretary of State for India, a newly created member of the British cabinet. This marked the end of the EIC's rule in India. Thus, the EIC armies came under the British Government's direct control through their Viceroy in India. Owing to the Report of Eden Commission, all three presidency armies were unified in 1895, and thus, a single Indian Army was born.⁴⁵

Meanwhile, around the 1880s, the 'Martial Race Theory'⁴⁶ was conceived to counter the growing Russian threat. Some recruiting officers were engaged to conduct ethnographic studies to ascertain the martial spirit of the different Indian classes/castes.⁴⁷ As a result, Punjabi classes began to dominate the British Indian Army. The number of battalions made up of South Indian classes was reduced. In 1903, Lord Kitchener, the C-in-C, organised the army regiments into sequential numbers.⁴⁸ The following table can gauge the changing pattern of recruiting grounds over the period.

Region	1862	1885	1892	1914
Madras	40	32	25	11
Bombay (including Rajputana and Central India)	30	26	26	18
Hindustanis east of Yamuna including UP and Bihar (Cis-Jumna)	28	20	15	15
Punjab and North-West Frontier Province (Trans-Jumna)	28	31	34	57
Nepal (Gurkhas)	5	13	15	20
Total	131	122	115	121

Table 1: Indian Infantry Battalions: Region-Wise⁴⁹

During the Anglo-Afghan Wars, the red uniform began to pose problems in operations in the dusty and rocky northwestern region, as soldiers wearing red could be spotted from a far distance. This led to a change in the colour of the uniform to *Khakhi*, a Persian spoilt of *Khakh* (dust) for camouflage purposes, and this gradually became an official dress.⁵⁰

World Wars and Indianisation

In Aug 1914, World War I broke out. The large manpower requirement during the war compelled the British to open recruitment to non-enlisted classes beyond the martial races.⁵¹ The total strength increased to over 1.4 million during the war from merely 2,00,000 in 1914. However, after the ceasefire, most of the newly raised battalions comprising newly enlisted classes were disbanded. The war proved to be a catalyst in terms of the performance of the Indian soldiers. Fighting at different war fronts, some 9,200 Indian soldiers were awarded gallantry medals, 11 of whom were conferred with the Victoria Cross, the highest gallantry award of the British Empire.

This was also the time when, due to the increasing demand for Indianisation, the officer cadre of the Indian Army was opened to Indians.⁵² Some 10 vacancies annually were reserved for Indian candidates at the Royal Military College at Sandhurst. Meanwhile, the army was reorganised in 1922, and the battalions were grouped into regiments. The system continues even today. Meanwhile, on

the recommendations of the Skeen Committee (1925), the Indian Military Academy (IMA) was set up at Dehradun in 1932 to train Indian officers in India. To this effect, vacancies for Indian candidates at the Royal Military College Sandhurst in Britain were dispensed with.⁵³

The World War II brought a marked change in the Indian Army as the requirement of war forced the British again to recruit men from all classes of India.⁵⁴ The strength of the army rose to over 2.5 million during the war. Further, the officer cadre was substantially expanded by Indians as Emergency Commissioned Officers. The strength of Indian officers rose from some 500 in 1939 to over 9,000 by 1945, strengthening the Indianisation process.⁵⁵ Women found an entry into what had traditionally been a male bastion, and thousands of them were recruited in the Women's Auxiliary Corps raised in 1942. Indian women were also commissioned in Army Medical Corps for the first time.⁵⁶ 28 Indian soldiers were awarded the Victoria Cross for their unparalleled valour. However, a large chunk of the army was demobilised after the war.

The war also led to a change in uniform again. When many army soldiers were engaged in densely forested Burma during the war, the soldiers were issued with green-coloured uniforms to suit the green vegetation and jungles of Burma and evade enemy gaze. The Indian and Allied forces in Burma, thus, adopted olive green uniforms. Later, in Apr 1946, olive green became the uniform of the Indian Army.⁵⁷

Conclusion

The origin of the British Indian Army began with the recruitment of two Rajput companies in the Bombay Presidency Army in 1682. These companies were commanded by Indian officers. Before this, although Indians were employed to guard the factories, they neither had a command system nor were they equipped with proper weapons and uniforms. The arrival of Major Stringer Lawrence in 1748 marked a significant change as Indians were now organised, drilled, and trained following European patterns. Lord Clive further reorganised the local recruits, dressing them in army uniforms and shifting the command mechanism from Indian officers to European officers. The separate army administrations of the three presidencies evolved into a presidential system, with

each presidency administered by its own C-in-C and Governor. After the uprising of 1857, the authority of the EIC ended and was transferred to the British Crown. The EIC Army was subsequently rechristened as the British Indian Army. In 1895, the three presidential armies were amalgamated to form a unified Indian Army. The Indianisation of the officer cadre, which commenced after the First World War, progressed very slowly until the establishment of the IMA at Dehradun in 1932. Indianisation received a real push during the Second World War when the British desperately needed the Indian Army to ensure victory. The strength of Indian officers consequently increased from approximately 500 in 1939 to over 9,000 by the end of the war in 1945. After Independence, on 15 Jan 1949, General (later Field Marshal) KM Cariappa took over as the first Indian C-in-C, completing the process of Indianisation of the Indian Army.

Endnotes

¹ London being the political capital of England and also the main seaport contained three fourth national commercial activity. Hence, its Company was explicitly called 'The Company of Merchants of London Trading unto East Indies.

² Nagendra Singh, *The Theory of Force and Organisation of Defence in Indian Constitutional History: From Earliest Times to 1947*. New Delhi, 1969, p. 181.

³ After Jehangir and Shahjahan, *firmans* for trade and factories were further issued by other rulers including Shuja (1651), Shaista Khan (1672) and Aurangzeb (1680), etc.

⁴ Government of India (Gol), *The Army in India and its Evolution*. Calcutta, 1924, p. 2.

⁵ Madan Paul Singh, *Indian Army under East India Company*, New Delhi, 1976, p. 2.

⁶ V. Longer, *Red Coats to Olive Green: A History of Indian Army, 1600-1974*. New Delhi, 1974, p. 2. Also see Singh, *The Theory of Force and Organisation of Defence*, p. 181.

⁷ Henry Dodwell, *Sepoy Recruitment in the old Madras Army*, Calcutta, 1922, p. 1. Henry Dodwell was appointed as first curator of Madras Presidency records in 1911.

⁸ Gol, *The Army in India and its Evolution*, p. 3

⁹ Amiya Barat, *The Bengal Infantry, Its Organisation and Discipline, 1796-1852*. Calcutta, 1962, p. xi.

¹⁰ Ashima, Kaul, *The Bengal Army* (unpublished PhD Thesis), New Delhi, JNU, 1998.

¹¹ Channa Wickeremesekera, *The Best Black Troops in the World: British Perceptions and Making of Sepoy, 1746-1805*, New Delhi, 2002, p. 42. Total 450 men arrived from England to take charge of Bombay in 1662, scarcely 100 remained alive a year later.

¹² According to an official publication of 1924, Topsses were named so by the form of headgear they wore. See Gol, *The Army in India and its Evolution*, p. 3. As per book of Colonel Longer, Alfonso de Albuquerque of Portugal captured Goa in November 1510 and encouraged his men to marry the daughters of Indians whom he had taken prisoner. The offsprings of these marriages Known as Mesticos were subsequently recruited by British into the army. These recruits were called Topasses. See Longer, *Red Coats to Olive Green*, p. 1.

¹³ Wickeremesekera, *The Best Black Troops*, p. 54.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 87.

¹⁵ Gol, *The Army in India and its Evolution*, p. 4.

¹⁶ R.D. Palsokar, *The Grenadiers: A Tradition of Valour*, Jabalpur, 1980, p. 2. Also see Singh, *Indian Army under East India Company*, p. 3.

¹⁷ Palsokar, *The Grenadiers*, p. 5.

¹⁸ Sir George MacMunn, Lt. Gen., *The Martial Races of India*, Delhi, 1979, p. 154. The Black Hole incident remains a contested event in the history. The Indian Historians have re-evaluated the incident and challenged the British accounts, offering more nuanced perspectives.

¹⁹ K.M.L. Saxena, *The Military System of India, 1900-1939*. New Delhi, 1999, p. xii.

²⁰ S. Rivet Carnac, Colonel, *Presidential Armies of India*, London, 1890, p. 194.

²¹ They mostly belonged to Bakshar, hence called Bakserry.

²² Gol, *The Army in India and its Evolution*, pp. 5-6.

²³ The old Merchants company was known as London Company. In 1698 a new company of merchants received charter called English Company. These two companies merged in 1708 and came to be known as East India Company.

²⁴ Arvind Sinha, *The Politics of Trade: Anglo French Commerce on the Coromandel Coast, 1763-1793*, New Delhi, 2002, p. 53.

²⁵ Seema Alvi, *Sepoy and the Company: Tradition and Transition in Northern India, 1770-1883*, New Delhi, 2008, p. 35.

²⁶ British historians call Stringer Lawrence as Father of the British Indian army.

²⁷ H. Bullock, Brigadier, "Stringer Lawrence: Commander-in-Chief of the Company's Forces", in *Journal of United Service Institutions*, 80 (340 & 341), 1950, pp. 222-30.

²⁸ Army in India now divided into three elements i.e. King's Troops, European Troops and Company's Indian Troops. This existed for more than hundred years till after the mutiny of 1857.

²⁹ Gol, *The Army in India and its Evolution*, pp. 9-10.

³⁰ Ibid. The Indians were commanded by their own commandant. Clive's organisation gradually replaced the Indian commandant by British.

³¹ Singh, *Indian Army under East India Company*, p. 6.

³² MacMunn, Lt. Gen., *The Martial Races of India*, p. 155.

³³ H.C. Wylly, Colonel, *Neill's Clue Caps, 1639-1826*, 2006, p. 105. Also see Wickeremesekera, *The Best Black Troops*, p. 94.

³⁴ Saxena, *The Military System of India*, pp. xii-xiii.

³⁵ Wickeremesekera, *The Best Black Troops*, p. 94.

³⁶ The pay in Mughal armies were in arrears for months together and there seemed no pension plan. See William Irvine, *The Army of the Indian Mughals: Its Organisation and Administration*. New Delhi, 1962, pp. 14 & 26.

³⁷ Ibid. Promotion from Havildar to Jamadar (now Naib Subedar) was offered for raising 20 grenadiers or 25 battalion recruits and Jamadar to Subedar for raising 40 grenadiers or 40-5 battalion recruits.

³⁸ Ibid, p. 99.

³⁹ Saxena, *The Military System of India*, p. xiii.

⁴⁰ Singh, *Indian Army under East India Company*, pp. 12-5.

⁴¹ Military Department of Bengal Presidency which was set up in 1776 later designated as Army Department in 1906, Defence Department in 1938, and Ministry of Defence after Independence in August 1947.

⁴² Saxena, *The Military System of India*, p. xiv. Governor of Bengal Presidency exercised the power of Governor General. Later by the Act of 1833, the post of Governor General of India was created.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Burton, Reginald George, Major, *A History of Hyderabad Contingent*, 1905, pp. 278-319. According to Praval, Nizam's army was formed by the French in European style. It was later disbanded. Captain John Malcolm, a political officer at Hyderabad re-formed Nizam's army before the battle of Seringapatam of 1799. This force thus became the nucleus of the body that was eventually known as Hyderabad Contingent. See K.C. Praval, *Valour Triumphs: A History of the Kumaon Regiment*, Faridabad, 1976, p. 8.

⁴⁵ Eden Commission set up in 1879, submitted its report in 1884. The Commission recommended abolition of three presidency system and its amalgamation into one. See report of the *Special Commission on Organisation and Expenditure of the Army* (Eden Commission), 1884.

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⁵⁶ Yadav, Narender, Women's Auxiliary Corps (India) in the Second World War, in *Strategic Analysis*, May 2024 (e-published), pp.1-8.

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International Forces in Gilgit-Baltistan and How India Can Play a Defining Role

Colonel (Dr) Bhasker Gupta (Retd)[®]

Abstract

This article attempts to identify the key forces in the tumultuous province of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), which historically was part of the undivided India's Jammu and Kashmir region, but has been illegally usurped by Pakistan (after the 1948 War), and has since undergone unprecedented changes, especially since the passage of the 'New Governance Order of 2009'. Pakistan, India, the erstwhile Great Britain, China, Russia, and Afghanistan are the key players having presence in GB. In this article, each is first analysed in detail, with historical roots and geo-political significance explored, leading to an understanding of the routes. The role of erstwhile British rulers, to whom it was leased, and their Russian connection, as well as governance under the rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who had annexed it, is also briefly examined. Next, the article enumerates why international focus remains on this part of the globe, and how and why Pakistan still continues to exploit its people and their resources, partially leasing the region to China (for the gains of the lucrative China-Pakistan Economic Corridor). Lastly, the article analyses how India can play a constructive part in getting GB and its people their due in deciding their future; whether as an Autonomous Unit, a sovereign Independent State, or reunite with Kashmir. Herein, lies the role of

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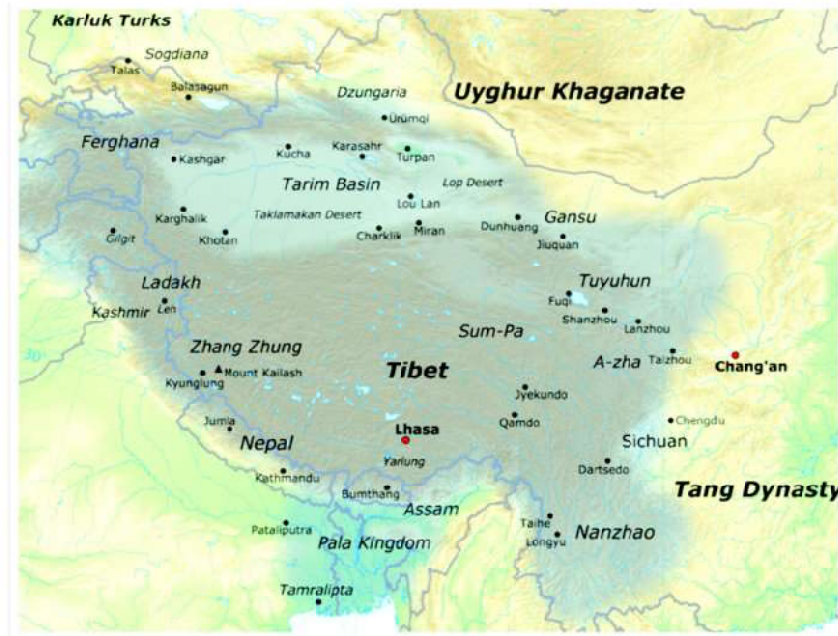
India—maybe after its own Kashmir conundrum is resolved peacefully, the process which has started after the successful installation of an Omar Abdullah-led government. But for this, a fresh approach is needed, minus the baggage of a conflict-ridden history. In conclusion, multiple options and scenarios for a peaceful and prosperous future of this resource-rich province are offered, with India's help/intervention, supported by international players (mainly the United States and Europe), thus preventing Pakistan from legitimising its continued illegal control over GB.

Introduction

Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), a strategically located province in the far-north of Pakistan, consists of 10 districts, a population of 2 million, and an area of 73,000 sq km. It shares boundaries with Afghanistan's Wakhan Corridor, China's Xinjiang Region, India's Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), and Pakistan's Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, as well as Pakistan-controlled swathe of territory in western Kashmir, referred to as 'Azad Kashmir (AK)'.¹

With the beginning of the Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan in 1947, both AK and GB came under the control of the latter. Pakistan then maintained an almost watertight division between the two regions: One could almost say that Pakistan established a kind of second 'Line of Control (LoC)', between AK and GB, beside the LoC that separates Pakistan from the Indian-administered parts of J&K. Recently, however, opposing political groups from both AK and GB have questioned Pakistan's control over these territories, and have attempted to overcome the division, to establish political cooperation between the parts.

History



Map 1: Map of Tibetan Empire citing areas of Gilgit-Baltistan as part of its Kingdom in 780–790 CE

Source: Rootshunt²

Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan in the framework of Pakistan³

The state of J&K was created as a result of the Treaty of Amritsar signed between the British government and Gulab Singh in 1846. This treaty established Singh as the ruler of the new state and ushering in the Dogra rule. After 1947, it was divided into three parts. Two of them, AK and GB, are controlled by Pakistan, and the third is under Indian control.

Gilgit-Baltistan as Part of Pakistan

Between 1947 and 1970, the Pakistan Government established Gilgit Agency and Baltistan Agency. In 1970, the Northern Areas Council was formed by Pakistan's ninth Prime Minister (PM), Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Thus, the region was directly administered by the Federal Government and called Federally Administered Northern Areas. In 1963, Pakistan ceded part of Hunza-Gilgit,

called Raskam, and the Shaksgam Valley of Baltistan region, which resulted in the Pakistan-China Border Agreement, 1963, over pending settlement of the dispute over Kashmir. This area is also known as the Trans-Karakoram Tract. The Pakistani parts of Kashmir to the north and west of the ceasefire line established at the end of the Indo-Pak War of 1947 (LoC, as it came to be called) were divided into Northern Areas (72,971 sq kms) in the north and AK (13,297 sq kms) in the south.⁴

Gilgit-Baltistan's Self-Governing Status of 2009

On 29 Aug 2009, the Gilgit-Baltistan Empowerment and Self-Governance Order⁵ was passed by Pakistan, granting self-rule to GB by creating, among other things, an elected legislative assembly. This order uplifted the self-identification of this territory's inhabitants through the name change, but left the region's constitutional status within Pakistan undefined. Though its people now had Pakistani passports and identity cards, they were still not represented in Pakistan's Parliament. However, for the first time, the people of GB gained the right to indirectly elect their own Chief Minister. The ordinance of 2009 not only gave GB a province-like status, but also granted locals some control over the budget and the right to legislate on 61 subjects, provided it did not violate the Constitution of Pakistan.

Influence of Foreign Powers in Gilgit-Baltistan

GB has a long history of being controlled by foreign powers. The people of the region—the Dards—are mentioned by classical Greek and Roman historians as well as in sacred Hindu texts. The early history (3rd Century CE–10th Century CE) of the region shows it being ruled by the Kushan, Chinese, and Tibetan empires. In the 7th Century accounts of Chinese travelers, and 8th and 9th Century Arabic and Persian chronicles, the region is referred to as Bolor in Arabic. It is also mentioned in the 10th Century Persian chronicle *Hudud al-'Alam*, the 11th Century Kashmiri classic *Rajatarangini*, and the 16th Century *Tarikh-e-Rushdi* of Mirza Haider Dughlat, a chronicler of the Mughal emperor Akbar's court.⁶

Sikhs-Dogras-British

The colonial history of GB begins with forays of Dogra generals. In 1846, the British defeated the Sikhs and carved out a new princely state of J&K, with appointing the Governor of Jammu,

Raja Gulab Singh, as its Maharaja. This history of foreign invasions and local rebellions lies at the heart of the confusion that surrounds the legal, political, and constitutional status of the region to this day. The successive invasions of local Rajas from Jammu and later from Kashmir, followed by the British, and the region's attachment to Pakistan have resulted in multiple claims and counterclaims of sovereignty.⁷

In GB, there has always been a considerable indigenous resistance against all colonial powers. The legend of Gohar Aman, a ruler from Yasin who fought against the intruding Sikh and Kashmiri armies, remains alive to this day. The Genial Revolution of 1951 is another example, during which local people were killed while demanding their rights. Today, many people of GB make efforts to claim their rights against the control of Pakistan over the region. The Pakistani state is primarily represented in GB by the military and bureaucracy, which symbolise the concentration of power among lowlanders and foster a sense of disenfranchisement and lack of control over local affairs among the people.

As for British control, it lasted exactly 101 years, ending in 1947 with the partition of the Indian subcontinent. This control was primarily exercised through a proxy system, with a nominated 'Political Agent'. These agents were typically individuals who had been posted in the region for an extended period and, as a result, understood the local politics and dynamics.

Afghanistan

Historically speaking, both Gilgit and Baltistan have their own local ethnic groups similar to other Dardic groups of eastern Afghanistan and the Khyber region, such as the Nooristani and Chatraili, etc., and have a different origin from the Indo-Aryan (with minor Dardic influence) Kashmiris. The region is also situated right next to Khyber and Wakhan corridor of Afghanistan. Even in the Islamic period, Afghans ruled both GB and Kashmir, and migrated to this region in large numbers.

Historically, many historians included GB within Afghanistan or the Land of Eastern Iran. The dream of 'Greater Afghanistan' of some nationalists led to a close relationship with the Soviets (to counter the 'Occupying' Pakistanis), ultimately resulting in the Soviet invasion and indirectly triggering the subsequent war and chaos.

Immediately after Pakistan emerged as an independent nation in 1947, Afghanistan had demanded the creation of an independent 'Pashtunistan', or 'Land of Pashtuns'. The idea was that Pakistan should allow the Pashtuns in the northwestern part of their country to secede and become an independent state if they so choose. Though the size of the envisioned Pashtunistan differed over time, Afghanistan's proposals often encompassed about half of West Pakistan, including areas dominated by Baluch majorities.⁸

From a legal perspective, Afghanistan's claim regarding the illegitimacy of its border with Pakistan was rather weak. Though Afghanistan claimed that the border had been drawn under duress, it had, in fact, confirmed the demarcation of this international frontier on multiple occasions, including agreements concluded in 1905, 1919, 1921, and 1930. However, the weakness of Afghanistan's legal case was overshadowed by the historical connection it felt to the Pashtun areas and the strategic benefits it would derive from expanding its territory.

Amid Pakistan's failure to stop the resurgence of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, following the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan in Aug 2022, GB is witnessing a growing influence of the Taliban. From burning down girls' schools to kidnapping government officials, the oppression seems unending. Locals also recall that in 2018, miscreants had set 13 girls' schools on fire across the district, but the government did not take any action even then. Taliban is against any progressive activities of women, enforces sharia law and engages in violent acts to assert its relevance. Sadly, the Pakistan administration is unable to control it.

Russian Influence

The Anglo-Russian agreement of 1873, which mutually defined the British and Russian spheres of influence in Central Asia and Afghanistan were mutually agreed upon, instead of ushering in a new era of cordial relations between the two rival powers, added new dimensions to the 'Great Game'. While this agreement effectively legitimised the two sides' advances to their advance within their respective zones, it also introduced the new challenge of delimiting the Afghan, Chinese, and Russian frontiers in the upper Oxus region of the Pamir mountains.

British attention was drawn to the complexity of this question by British officers who, in 1874, explored the Wakhan and Pamirs area. They discovered that Afghan territory in the eastern extremity extended to both sides of the River Oxus, which, under the 1873 agreement, had been declared to be the dividing line between Afghanistan and Russia. This discovery challenged the very foundation of the accord. On examining the passes of the Hindu Kush, British explorers found them easy to cross, making India vulnerable to attack from across the Hindu Kush passes, British explorers found them easy to cross, thus making India vulnerable to attack from across the Hindu Kush. Both these discoveries were strategically significant, leading the British to modify their frontier policy accordingly. The deputation of Biddulph in 1876 to survey the Hindu Kush passes, followed by the establishment of the British agency in Gilgit under the same officer in 1877, reflected the new British strategy to address the challenge posed by the Russian advance toward the Pamirs. Today, however, Russian influence in GB has declined and remains very limited, primarily centred.

American Influence

Initially, the sole focus of the United States (US) in the northern areas was to keep the Soviets at bay from Afghanistan. This led to the Great Afghan War, fought from 1979 to 1989, whose aftereffects included the breakup of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics into 15 independent republics. Later, at the beginning of the 21st Century, the events of 9/11 in the US profoundly influenced developments in South and Central Asia. Afghanistan and Pakistan became deeply embroiled in the US' 'War on Terror' following the ouster of the Taliban regime from Kabul in 2001. The US-Afghan and Pakistan relations became a pivotal triangle in the strategic picture of South, Central and West Asia.⁹ However, following the US' ignominious exit from Afghanistan in 2022, its influence over Afghan affairs and relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan have deteriorated, particularly after Pakistan expelled nearly 1.5 million Afghan refugees.

China and the Pak-China Nexus

The Karakoram Highway (KKH). The areas of the GB region were virtually disconnected from the rest of Pakistan until the completion of the KKH in 1978, which connects Pakistan with the

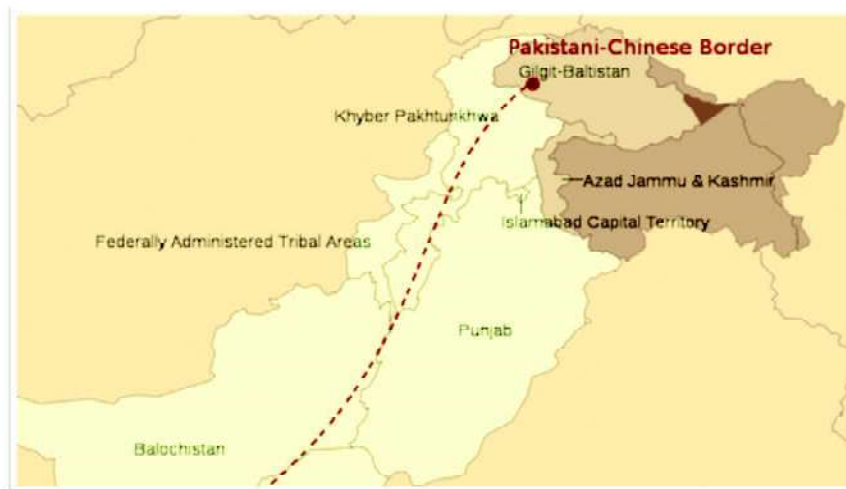


Map 2: The Karakoram Highway
 Source- Rootshunt¹⁰

Chinese province of Xinjiang via GB. Its construction was a landmark for the strategic friendship of Pakistan and China and its construction marked a significant milestone in the strategic friendship between Pakistan and China, and its impact on life in GB has been immense. For the government of Pakistan, these roads were crucial for connecting with this geographically and strategically important region. Today, China's ambition to access the Gwadar deep-water port on the Baluchistan coast from its western provinces makes the KKH important for bilateral trade between Pakistan and China, and for their long-standing strategic friendship.¹¹

The construction of the KKH, followed by the development of other roads, has greatly transformed life in the area. The exchange between the mountain regions and down-country Pakistan, in terms of both the travel of people and the transport of goods, has increased significantly. Theoretically, KKH is an all-season and all-weather road. In practice, however, it is frequently disrupted by both natural and political events.

Over the last four decades, GB has been transformed from a remote, agricultural mountain area to a highly literate rural society, with the urban hub of Gilgit now connected to the markets of Pakistan and China via the KKH. This shift is a major game changer for its locals and a hot topic of discussion among foreigners and researchers.



Map 3: China-Pakistan Economic Corridor
Source: CPEC Website¹²

The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).¹³ The USD 46 bn CPEC is a network of highways, railway lines, oil pipelines, electrical power grids, fibre optic cables, and Special Economic Zones (SEZs), linking the Chinese trading hub of Kashgar in Xinjiang province with the Pakistani port city of Gwadar, located near the strategic Strait of Hormuz. However, the project has encountered significant challenges, with massive protests erupting in the GB region.

As in Baluchistan, where Gwadar is located, residents of GB are not opposed to the project itself but fear being excluded from its benefits. Although GB plays a key role in the CPEC project—with all roads and pipelines crossing into China from Pakistan passing through this mountainous region—not a single SEZ is being set up there. Consequently, calls for the rollback of CPEC and the withdrawal of Pakistani security forces from GB are growing louder.

In addition to GB's disputed status, its undefined relationship with Pakistan further complicates the situation. At international forums, Pakistan maintains that GB is part of the dispute with India over Kashmir and that its future should be decided through a plebiscite, as outlined in United Nations resolutions. Hence, it has not been made a part of Pakistan and is not mentioned in the Pakistani constitution. Its people are neither conferred Pakistani citizenship nor allowed to vote in national elections, and they have no representation in Pakistan's parliament. Although a legislative assembly was created in 2009, it is the Federal Government that wields real power in the region. Thus, Pakistan is not only forcibly occupying GB but also lacks the legal justification within its own constitution, putting its position in jeopardy.

Additionally, the presence of the Chinese People's Liberation Army in GB constitutes the direct involvement of Beijing in the dispute over Kashmir, making any future understanding between Pakistan and India more difficult, and one that can arouse a new and serious rift between New Delhi and Beijing. The deployment of Chinese soldiers on Pakistani soil is, therefore, far from an ordinary matter. If successive Pakistani governments have consistently objected to the presence of the US troops in the country, why is there such openness towards the Chinese army?

Saudi-Iranian Influence

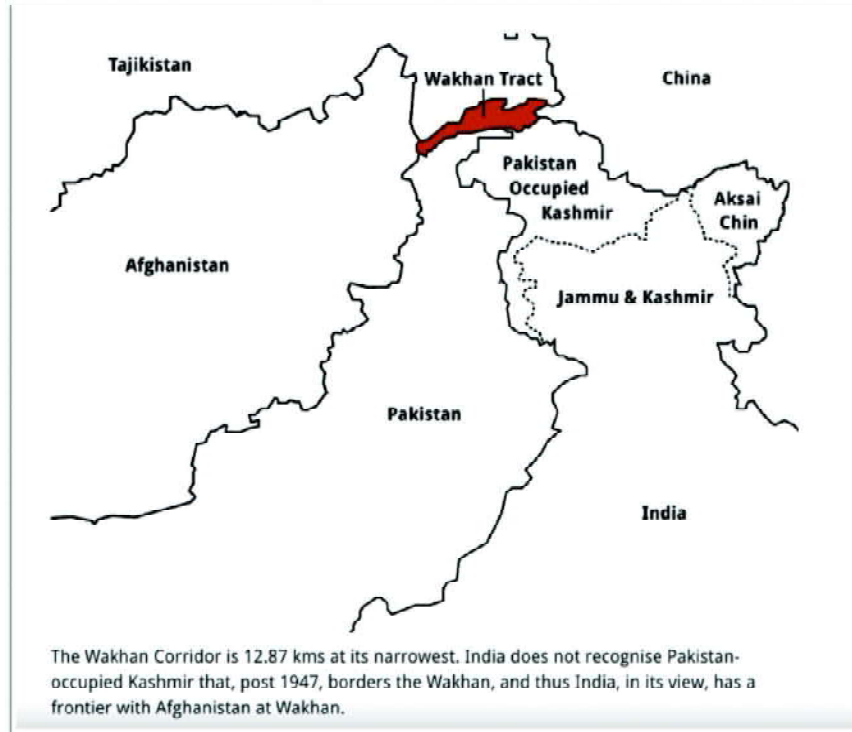
Some other factors have also affected life in GB, primarily contributing to deep-rooted sectarian violence. These include the proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran on Pakistani soil, the strategic location of GB as part of the disputed territory between Pakistan and India, and its proximity to China's border. Religious and sectarian identities in GB have become dominant since the 1980s, coinciding with the peak of the Iranian Revolution and the Saudi Arabian government supported the establishment of madrassas across Pakistan in order to support Sunni Islam.¹⁴ The rise of sectarianism in Pakistan, particularly in GB, is closely linked to the backing provided by Iran and Saudi Arabia to their respective groups.

Indian Influence and Likely Future Role in Gilgit-Baltistan

By virtue of its geography, GB holds great strategic significance for India, as it is the only land link between Pakistan and China, and between China and India. India claims this territory and accuses Pakistan of illegally occupying it. Complicating Pakistan's troubles with GB is India's claim to this region, which has lately been articulated more robustly.¹⁵ Indian PM Narendra Modi made an oblique reference in his 2016 Independence Day speech to the grave human rights situation in Baluchistan, GB and other areas of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). A few days earlier, he had emphasised the need to highlight the plight of people in these regions at international forums. The Modi government can be expected to step up efforts to engage with Baluchi nationalists in the coming years and to assert its claims over GB more vigorously. Unsurprisingly, China and Pakistan are concerned. Will India's stirring of the bubbling cauldrons in Baluchistan and GB exacerbate the security situation there? More importantly, what will happen to Pakistan's already tenuous and illegal control over GB?

Likely Future Linkages. With regard to improving Indo-Pak relations, trade linkages have been operational since 2008, connecting the Indian-administered and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Consequently, the call for opening GB's borders has gained momentum in recent years. The idea for the connection dates back to the 1990s, when a feasibility survey confirmed the project's viability. Then, in 2011, the GB Legislative Assembly adopted a resolution towards establishing a 220 km-long road from Ghizer

(westernmost district of Gilgit) to Tajikistan. The route would connect GB to Central Asia, through the Wakhan Corridor.¹⁶



Map 4: Wakhan Corridor

Source: Centre for Land Warfare Studies¹⁷

Currently, this corridor lacks reliable connectivity. Due to its remoteness and sparse population, Wakhan has thus far evaded Taliban influence. But its inhabitants remain deprived of essential services. The time is ripe for India to lead investment to upgrade the physical and social infrastructure in the Wakhan corridor. This would only be feasible if connectivity is established between Gilgit and Wakhan, and GB's borders are opened to allow India direct access to Wakhan. This proposed Gilgit-Wakhan route can also serve as the shortest route from Kashmir to Tajikistan.¹⁸

On the Indian side, linkages still exist between Ladakh and GB via the Kargil-Skardu road, Turtuk-Khaplu road, and Gurez-Astor road. These three routes were specifically proposed by the Prime Ministerial Working Group formed during PM Manmohan

Singh's regime in 2006. In particular, upgrading the 150 km Kargil-Skardu Road to an all-weather road would ensure year-round connectivity with GB, serving as a substitute for the Khunjerab link during winter months and providing a reliable route in case of natural disasters.

Despite the potential gains from stronger connectivity between South and Central Asia, challenges remain. The landscape of Ladakh is heavily militarised due to significant military deployments and tensions along the Line of Actual Control (the de facto India-China border) remain unresolved. In addition, the northwestern part of GB that borders the Wakhan Corridor faces topographical and environmental challenges from the mountain ranges and the snow-laden passes, and political challenges from the complexity of Af-Pak relations.¹⁹

However, given the state of bilateral relations between India and Pakistan, these scenarios are neither realistic nor feasible at present. To begin with, Islamabad is unlikely to open GB's borders or welcome Indian investment in the region. Also, it remains unclear which entity has actual control over the Wakhan Corridor, making the prospect of India's investment there more of a dream than a reality. With the presence of Pakistan to the north, India is effectively cut off from Central Asia. While diplomatic ties and limited trade with Central Asian nations do exist, they remain minuscule in scale compared to the overall potential.

Conclusion

In 2020, the Imran Khan regime proposed elevating GB's status to that of a province. China had been pushing for this, as it sought legal cover for its billion-dollar investments in CPEC. However, this proposal posed significant challenges for Islamabad. Additionally, legally absorbing GB into Pakistan would require Islamabad to shift away from its decades-old stance of supporting a plebiscite and, thus, compromising its broader Kashmir agenda and potentially being seen as a betrayal of the 'Kashmiri Cause'. Consequently, whether or not to make GB Pakistan's fifth province will not be an easy decision for Islamabad.²⁰

While India would initially object to Pakistan's formal integration of GB, the move could open up an opportunity to settle the Kashmir dispute with Pakistan. After all, India is in favour of

freezing the status quo, allowing both countries to keep territory under their control by making the LoC the international border. Could CPEC then trigger a process to end the India-Pakistan dispute over Kashmir?²¹ As a former Indian foreign secretary recently observed, “Without Pakistani control over this disputed territory of GB, there would be no CPEC”. Hence, whatever steps Pakistan takes to strengthen its control over GB and importantly, to endow its relationship with the region with some legality, will be keenly watched in Beijing as well as Delhi.

Given all the benefits that open borders could offer to the region, a ‘Strategic De-escalation’ of regional tensions could pave the way for greater connectivity and increased economic benefits.²² Yet mitigating regional tensions will require high-level cooperation from all governments involved. A trilateral working group consisting of representatives from India, Pakistan and Afghanistan could be constituted to discuss the possibility of a road network linking Kashmir with Pamirs. The official opening of the LoC in 2005 and the establishment of J&K Joint Chambers of Commerce and Industry in 2011 were followed by increased economic activity and institutionalised trade ties.

The wishful opening of GB could produce similar opportunities, if it ever happens. Herein lies India’s opportunity to not only reunite GB with Kashmir and give the people their long-lost due sovereignty, but also leveraging its soft power. If that fails, we always have a powerful military, foreign office and intelligence agencies who can do the needful, minus the baggage of a conflict-ridden history. However, since this is more of wishful thinking than a likely happening, given the freeze in the Indo-Pak relations for over more than decade now. A more plausible course of action for India would be to place the issue on the back burner and concentrate on developing the part of Kashmir that it holds post the recently conducted elections and successful installation of a democratic state government there.

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Al-Mizan to Azm-e-Istekham: Few Perceptible Dominant Trends

Colonel Varun Vijay Gidh, SM[®]

“A soft state can never gain the trust of investors”

- Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Jul 2024

Abstract

The time period between the Taliban 1.0 and 2.0 regimes in Afghanistan has also witnessed multiple military kinetic operations undertaken by the Pakistani Armed Forces starting with ‘Al Mizan’ (Balance), often conducted under American or, more recently, Chinese pressure. Also, a new radical ethnic-religious mindset in the Af-Pak region has emerged as a significant security challenge, with immense strategic implications for stability in the Indian subcontinent. This article summarises some dominant and perceptible trends that require attention from policymakers, academia, and the wider strategic community in the region. Inter-alia, geoeconomics stands out as a key driver for Pakistan, alongside other political compulsions as it has recently announced the launch of the latest such operation aptly titled ‘Azm-e-Istekham’ (Quest for Stability).

Introduction

The euphoria in Pakistani strategic circles over the Taliban 2.0 regime in Afghanistan in 2021 was short-lived and has since turned into a nightmare, as the Pashtuns have never accepted the Durand Line. There is a view that Pakistani authorities found in the process of aggressive Islamisation initiated by the United States (US), an opportunity to blunt the tribal ethnic consciousness

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among the Pashtuns—an identity that consistently threatens to draw the frontier population into the orbit of Pashtun nationalism promoted by Afghanistan.¹ This new radical ethnic-religious mindset has now become a significant security challenge with immense strategic implications for peace in the region. It represents a belief system or perspective that combines extreme ethnic ideology for Pashtun causes with religious Islamic convictions. Key characteristics of this mindset include exclusivity, polarisation, and the justification of violence.

A summary of the 10 major operations reluctantly undertaken by the Pakistan Armed Forces in the region to fight this challenge are tabulated below (Table 1).

The nature, scope, and trajectory of these operations have primarily involved the kinetic use of force by the Pakistani Armed Forces, largely concentrated in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) region, leading to a temporary restoration of peace and normalcy in the area of operations.

Name of Operation	Years	Region
Al-Mizan	2002 - 2006	North Waziristan, KP
Rah-e-Haq I, II and III	2007 - 2009	Swat Valley, KP
Eagle Swoop	2007	Darra Adam Khel, Kohat
Silence	2007	Lal Masjid, Islamabad
Khyber I-IV	2008	Khyber Agency, KP
SherDil	2008	Bajaur, KP
Rah-e-Nijat	2009	South Waziristan, KP
Rah-e-Raast	2009	Swat Valley, KP
Zarb-e-Azb (ZeA)	2014 - 2017	North Waziristan, KP
Raad-ul-Fasaad (RuF)	2017 - 2024	All States of Pakistan

Table 1

Source: Table compiled by the author from multiple sources

Concomitantly, 10 major terrorist strikes by Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and its associates within Pakistan over the past decade are tabulated below (Table 2):

Target	Month and Year	Region
Karachi Airport	Jun 2014	Sindh
Gathering near Wagah Border	Nov 2014	Punjab
APS Peshawar	Dec 2014	KP
Easter Sunday Gathering in Lahore	Mar 2016	Punjab
Quetta Hospital	Aug 2016	Balochistan
Bannu Hostage Crisis	Dec 2022	KP
Mosque in Peshawar Police Lines	Jan 2023	KP
Jamaik Ulema-e-Islam(F) Political Rally	Jul 2023	KP
Mianwali Training Air Base	Nov 2023	Punjab
Chinese Engineers in Bisham	Mar 2024	KP

Table 2

Source: Table compiled by the author from multiple sources

Thus, the same scenario of Taliban 1.0, which refers to the initial period of Taliban rule in Afghanistan from 1996 until the US invasion in 2001, is now repeating itself. This theocratic rule was characterised by, inter alia, increased violence in KP. As suggested by Dr Arjun Behuria, a Senior Fellow at the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, in his seminal work on the TTP, Pakistan-Afghanistan relations during the Taliban era only ensured reverse strategic depth for the Taliban and various Pro-Taliban groups emerged in the tribal belt and entrenched themselves in the local terrain since late 1990s.² While Pakistan has always sought 'Strategic Depth' in Afghanistan, a term popularised by former US Ambassador to Pakistan Richard Olson, the reverse is now being sought by the Taliban in conjunction with the TTP.

This journey from the Taliban 1.0 to 2.0 regime is graphically depicted below:

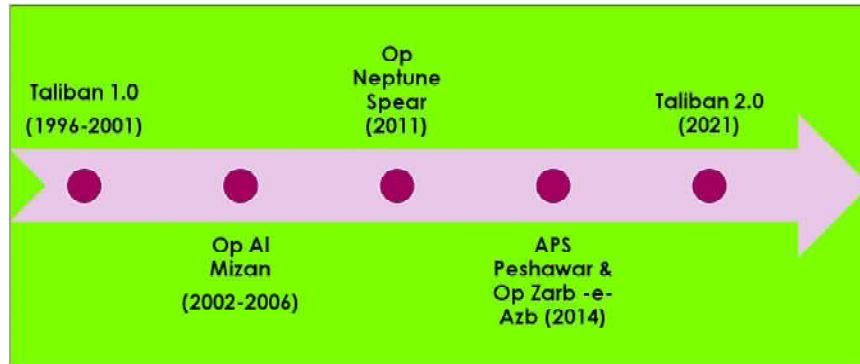


Image 1: Journey from Taliban 1.0 to 2.0

A few key perceptible dominant trends that have emerged since the first operation, *Al-Mizan*, up to the latest, *Azm-e-Istekham* (AeI), are enumerated in the succeeding paragraphs.

One: The Afghan Taliban Factor.

The Afghan Taliban emerged in the mid-1990s as a small group of Afghan religious students and scholars. By Sep 1996, they had captured Kabul and established the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan with ideological underpinnings rooted in Pashtun nationalism. The perception of the Taliban can be divided into various perspectives and experiences, leading to distinctions often referred to as ‘Good’ and ‘Bad’ Taliban. But this narrative of good versus bad Taliban is now irrelevant as the head of the Haqqani network is himself the Interior Minister in Taliban 2.0 regime.³ While a prompt response by the Pakistan Armed Forces was seen on the Iranian front in Jan 2024, targeting Baloch rebels, the same is not the norm with Afghanistan (although two such Pakistan Air Force [PAF] strikes were reported in Apr 2022 and Mar 2024). Pakistan is facing a dilemma of striking across the Durand Line as the Afghan Taliban and the TTP are joined at the hip and under no circumstances will the former take any action against the latter. Any pressure by security forces in the region will have a ballooning effect with large number of the TTP cadres moving to their safe sanctuaries in Afghanistan, as opined by retired cop Avinash Mohananey, an IPS Officer, in an article in *The Economic Times*.⁴ This was clearly evident during the so-called successful conduct of Operation ZeA

when the Inter-Service Public Relations (ISPR) claimed that 3,500 terrorists were killed.⁵ Yet, the TTP retaliated with the Lahore and Army Public School, Peshawar terrorist attacks in Nov and Dec 2014, respectively.

Two: The China Factor.

While the killing of five Chinese engineers at Bisham, KP, on 26 Mar 2024 is certainly concerning, the larger worry for China is the potential fallout of its USD 65 bn investment (as of 2022, according to multiple sources) in China-Pakistan Economic Corridor in Pakistan being tarnished by bad publicity. This concern was evident in the joint statement issued at the conclusion of Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff Asif Munir's visit to China in Jun 2024. Thus, geoeconomics has proven to outweigh other geopolitical factors and regional dynamics, which are also crucial for sustaining China-Pakistan collusion. The joint statement noted Beijing will encourage companies to invest in Pakistan in accordance with the market and commercial principles, signalling that it will not push firms to take unwanted risks or to give any concession to Pakistani companies.⁶

Three: The United States Factor.

While the American pressure resulted in the first-ever Pakistan Army operation in 2002, the US remains a stakeholder, maintaining constant contact with the Taliban regime. Pakistani authorities have alleged that the Afghan Taliban has failed to honour the commitments it made to the international community in the Doha Agreement of Feb 2020 between US and the Taliban. The US refuses to entertain the request of Pakistan Army for targeted operations against the TTP as the US would not mind so, as long as TTP continues to target Chinese interests and spares the US.⁷

Besides, the US is not relying entirely on the Taliban for its counter-terrorism actions. Since its withdrawal from Afghanistan, the US has asserted that it would retain 'Over-the-horizon' capabilities to target those planning terror attacks against American interests. It had used that capability in Al-Qaeda Emir Zawahiri's killing in Jul 2022 in Kabul.⁸

Four: The Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Factor.

The PTM, led by human rights activist Manzoor Pashteen since Jan 2018, has a slogan “*Yeh Jo Dehshat Gardi hai uske peeche Wardi hai*” (Behind the terrorism there is the uniform [Army]).⁹ Pashtun angst has been exacerbated by the displacement of approximately 1.4 million internally displaced persons in the KP region (figure sourced from the Global Human Rights Defence report of Mar 2024) as well as the destruction of livelihoods and loss of lives resulting from ongoing military operations since 2001. This sentiment has been further exploited by the PTI and its leader, Imran Khan, now a nemesis of the Pakistani Deep State. At a press conference held by the Director General (DG) of ISPR on 22 Jul 2024, it was repeatedly emphasised that the new Operation Ael would not lead to mass displacement of the civilian population and was primarily aimed at countering opposition to the operation by political parties in the Pashtun region.

Five: Durand Line.

The Durand Line is the boundary drawn between Pakistan and Afghanistan in 1893 during the British colonial rule. Initiated in 2017 as a defensive measure, a fence along the Durand Line is now nearing completion in the KP region. According to a DG ISPR briefing in Apr 2023, approximately 3,141 km of the border along Afghanistan and Iran has been fenced to prevent the infiltration of terrorists. He further stated that 98 per cent of the border along Afghanistan and 85 per cent along Iran has been fenced, while 85 per cent of forts along the Afghanistan frontier and 33 per cent with Iran have been completed.¹⁰ Additionally, in Jan 2019, Pakistan withdrew the long-standing facility of a 30-day on-arrival visa for Afghan nationals and began deporting Afghan refugees in 2024. Thus, employing non-kinetic means to counter the radical ethnic-religious mindset in the region will remain a significant challenge for the Pakistani establishment in the future, despite the numerous kinetic measures being undertaken.

Six: Role of the Pakistani Air Force and Pakistan Navy (PN).

Assets of the PAF and PN have been extensively employed in operations in the KP region. For instance, helicopter gunships and fixed-wing aircraft of the Air Force, along with the Navy’s special

forces, were heavily utilised in Operation *Rah-e-Nijat* (Path to Salvation) in South Waziristan in 2009. In response, the TTP launched retaliatory strikes on their assets in the hinterland, including the Mehran Naval Base (2011), Kamra Air Base (2012), the Pakistan Navy Ship *Zulfiqar* incident (2014), and the Mianwali Air Base (2023). These attacks were intended to deter their participation in such operations. However, they also highlight the alarming penetration of TTP ideology within some members of the officer cadre and other ranks of the PAF.

Seven: Role of Pakistan Police.

The police have played a crucial role through the Counter Terrorism Department (renamed in 2010) in each province and have been actively involved in counter-terrorism operations. To demoralise their cadre, the TTP executed the Peshawar Police Lines Mosque attack in Jan 2023. In response, an upgradation plan for the Counter Terrorism Department in KP has been initiated.

Eight: The Role of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI).

There is overwhelming proof of ISI complicity with Al-Qaeda and hiding Osama Bin Laden in Abbottabad for nine years, apart from helping Taliban retake Afghanistan post-2001.¹¹ The ISI's efforts to strike peace deals or ceasefires with the TTP or its earlier versions have repeatedly failed, including the Shakai Agreement (2004), Sararogh Agreement (2005), Waziristan Accord (2006), and ceasefires mediated by the Taliban 2.0 regime in 2021 and 2022.

Implications for India

Firstly, the continued engagement of the Pakistani military on the western front drains its scarce resources, thereby, affecting its capabilities and capacities to engage India from a conventional warfare perspective. Secondly, in the best-case scenario, pressure from an increasingly emboldened emerging middle class, the *Awam* (common public), and economic challenges may compel Pakistan to abandon terrorism as a tool of foreign policy. However, ignoring the rising trend of radicalisation in the neighbourhood would be *fatalis vitium* (fatal) for India's current and future national security interests.

The impressive influx of tourists and the successful conduct of the G20 Tourism Working Group meeting in 2023, coupled with an unprecedented voter turnout during the Parliamentary elections in 2024, could be one reason for ISI's attempts to revive the terror network in an otherwise peaceful Jammu and Kashmir. Hence, as recommended by Dr Soumya in a comprehensive essay in the United Services Institution Journal in 2023, for India's regional stability, vigilance, strategic acumen, and prudent military measures are crucial in navigating the complex dynamics between Afghanistan, Pakistan and the evolving terror landscape in the region.¹²

Conclusion

Afghanistan under the new Taliban rule seems to have achieved a certain amount of political stability but not security.¹³ Similarly, Pakistan also seems to have achieved some political stability under the Pakistan People's Party and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz coalition. However, to address the worsening security situation, a new operation has been announced, aligned with the 'Whole of Nation Approach', modelled on the National Action Plan, which combines foreign and domestic policy initiatives. Furthermore, the Pakistani Chief of Army Staff would likely aim to ensure the success of Operation Ael, given the supposedly successful but questionable legacy of three previous Army Chiefs, namely Operations SherDil, ZeA and RuF.

Endnotes

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China's Galwan Aggression and Military Lessons for India

Lieutenant Colonel Yogeshwer Rana®

"From the mountain ranges of the Himalayas to the waters of Vietnam's Exclusive Zone, to the Senkaku Islands, and beyond, Beijing has a pattern of instigating territorial disputes"

- Michael R Pompeo, Former US Secretary of State

Abstract

The 2020 Galwan Valley clash marked a critical juncture in India-China relations, highlighting China's increasingly assertive tactics and emphasising the need for India to reassess its approach toward border security. This essay examines China's strategic motives, including territorial expansion, historical claims, and geopolitical posturing, which have led to heightened tensions along the Line of Actual Control. By analysing the historical context, recent standoffs, and China's broader aggression towards multiple nations, this essay reveals critical military lessons for India. Key recommendations focus on enhancing border infrastructure, fortifying intelligence and surveillance capabilities, and adapting to mountain warfare demands. Leveraging advanced technology, such as artificial intelligence and automated defence systems, can offer India a tactical advantage, while diplomatic initiatives, including military-to-military dialogues and confidence-building measures, remain essential for long-term stability. Military diplomacy, infrastructure upgrades, and diverse defence supply chains are proposed as strategic countermeasures to China's aggression. The essay concludes that while diplomacy is paramount, India must simultaneously strengthen its military readiness to safeguard its strategic interests, ensuring it is better positioned

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for potential future confrontations along its northern borders. This comprehensive approach underscores India's need for resilient strategies to counter China's continued territorial assertiveness.

Introduction

In the past few years, China has shown its strong intentions regarding its disputes with major countries for its claims on superpower status through the aggressive use of economic and military gestures—with the United Kingdom on the issue of Hong Kong, with Australia on trade, with Japan over the ownership of the Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea, with the United States (US) on its projection of military power, and with Southeast Asian countries over control of the South China Sea, despite the verdict of the world court under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea agreement. The unprecedented display of Wolf Warrior Diplomacy in international forums, the aggressive stance over the Covid catastrophe, and the debt-trap policy are a few examples of how China is on the path to achieve Xi Jinping's vision of a 'Resilient China'. However, the recent attempts by China to stir up trouble on the India-China border, translating it into aggression in the Galwan River Valley, have severely added to the worries of not only India but also the international community. The Galwan Valley clash on 15 Jun 2020 between India and China marked one of the most serious military confrontations between the two Asian giants in decades. The skirmish resulted in casualties on both sides, shaking the diplomatic relations between the nations. This was a one-of-a-kind border clash, taking place between two nuclear power giants, which happened without a single shot being fired but resulted in one of the largest face-offs ever on the Line of Actual Control (LAC). The conflict remains unresolved, and both sides are maintaining a significant military presence along the disputed LAC. The mystery behind the true intentions of the 'Dragon' in abrogating border agreements remains unresolved, but it has unveiled that the Indian perception of its northern neighbour needs reassessment. Delhi requires a major rework in designing its strategy to match the ambitions of China.

This also necessitates that all efforts at political and military levels converge toward a common aim of disengagement and the establishment of the status quo on the LAC. At the same time, India should not lose sight of the overall game plan of Chinese

geopolitics. Rather, it should manoeuvre to outlast Beijing's attempts at disregarding India's ambitions. However, it has been more than three years since the incident happened, and no permanent solution is in sight. This leaves no choice but to strengthen India's stance in all spheres of the diplomatic, informational, military, and economic paradigm. Since the confrontation has its origin on the borders, the military sphere occupies a prime spot in dealing with the issue. Hence, this article sheds light on China's aggression in the Galwan Valley and the military lessons India can draw from this confrontation to curb Chinese progress on the LAC.



Map 1: Map showing Line of Control (LoC) and LAC¹

Historical Context and Agreements on Confidence Building

The Sino-Indian border, which lies mostly in the Himalayan region, has always been a contentious issue. Despite repetitive rounds of negotiations between the two, there has been no success achieved so far to demarcate the LAC conclusively.² After India gained independence in 1947 and the People's Republic of China was established in 1949, the status of their border became an issue, primarily in two regions of Aksai Chin and Arunachal. Aksai Chin is in the western sector where China built a road connecting

Xinjiang to Tibet through this region, which India claims as part of its Ladakh territory. Arunachal Pradesh is in the eastern sector, where China never recognised the McMahon Line and claimed a significant part of what is today's Arunachal Pradesh. In 1962, territorial disputes and skirmishes escalated into a full-fledged war between India and China. The war ended with China declaring a unilateral ceasefire, but the boundary issue remained unresolved. China retained control of Aksai Chin, which it had occupied, while India continued to maintain control of Arunachal Pradesh. Subsequently, several rounds of border talks began in the 1980s, aiming to bring about a negotiated settlement acceptable to both nations. Consequent to which, several border agreements have been concluded between the two nations which are as under³:

- **1993 Agreement on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquillity along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas.** It recognised the LAC as the effective border between the two countries and set out the basic principles to prevent border disputes from escalating. Both sides agreed to reduce or limit their military forces in areas where they are in proximity.
- **1996 Agreement on Confidence Building Measures in the Military Field along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas.** This agreement expanded upon the 1993 agreement by laying down explicit provisions for the reduction of military forces and maintaining peace along the LAC. Specific restrictions were put on air force flights, and large-scale military exercises close to the LAC.
- **2005 Protocol on Modalities for the Implementation of the Confidence Building Measures in the Military Field Along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas.** This protocol was a follow-up to the 1996 agreement and provided detailed modalities for the implementation of the confidence-building measures that were previously agreed upon.
- **2012 Agreement on the Establishment of a Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs.** This agreement established a mechanism to ensure that border affairs are effectively managed, consultations are held regularly, and any differences or disputes are addressed in a timely manner.

- **2013 Border Defence Cooperation Agreement.** This was signed to ensure that patrolling along the LAC does not escalate into conflicts. It includes measures such as both sides not following or tailing patrols of the other, not using military capability to harm the other, and setting up a hotline between military headquarters.

However, over the years, despite multiple rounds of negotiations and talks, the exact demarcation of the LAC has remained a contentious issue. Both sides periodically accuse each other of patrolling and building infrastructure across their perceived lines. Notably, there was a significant escalation in 2020 in the Galwan Valley.

The Galwan Standoff

The Galwan Valley lies at the heart of this disputed territory and holds strategic importance for both countries. Galwan, due to its proximity to the vital road link of the Darbuk-Shyok-Daulat Beg Oldie Road, is of particular importance. This road, passing near the Galwan Valley, improves India's access to the northernmost part of its territory, providing logistical advantages to India. Also, the Galwan Valley's proximity to Aksai Chin provides a strategic upper edge to India in the larger India-China border dispute context. Since China has significantly improved its infrastructure in the Tibetan plateau, which allows it to quickly mobilise its forces, maintaining and enhancing India's infrastructure, including in areas like the Galwan Valley, acts as a counterweight against the infrastructural advantage enjoyed by China in the region.

The tensions in the Galwan region started escalating in early May 2020. Chinese troops reportedly began setting up tents and infrastructure in an area that India claims as its own. By mid-June, the friction led to violent hand-to-hand combat.⁴ While firearms were not used due to a 1996 agreement prohibiting the use of guns and explosives at the LAC, the skirmish led to the death of 20 Indian soldiers and an undisclosed number of Chinese casualties. It is imperative to mention here that the Galwan Valley clash in 2020 is tragic and a definite inflection point in Sino-Indian ties, but it certainly did not come as a surprise.

Reasons Behind China's Aggression

Principle of Historic Rights and Dwindling Claim of Sovereignty. China has often invoked the principle of 'Historic Rights' to assert its claim over Indian territories⁵, e.g., the claim to the South China Sea. On 19 Jun 2020, just four days after the deadly clashes, Zhang Yongpan, a scholar with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, referred to instances of territorial control by the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911) and western literature as justification for China's claim over the Galwan Valley. This claim was soon followed by a statement from the Chinese Foreign Ministry asserting its sovereignty over the valley.⁶ Making claims solely based on the 'Principle of historic rights' is entirely ambiguous, baseless, and has no grounds in well-defined nation-state practices. However, China has been progressing its stakes without adhering to any international laws and judgments, resulting in disputes between China and several of its neighbours. The same tactics have been applied by China with India in Ladakh as well as Arunachal Pradesh, even though sources and references from history books do not always translate into exact cartographic outputs and may not necessarily be true.

Prodding and Provoking Tactics. According to Parliament records, between 2016 and 2018, over 1,000 incidents of transgressions by Chinese troops were noted.⁷ China's strategy to keep the issue of the LAC simmering and provoke seemingly arbitrary transgressions or face-offs is part of a well-coordinated arrangement under the top hierarchy of the Communist Party of China (CCP), with the likely aim of seizing territory and distorting the alignment of the LAC.

Strategic Deceit. The Chinese top hierarchy has often displayed a 'Mindful but duplicitous' mindset in their thinking toward India. China has always been cautious about the modernisation of the Indian Armed Forces and strives to deter any Indian advantage, yet it simultaneously disregards India's military capability, citing a lack of inventory, poor quality, and time lags as reasons. In Oct 2019, ahead of the summit between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi, China objected to India conducting 'Op Him Vijay', one of its biggest war games in Arunachal Pradesh. Despite clarifications that the exercise is an annual feature, the Chinese pushed to postpone the meeting.

Similarly, in 2014, while President Xi was being hosted by PM Modi in his home state of Gujarat, the People's Liberation Army carried out incursions along the borders.⁸ Arguably, as the Doklam incident has proved, China's forays into South Asia, including adventurism in the Indian Ocean region or on the disputed borders, are often aimed at imposing reputational costs on India. Beijing frequently views the Sino-Indian relationship through the lens of Sino-US and Indo-US relations, reflecting Chinese anxiety. In the words of the late Cheng Ruisheng, a veteran diplomat and former Chinese ambassador to India who championed a stable Sino-Indian relationship, "We don't feel stress with regard to India, in part because China is militarily stronger". Cheng added, "I think, frankly speaking, we are somewhat concerned about the cooperation between India and the US, especially in the sphere of security". Speaking nearly a decade ago, he stressed, "The China-US relationship, the China-India relationship, and the India-US relationship are inclusive of each other. Balance is very important".⁹

China's Ideology of Increased Assertiveness Against India.

Although China's stance post-Galwan carries divergent meanings on the domestic and international fronts for India, China's actions on the LAC signal serious intent, and any attempt to hinder China will likely be perceived as a threat to its expansionist ambitions. Several concealed agendas exist behind China's increased assertiveness against India on the LAC:

- **Strategic Depth.** China might aim to push the LAC further west, providing its National Highway 219, linking Tibet and Xinjiang, with more security.
- **Geopolitical Messaging.** By taking an aggressive stance, China might be signalling to India (and other adversaries) its willingness to escalate territorial disputes.
- **Internal Politics.** Domestic factors in China also play a role. Showing strength against foreign adversaries, real or perceived, can bolster the image of the CCP within the country and consolidate its hold on power.
- **Diversion.** Amid internal challenges, such as the Hong Kong protests and international scrutiny over its handling of the Covid outbreak, the border clash could divert domestic and international attention.

- **Economic Corridor.** The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative. It provides China with a direct route to the Arabian Sea, bypassing the Strait of Malacca, which can be a chokepoint in case of naval blockades. This ensures a continuous flow of energy and trade, even if maritime routes face disruptions.
- **Access to Pakistani Military Bases.** While not openly admitted, with a secure CPEC, it is speculated that China could gain access to military and naval bases in Pakistan, which would extend its power projection capabilities.

Military Lessons for India

With a history that ranges from the 1962 Sino-Indian War to recent skirmishes along the LAC, India has had several opportunities to introspect and draw valuable military lessons in its approach toward China. This analysis aims to shed light on these lessons, emphasising the evolving nature of warfare, the importance of technological and logistical advancements, and the need for diplomatic acumen to accompany military strategies. As both nations continue to assert their roles in a multipolar world, the understanding and implementation of these lessons become pivotal for India to ensure regional stability, national security, and the safeguarding of its strategic interests. The following lessons are pertinent:

- **Enhanced Border Infrastructure.** Investing in infrastructure along the border regions would allow for quicker troop movements and better logistical support.
- **Improved Intelligence and Surveillance.** Enhancing capabilities for real-time intelligence, reconnaissance, and surveillance would be vital to keep Chinese developments under continuous observation. Any deviation from mutually agreed regulations shall be met with an appropriate response at bilateral as well as international levels.
- **Mountain Warfare Training.** Given the terrain of the India-China border, specialised mountain warfare training should be a priority for all personnel of the armed forces as well as paramilitary forces deployed on the LAC.

- **Rapid Deployment Options.** The ability to quickly mobilise and deploy forces to contested regions can act as a deterrent and provide strategic flexibility. Akin to Chinese Trans-Regional Support Operations, India's forces need to develop capabilities in strategic mobility.
- **Diplomacy and Military Coordination.** The importance of close coordination between diplomatic and military strategies cannot be overlooked. Both fronts should be synchronised to avoid mixed signals. Unlike what happened during President Xi's visit to India in 2014, when the Chinese army carried out multiple transgressions on the LAC, Indian military and diplomatic strategies should be in tune with each other.
- **Diverse Supply Chains.** Reducing dependency on a single country for military hardware and technologies would ensure that the armed forces are not compromised in the event of a conflict. In the event of conflict with China, which is nearly self-sufficient in war inventory and capable of influencing military hardware suppliers, India needs diverse supply chains to fulfil its defence requirements.
- **Theaterisation/Enhanced Joint Operations.** Promote better coordination between the Indian Army, Air Force, and Navy for joint operations, ensuring a combined and holistic approach to warfare. Theaterisation is much needed to counter the strategy of Chinese Theatre Commands.
- **Robust Electronic Warfare (EW) and Cybersecurity Capabilities.** With the growing threat from Chinese cyber warfare, ensuring the security of communication systems, equipment, and data is paramount. EW/Cyber Battalions must become integral parts of formations.
- **Understanding Asymmetric Warfare.** Recognising that not all confrontations will be direct and understanding the nuances of grey-zone warfare, cyberattacks, and propaganda wars is crucial. Collusion with Pakistan, water wars, cartographic aggression, and influencing neighbours are some of the examples where India needs to tackle China on favourable terms. The Indian Army must factor these elements into its military strategy.

- **Modernising Equipment.** Continually updating and modernising equipment ensures that the forces are prepared to face modern threats.

Technological Leverage/Incorporating Technology

Technology has become an indispensable part of modern military strategy. How Indian forces can leverage technology to bolster their position against China along their borders is given below:

- **Surveillance Drones.** Deploy drones to monitor border areas continuously. These can provide real-time updates, track enemy movement, and be used for reconnaissance missions without risking human lives. Drones should become part of the inventory at the sub-unit/detachment level.
- **Satellite Surveillance.** Invest in advanced satellite capabilities to monitor large stretches of land, especially in hard-to-reach terrains. This provides a bird's-eye view of troop build-ups, infrastructure developments, and other activities.
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI).** Employ AI for predictive analysis. Machine learning can analyse patterns in enemy movements, predict potential hotspots, and offer strategic recommendations.
- **Modern Communication Systems.** In a conflict scenario against China, owing to its EW capabilities, the security of information and forces can only be ensured by modern encrypted communication systems. These systems can establish secure communication between troops and command centres, minimising the risk of interception and eavesdropping by the enemy.
- **Sensor Networks.** Deploy advanced sensor networks along the border that can detect vibrations, sound, and other metrics. These sensors can alert forces about any significant movement or activities on the other side.
- **Automated Defence Systems.** India needs to invest in modern automated defence mechanisms, such as missile defence systems or automated gun turrets that can respond to threats in real-time and cater to surprise or unanticipated threats.

- **Advanced Weaponry.** Equipping forces with advanced weaponry integrated with technology is the need of the hour. Smart guns, guided missiles, and laser-based systems can provide a significant edge in conflict scenarios.
- **Virtual Reality (VR) Training.** Use VR to simulate border scenarios and train troops. This can prepare them for various eventualities, from hand-to-hand combat in rugged terrains to coordinating technological assets during a skirmish.

Military Diplomacy

Military diplomacy is an essential tool in the broader diplomatic arsenal of any nation, aiming to build trust, foster understanding, and mitigate conflicts. For India, which shares a complicated relationship with China, military diplomacy can take several forms:

- **Military-to-Military Dialogues.** Establish regular high-level dialogues between the military leaderships of both countries. This can address mutual concerns, reduce misunderstandings, and pave the way for confidence-building measures.
- **Joint Military Exercises.** Organising joint military exercises can enhance trust and understanding between the armed forces of both countries. These exercises can focus on fields like counterterrorism, anti-piracy, or humanitarian assistance. Although the scenario has bleak possibilities, it can be exploited to enhance mutual trust.
- **Defence Attachés.** Increase the presence and role of defence attachés in respective embassies. They play a vital role in building bridges between the military establishments of both countries.
- **Observation of Military Exercises.** Allow military officers from one country to observe the other's military exercises. This provides transparency and reduces suspicions about military intentions.
- **Exchange Programs.** Promote exchanges of junior and senior military officers for training and education. Experiencing the military culture of the other country first-hand can foster better understanding and rapport.

- **Establish Hotlines.** Set up more direct communication lines between top military officials on both sides. This can help quickly resolve misunderstandings and prevent minor issues from escalating.
- **Mutual Agreements on Border Management.** Establish clear protocols and agreements on managing border issues, patrols, and engagements to prevent incidents like the Galwan Valley clash in 2020.
- **Multilateral Platforms.** Engage constructively in regional and global military forums and platforms, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation or the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus. These platforms can be utilised for constructive dialogues and building regional trust.

Conclusion

The Galwan Valley clash in 2020 illuminated the intricate complexities of the India-China border dispute and was a grim reminder of the simmering tensions that exist between India and China. It also emphasised the paramount importance of strategic preparedness for India. At the strategic level, it underscored the value of rapid infrastructure development, the necessity of diversifying defence supply chains, and the crucial role of robust diplomatic engagements. At the armed forces level, the incident highlighted the need for joint military training, building military alliances, and leveraging advanced technology in modern warfare. For the Indian Army, Galwan stands as a stark reminder of the challenges it faces and the lessons it must internalise to ensure no such opportunity is ever again thrown in front of the Chinese for their exploitation.

While diplomatic channels must always remain the primary tool for conflict resolution, India's armed forces can take several military lessons from the episode. Strengthening its defences, re-evaluating outdated agreements, and developing infrastructure near the border are imperative steps toward ensuring that India is better prepared for any future confrontations.

Endnotes

¹ Map taken from upscwithnikhil.com

² M. Taylor Fravel, "Strong Borders, Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict in China's Territorial Disputes", *Princeton University Press*, accessed 23 Aug 2023, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt7s2s6>

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⁵ Utkarsh Pandey, "The India-China Border Question: An Analysis of International Law and State Practices", *Observer Research Foundation*, 16 Dec 2020, accessed 01 Sep 2023, <https://www.orfonline.org/research/the-india-china-border-question/>

⁶ "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian's Regular Press Conference", *Ministry of Foreign Affairs, People's Republic of China*, 19 Jun 2020.

⁷ Shruti Pandalai, "Lessons for India After the Galwan Valley Clash", *The Diplomat*, 31 Jul 2020, accessed 27 Aug 2023, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/07/lessons-for-india-after-the-galwan-valley-clash/>

⁸ Jason Burke & Tania Branigan, "India-China border standoff highlights tensions before Xi visit", *The Guardian*, 16 Sep 2014, accessed 27 Aug 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/16/india-china-border-standoff-xi-visit>

⁹ Pandalai, "Lessons for India"

Looking At the Disabled Soldier: Past, Present, and Future His Care, Career Prospects, and Rehabilitation

Commander Anirudh K Singh®

Abstract

This essay explores the rehabilitation and career prospects of war-wounded soldiers, focusing on current systems and areas for improvement. While the armed forces provide initial medical treatment, long-term rehabilitation procedures often lack standardisation and comprehensive support, leaving personnel dependent on personal resilience and family support. Through qualitative and quantitative methods, this study gathers perspectives from affected soldiers, highlighting deficiencies in psychological care, inadequate facilities, and bureaucratic challenges, such as the L1 procurement process that delays access to quality medical implants and prosthetics. The need for standardised rehabilitation protocols, partnerships with non-governmental organisations, and advanced civilian medical centres is emphasised. Key recommendations include implementing a structured, multidisciplinary approach to care, improving mental health support, and fostering a sense of purpose within the organisation to motivate recovery. The inclusion of veteran-led civil organisations like Conquer Land Air Water, which empowers war-wounded soldiers by demonstrating their continued

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value and resilience, underscores the potential for reintegration into society and the workforce. This analysis advocates for systematic reforms to ensure war-wounded soldiers receive the support necessary for meaningful rehabilitation and re-engagement, benefiting both the individual and the broader military community.

Introduction

“The soldier, above all other people, prays for peace, for he must suffer and bear the deepest wounds and scars of war”¹

The profession of arms has always been one that requires the highest levels of commitment, resolve, and, above all, sacrifice. This sacrifice, however, does not come easy for everyone, and some of our bravest come back from war with scars that may last a lifetime. It is imperative to understand that while the nature of war remains constant, the character of warfare is ever-changing. The lethality and range of weapons have made warfighting an attrition-based affair, wherein, loss of life is not only imminent but guaranteed. During these conflicts, numerous lives have been lost; however, more have been wounded and are now forced to live half a life with struggles and trauma that most cannot even fathom.

There are nearly 40,000 war-wounded personnel in our country, and this number is constantly increasing. With the extent of injury deciding the fate of the soldier, some may become permanently disabled and are invalided out of service, while the remaining continue to serve with disabilities. The commemorative medals and financial grants, although important, cannot be compared to the emotional support required. The importance of care and constantly catering to the requirements of our war-wounded would go a long way in ensuring that none of the serving soldiers think twice before proceeding on an assigned mission, no matter how dangerous.

Terminology

Rehabilitation.² Rehabilitation is a process of assessment, treatment, and management by which individuals (and their families) are supported to achieve their maximum potential for physical, cognitive, social, and psychological functions, participation in society, and quality of living.

Battle Casualty.³ Battle casualties are those which are sustained in action against enemy forces or in preparation for/deployment to operations on land, sea, or air. Casualties of this type consist of the categories as shown in Figure 1.

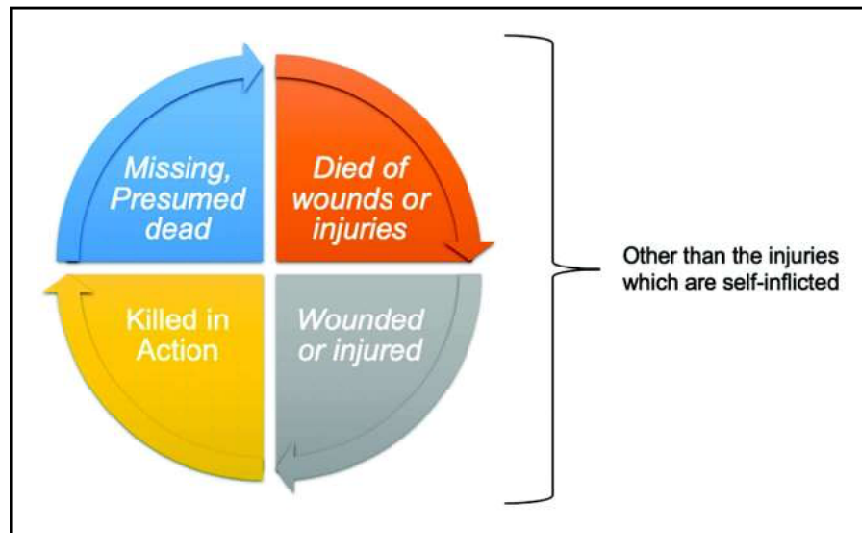


Figure 1: Battle Casualties – Types

Amputation.⁴ Amputation is an acquired condition that results in the loss of a limb, usually from injury, disease, or surgery. Losing a limb due to accidental trauma or disease has an enormous impact on a person's body, emotions, relationships, vocation, and way of life.

Understanding the Process of Rehabilitation for the War-Wounded

The methodology adopted to understand the issues with the current rehabilitation procedures in our armed forces must consist of both quantitative and qualitative analyses. The qualitative method involves interactions in the form of interviews, while the questionnaire forms part of the quantitative method.

Qualitative Method. Through personal interactions, three soldiers were interviewed in a detailed one-on-one setting, which provided insight into their individual struggles. These views, highlighted in the following paragraphs, are unique to everyone. While the level of satisfaction varies, it was clear that support from the service or branch played a significant role in their recovery.

The Ace Fighter Pilot. The officer, a SU-30 pilot, gave a first-hand account of his ejection and how he lost his leg in the process. This story is particularly significant, as most pilots involved in crashes are not alive to recount their ordeals in detail. Key points that emerged during the discussion are as follows:

- Even after multiple conflicts and casualties in the armed forces, there is still no standardised methodology for rehabilitation; it remains largely dependent on the individual's personal resilience.
- Psychological rehabilitation requires improvement, as merely sending doctors to assess mental stability may be insufficient.
- While the injury centres are equipped with new rehabilitation facilities, basic amenities like ramps and wheelchair-accessible pathways are lacking.
- The Artificial Limb Centre (ALC) in Pune played a crucial role in helping the officer set a clear goal toward gaining independence post-rehabilitation.
- Physiotherapists are like drill instructors at the academy, focused solely on achieving progress at a set pace, which may not be suitable for patients of all mental capacities.
- In this case, the Service played a key role in the officer's recovery, providing transportation support and allowing his wife (also a serving Air Force officer) to be attached to various locations on temporary duty to assist him. This support has reinforced his commitment to the service.
- The officer considers himself fortunate and has come to terms with his disability, which has not deterred him in any way.

- The Service and the Commandant, ALC were instrumental in providing him with a better rehabilitation and guiding him in a way which was suitable and helped him to remain focussed.



Image 1: The Fighter Pilot with his Ottobock Prosthetic

The Land Mine Survivor. The Army officer interviewed was posted in Naushera District at the Line of Control at the time of his injury. Encountering a mine during an operation, he was airlifted to Command Hospital, Udhampur, where he underwent one of the best reconstructive surgeries, which saved the remaining part of his left leg. Some relevant extracts from his responses are as follows:

- A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for rehabilitation procedures was also absent in this case, making the process entirely human-centric and dependent on the patient's capability.

- The staff at the ALC, though supportive, was severely limited due to the large number of patients needing attention.
- The prosthetic provided to the officer was not correctly constructed, leading to discomfort. He approached the ALC for reconstruction; however, the issue remained unresolved.
- The officer was mentally resilient during rehabilitation and did not require psychological support; however, he noted that the psychologists initially assigned to him were there merely for formality.
- The officer approached the ALC for his second prosthetic but was unable to make progress and ultimately had to finance his own limb from Ottobock Pvt Ltd.
- The non-availability of the required prosthetic was attributed to the 'Make in India' certification required for procurement on an L1 basis.
- The officer is still awaiting his second, improved prosthetic and is now in the process of purchasing another personally financed limb.



Image 2: Amputated Left Foot



Image 3: Personally financed Prosthetic

The Marine Commando Who Beat Death. The officer's story has surfaced on multiple occasions, but his internal struggles are known to few. Injured during Counter Insurgency Operations in Jammu and Kashmir, he arrived at hospital clinging to life after a grenade blast, with splinters throughout his body. Despite multiple internal injuries, he overcame the odds with the unwavering support

of his family. However, the struggle for full health continues after being diagnosed with cancer and other lung ailments. The excerpts from his interview are as follows:

- Rehabilitation procedures assume that, as a soldier, the patient is mentally prepared to endure the ordeal and does not require emotional support.
- Civilian rehabilitation differs in that a visit to the doctor can be solely for communication. This is not so in the armed forces, likely due to the organisational structure.
- Physical support, though present, cannot substitute for the psychological support needed.
- Physical injuries are visible and often elicit sympathy or empathy, whereas, internal injuries are frequently overlooked and must be reiterated by a patient.
- It is essential to recognise that while a patient might prioritise physical rehabilitation, a sense of purpose and the will to continue in the same line of work can only be provided by the organisation.
- High-quality medical equipment, such as stents and pacemakers, is still procured via the L1 route, resulting in lower-quality materials and delayed timelines.
- During his time in the Intensive Care Unit, the officer looked forward each morning to interact with the doctor or nurse, underscoring the importance of physical compassion.
- There are ongoing challenges in providing manpower to tend to the patient initially.
- The ability to provide for the wounded sends the strongest message; not only to other disabled soldiers, but also to the entire serving community.

The questions that come to mind after interacting with these officers are straightforward and centre around the following arguments:

- What is the driving force behind war-wounded soldiers, and how does it inspire them to perform their duties, sometimes even better than others?

- Why are there no SOPs in place for psychological rehabilitation, and why is it regarded as merely a formality?
- Why is the L1 procurement procedure being followed for medical implants and prosthetics, resulting in the purchase of low-quality materials and delayed timelines?
- Are there any Memorandum Of Understanding (MOUs) in place with Non-Governmental Organisation (NGOs) and other civil hospitals/treatment centres for financing and providing medical aid, including rehabilitation, for war-wounded soldiers?
- Why are basic amenities that assist disabled soldiers in their daily routines, such as ramps, parking spaces, and accessible washrooms, not available at various institutions where personnel may be posted?

Quantitative Method. As part of the quantitative analysis, a research questionnaire was circulated exclusively among war-wounded personnel, both serving and retired. The research focused on exploring the following areas:

- To gauge the levels of satisfaction personnel had regarding the rehabilitation process.
- To assess the levels of stress experienced during the time of injury, particularly by the patients and their families throughout rehabilitation.
- To gather views on the general attitude of the service towards war-wounded personnel, whether it is sympathetic, empathetic, or disdainful.
- To seek recommendations on facilities that could be provided to families who care for patients during rehabilitation.
- To examine the desire to continue serving in the armed forces despite a disability.

Data Analysis of Questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed exclusively within the war-wounded community, excluding regular service personnel, to ensure the feedback's accuracy and to avoid merely populating responses. Although the

number of responses was limited, the soldiers who participated offered key recommendations, as detailed below:

- Only 38 per cent of respondents were satisfied with the rehabilitation provided by the services, with satisfactory rehabilitation primarily for gunshot wounds.
- 30 per cent of respondents were dissatisfied with rehabilitation procedures, and 66 per cent opted to seek privately financed rehabilitation sessions at civilian medical centres.
- All respondents (100 per cent) felt that psychological rehabilitation was necessary but had been lacking in their treatments. Additionally, 72 per cent reported experiencing high levels of post-traumatic stress, which they overcame largely due to the support of their loved ones.
- 72 per cent felt that the environment remains sympathetic toward the war-wounded, with considerable room for increased empathy.

Organisational Issues and Constraints

To fully understand the issues, they may be categorised under three sub-headings: Care, Career Prospects, and Rehabilitation. These are detailed in the succeeding paragraphs.

Care and Rehabilitation.

- **Resilience and Complete Care.** Building and maintaining resilience among military and veteran communities is essential for promoting successful reintegration into civilian life. The importance of a comprehensive care package—including pre-operative and post-operative care with therapy—is notably absent from the current rehabilitation process. This may stem from doctors and caregivers perceiving military patients as inherently resilient due to their training and service, thus, overlooking the need for support. Consequently, many patients rely solely on their loved ones, who may not always be able to provide adequate support, potentially prolonging the rehabilitation period and leaving patients struggling internally even after physical recovery.

- **Absence of Standard Operating Procedures for Psychological Rehabilitation.** Current procedures are personality-based; for example, two war-wounded personnel were personally counselled by the Commandant of ALC, Pune, which led to quicker recoveries. However, this was due to the personal interest of the officer-in-charge of their rehabilitation. This personalised attention is not guaranteed for every patient, leaving those with weaker personal resolve or less mental stability facing extended recovery timelines.
- **Overtasked Medical Facilities.** Due to the large number of patients visiting medical facilities, most doctors are occupied with routine tasks, leaving little time to focus on the rehabilitation of critical patients. Consequently, patients often struggle to ask questions or have their queries addressed. Although physiotherapists at the ALC are successful in helping patients achieve physical rehabilitation goals, they frequently proceed without considering the patient's mental adaptability.
- **L1: Method of Procurement.** Mixed feedback has been received on the quality and timely provision of prosthetics. While one patient received a prosthetic worth 37 lakhs, another was forced to personally finance a foot plate from the leading prosthetic manufacturer, Ottobock, due to the absence of a 'Make in India' certification. This procurement method has led to delays in acquiring crucial items, such as heart stents and pacemakers, which paints a troubling picture of the current system.
- **Service-Specific Care.** The level of care provided by each service can significantly impact recovery times. Although the air force played a key role in supporting the above-mentioned fighter pilot with necessary airlifts and assistance, the army, due to its higher number of patients, was unable to offer a similar level of individualised support.
- **Facilities at Leading Civil Hospitals vs Military Medical Centres.** A holistic comparison between the facilities at leading hospitals and military rehabilitation centres reveals significant gaps, particularly in family accommodations, basic amenities, and available rehabilitation equipment. These gaps underscore the insufficient funding allocated within the defence budget for comprehensive rehabilitation resources.

Career Prospects.

- **Desire to Serve.** Over 95 per cent personnel who responded to the questionnaire expressed a desire to continue serving, even though stress levels and rehabilitation procedures need significant improvement. The will to serve remains strong; however, many soldiers feel left out upon returning to their parent organisations. Initial sympathy often turns to empathy, which may eventually give way to disdain.
- **Employability in Suitable Jobs.** Not all soldiers are required on the front lines; some may be needed in roles that ease the burden on their counterparts who have gone through similar ordeals. The affiliation of the Services Sports Control Board with the Paralympic Committee of India, for example, is a positive step; though it requires focused attention, with the navy and air force encouraged to follow suit. Personnel transfers are conducted via COPE coding, yet it can be a continuous struggle for disabled soldiers to prove their capabilities within the organisation, often leaving them frustrated.
- **War-Wounded and Battle Casualty Classification.** Feedback suggests that many soldiers struggle to validate their casualty status within the current system. While some individuals may have taken advantage of the system to secure disability pensions, genuine patients face daily challenges in obtaining enhanced emoluments.
- **Transition to the Outside World.** The rules governing wounded personnel's transition to civilian life are outdated, offering minimal ex-gratia and limited medical coverage. These issues are even more pronounced for cadets who are discharged from academies due to injury. Additionally, entitlements vary significantly by state, adding further inconsistency.

Way Ahead and Recommendations

Systematic Care and Rehabilitation.

- **Composite Care Package.** The war-wounded personnel who participated in the survey were fully satisfied with the first aid and surgeries provided by doctors. However,

corrective surgery is merely the beginning of the rehabilitation process. Drawing from the United States' 'Promoting Successful Integration'⁵ program for veterans and war-wounded personnel, a comprehensive care package should include a multidisciplinary rehabilitation team as given in Figure 2.

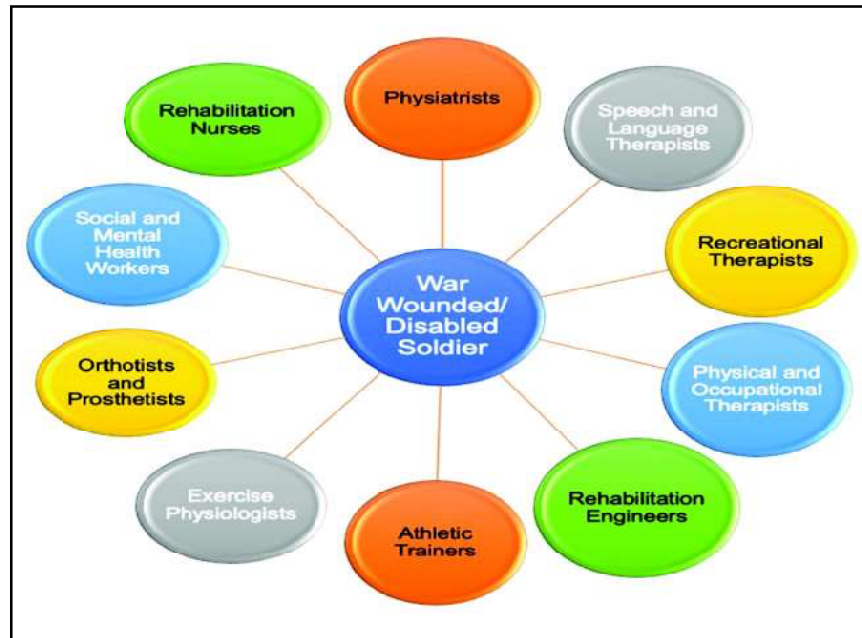


Figure 2

- **Step-by-Step Analysis.** A systematic analysis by each expert on the team would help determine the patient's strengths and weaknesses, thereby, emphasizing the recovery process. Even if the existing system lacks the necessary expertise, MoUs with civil agencies and financial aid from NGOs would support the service in achieving the desired outcomes. It is essential that therapists and engineers assess patients early in the rehabilitation process to identify any psychological barriers that may hinder recovery. Social support and a sense of purpose can be crucial for a wounded soldier striving to reintegrate as an active member of the forces.
- **Mental and Physical Pain Management.** Pain management was a significant concern raised by respondents, specifically regarding the side effects of heavy medication,

which should be clearly communicated to the patient upfront. A briefing on injuries in the presence of a psychologist is likely to promote a positive outlook on recovery.

- **Formulation of Standard Operating Procedures.** Many institutions worldwide, such as the Borden Institute⁶ and Headley Court⁷, have established rehabilitation procedures that outline processes for various injuries. These documents could serve as references to develop an SOP, with input from medical experts from both military and civilian sectors. Detailed Project Reports could be approved for these projects, in collaboration with leading hospitals, to establish a National Defence Rehabilitation Centre, thus, fostering a more motivated and battle-ready workforce.

- **Amputee Care Program.**⁸ The number of amputees in the country is relatively small, warranting dedicated attention from all three services. Providing advanced prosthetics would represent a minimal fraction of the defence budget but would ensure that service members can perform their duties confidently and without hesitation. The L1 procurement system for prosthetics should be eliminated, as it not only extends timelines but also results in the purchase of low-quality materials that require frequent replacements, thereby, incurring higher cumulative costs. Establishing MoUs with companies like Ottobock would be a step in the right direction to ensure complete satisfaction for disabled soldiers and to encourage them to engage in sports, providing a meaningful reason for continued existence. A schematic flowchart of amputee care is shown in Appendix 'C'.

Career Prospects.

- **Raison d'être.** Analysis of the questionnaire responses revealed that all respondents desired to continue in service despite facing numerous challenges in transitioning back to their core roles. However, a sense of purpose—something that can only be provided by the organisation—plays a crucial role in their recovery. The simplest approach for any organisation might be to sideline the affected soldier, leaving them isolated and potentially questioning their abilities. Instead, continuous engagement and a sense of belonging can pave the way for sustained productivity.

- **Career Prospects within the Services.** Interactions indicated that most soldiers have come to terms with the limited prospects of rising in the hierarchy due to their injuries. However, denying them the opportunity to serve in a similar capacity as their original role could signal a lack of faith. The example of Captain Christy Wise of the United States Air Force, who returned to active flying after losing her right leg, illustrates how such soldiers can excel. While limitations may exist, assigning these individuals to suitable roles at Headquarters, where their expertise and years of service are invaluable, allows them to continue contributing meaningfully.
- **Specialist Civil Organisations.** With increased media interconnectivity, organisations like Conquer Land Air Water (CLAW) have brought widespread attention to the achievements of war-wounded soldiers. Founded by veterans Major Vivek Jacob and Major Arun Ambathy, this organisation has gained prominence by taking disabled soldiers to the highest battlefield, Siachen, and is now set to break the world record for the largest SCUBA Occupational Therapy and Skill Training program for people with disabilities. Such organisations challenge outdated perceptions of limited capabilities, with disabled personnel leading these initiatives. Many war-wounded veterans have now joined CLAW, gaining opportunities to teach, learn, and work toward independence. The organisation strives to eliminate pity, glorify soldiers' injuries, and foster a sense of invincibility.

Conclusion

While there is currently a system in place within the services to monitor and support war-wounded personnel in the country, the rehabilitation procedures remain personality-centric and require a dedicated effort. This includes the formulation of SOPs, partnerships with NGOs and civilian medical organisations to establish state-of-the-art facilities, and improvements in the procurement of prosthetics. The removal of the L1 procurement procedure for medical implants, which are critical for the survivability of war-wounded personnel, is essential to ensure they have a better chance of maintaining health and are motivated to make a swift transition back into service or civilian life.

Appendix 'A'

Details Of Questionnaire

Ser No	Details of Question	Response Required
1.	Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Army ● Navy ● Air Force ● Paramilitary
2.	Whether Serving or Retired	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Serving ● Retired
3.	Years of Service (In Years and Months)	Individual
4.	Unit/Formation	Individual
5.	Have you been in Active Combat situations/Conditions of High Stress as a Team Member or Team Leader?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Yes ● No
6.	Were you injured during the Active Combat Situation/Conditions of High Stress?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Yes ● No
7.	Date of injury?	Individual
8.	Were you Married or Single during the time of injury?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Married ● Single
9.	Did you have children during the time of injury?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Yes ● No
10.	If you had children what were their ages during the time of your injury?	Individual
11.	During the time of your injury and subsequent rehabilitation did you ever feel that your family went through extremely stressful situations. This may be rated on a linear scale.	Linear Scale from 1 to 10 '1' being the least amount of stress '10' being the least amount of stress

	(The stress borne by the family generally goes unnoticed during the time of injury and during the rehabilitation process. This question would help us understand whether this led to additional stress for you and the family)	
12.	Type of Injury and Restrictions Imposed if any (The question is aimed at analysing the type of injuries being suffered and drawing inferences from the area of operations. I would request descriptive answers, so that I am able to analyse and recommend the kind of rehabilitation which should be focussed on)	Individual
13.	Whether Amputee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Yes ● No
14.	If Amputee, then were Prosthetics Limbs provisioned by: Enterprises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Service Rehabilitation Establishments ● Private Means
15.	For Amputees, If Prosthetics were provided, then are they meeting your requirements or need further improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Not Suitable ● Are suitable however require much improvement ● Suitable and require slight improvement ● Completely Suitable for my use
16.	Time Accorded for Rehabilitation (Please mention if still ongoing)	Individual
17.	Number of Sessions undertaken for Rehabilitation (Please mention if still ongoing)	Individual

18.	Were you satisfied with the Rehabilitation Process given to you by the service including the proficiency of Doctors and Therapists	Answers sought on a linear scale from 1 to 10 ● Not Satisfied - 1 ● Extremely Satisfied - 10
19.	Have you sought any Private Rehabilitation Services/Health Care Services for better recovery	● Yes ● No
20.	If you compare the rehabilitation process given to you in the services with that of civilian establishments, how would you rate it on a linear scale Improvement Extremely	Answers sought on a linear scale from 1 to 10 ● Not at Par with Civilian Establishments and needs much Satisfied - 1 ● At Par with Civilian Establishments - 10
21.	Relevance of First Aid during your Injury: (This question is aimed at evaluating whether the current combat casualty care practices and teachings in the service are enough or whether they require re-evaluation including modernisation of equipment and increased focus on Tactical Combat Casualty Care)	● Yes - Timely First Aid and Evacuation helped me in reducing the extent of my injury ● No - The first aid and evacuation could have been better ● Maybe - One out of the Two requirements i.e., First Aid and Evacuation was not as it should have been
22.	If given a choice, would you like to continue to serve in the Forces after the injury?	● Yes ● No ● Maybe
23.	Do you feel the environment is more sympathetic or empathetic towards War Wounded Soldiers?	Answers sought on a linear scale from 1 to 10 ● Sympathetic - 1 ● Empathetic - 10
24.	Were you faced with any kind of stress, particularly Post Traumatic Stress Disorder after your injury?	● Yes ● No ● Maybe

25.	If any kind of Stress was faced, can that be quantified on a linear scale	Answers sought on a linear scale from 1 to 10 ● Very Little Stress - 1 ● Extreme Stress - 10
26.	Do you feel that Psychological Rehabilitation/Mental Strengthening Practices are equally important for War Wounded Soldiers to overcome any stresses they face after sustaining injuries?	● Yes ● No ● Maybe
27.	Do you feel that certain facilities and policies may be accorded to the families or wounded soldiers during their rehabilitation. Multiple Checkboxes are mentioned, these may be selected as per choice?	● Travel by Air for Self and Family ● Support by a Buddy provisioned by the Unit/Formation ● Regular Counselling ● Regular visits by your Unit/Formation personnel ● Accommodation Support in the Station of Rehabilitation ● Training/Counselling for Transitioning into regular life outside service
28.	Recommendations (in detail if any) (This part of the questionnaire is particularly important as it would help me in understanding, the personal journeys and issues faced in Rehabilitation or even the good things which you may have encountered during your road to recovery. These may include any recommendations to enhance or improve the rehabilitation process)	Individual

Appendix 'B'

Analysis Of Data from Questionnaire

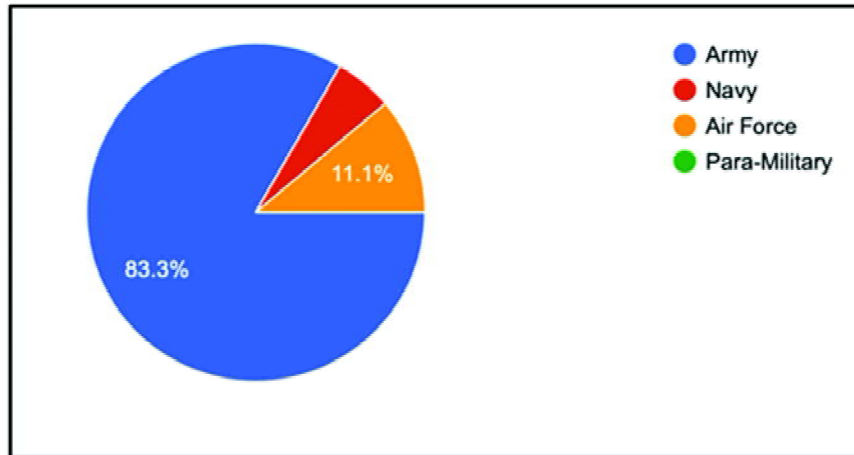


Figure 3: Services of Respondents

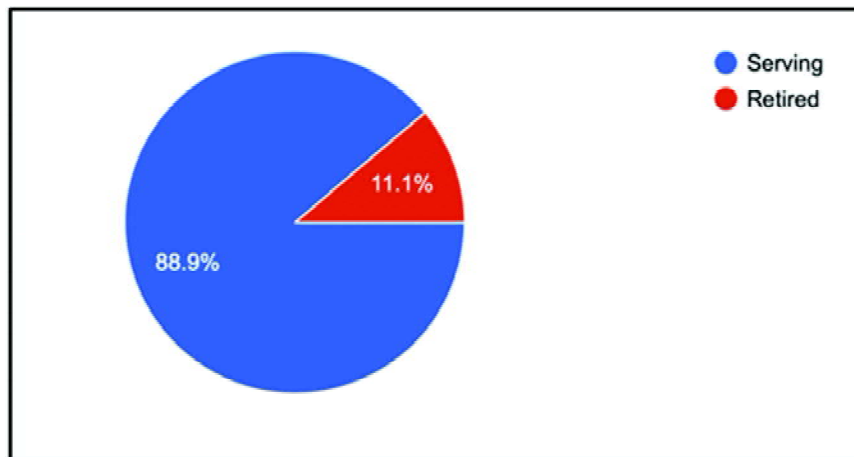


Figure 4: Serving or Retired

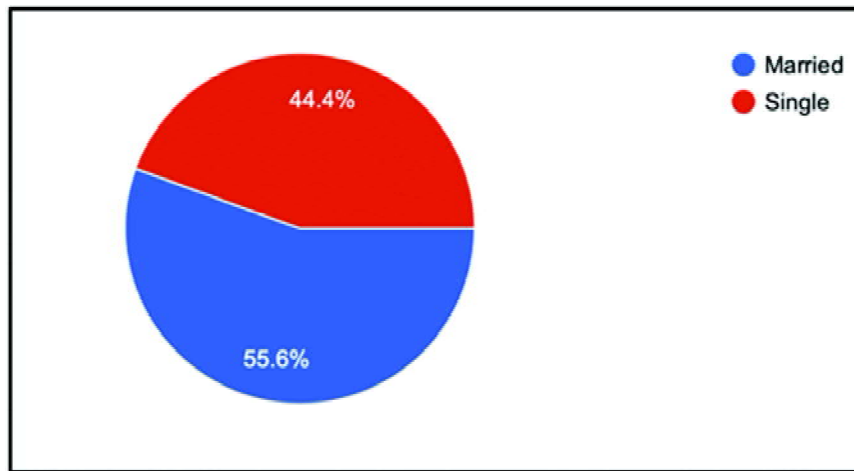


Figure 5: Married or Single

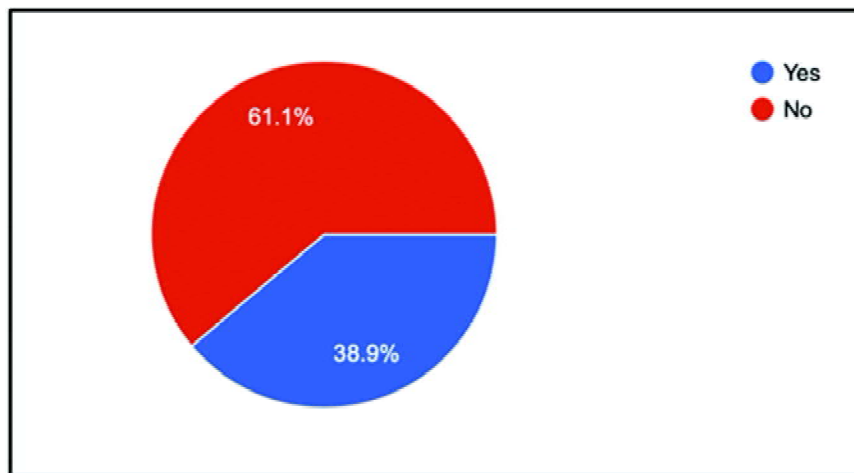


Figure 6: Having Children during time of Injury

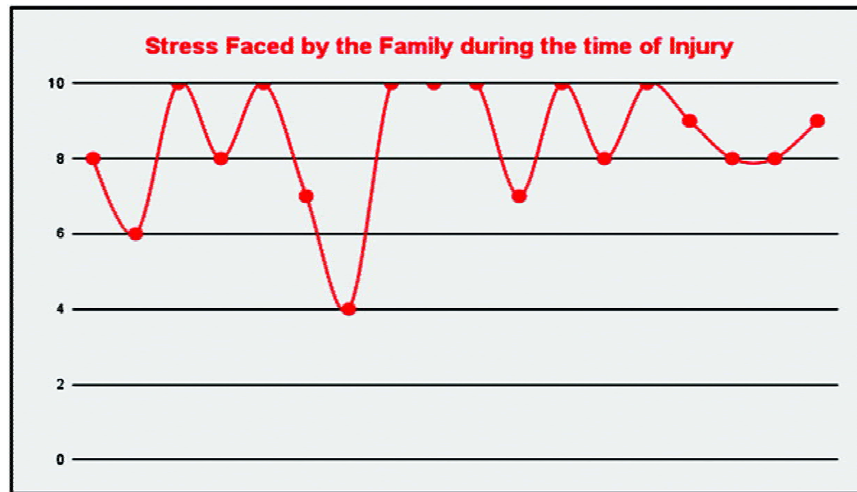


Figure 7: Stress on a Linear Scale from 1 to 10



Figure 8: Satisfaction on a Linear Scale from 1 to 10

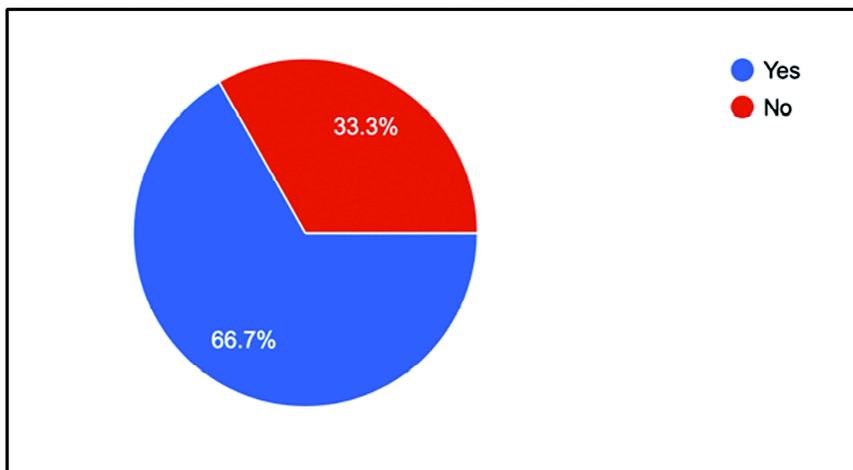


Figure 9: Sought Private Rehab Procedures

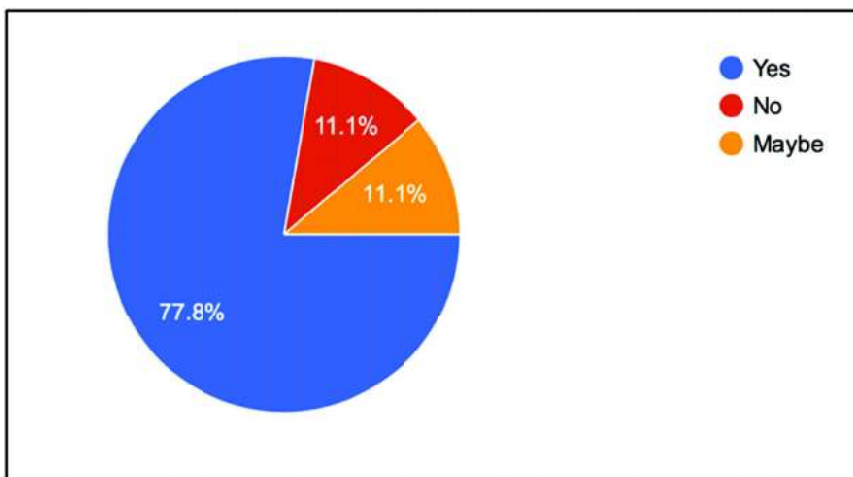


Figure 10: Would you continue to Serve

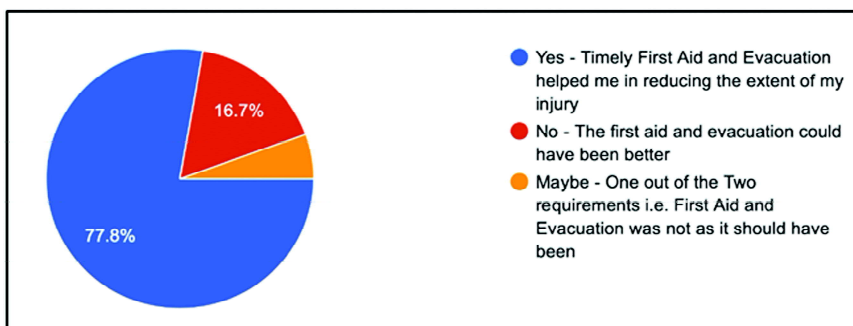


Figure 11: Relevance of First Aid during Injury

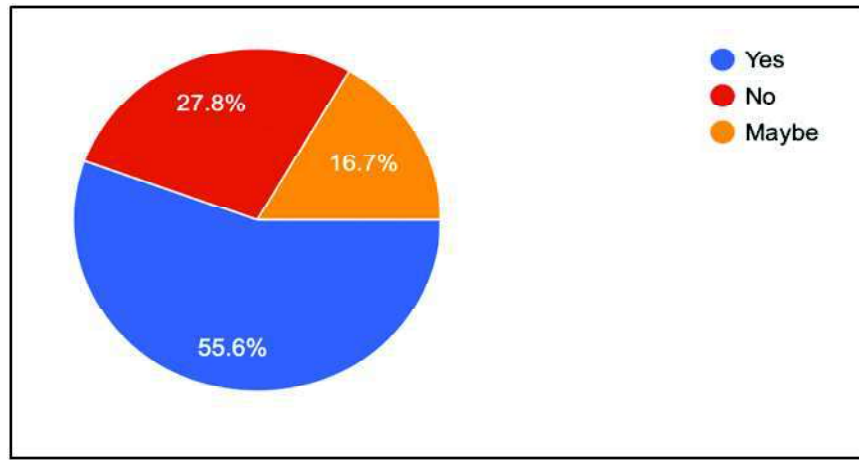
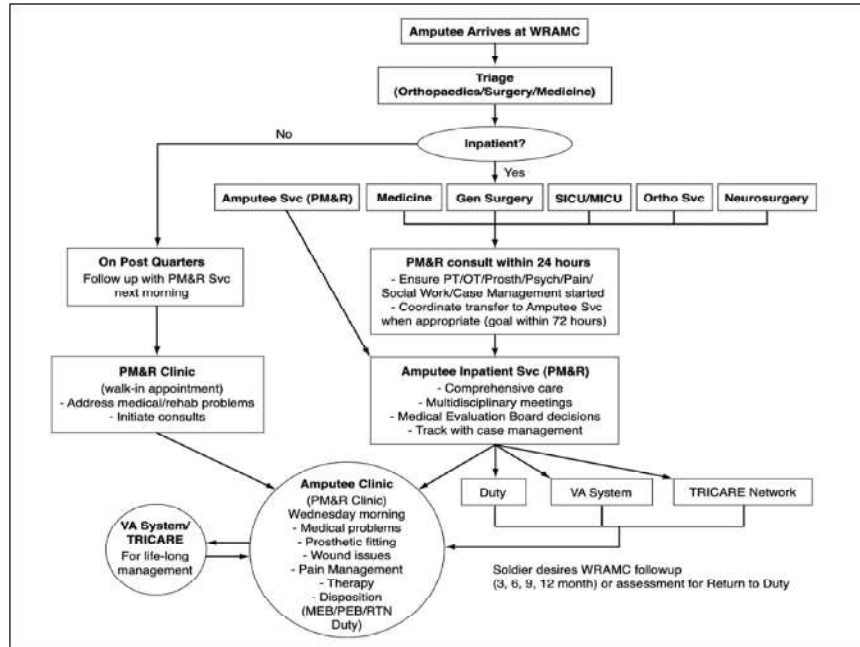


Figure 12: Did you Face Stress during Recovery

Appendix 'C'

US Army-Amputee Care Schematic and Flowchart



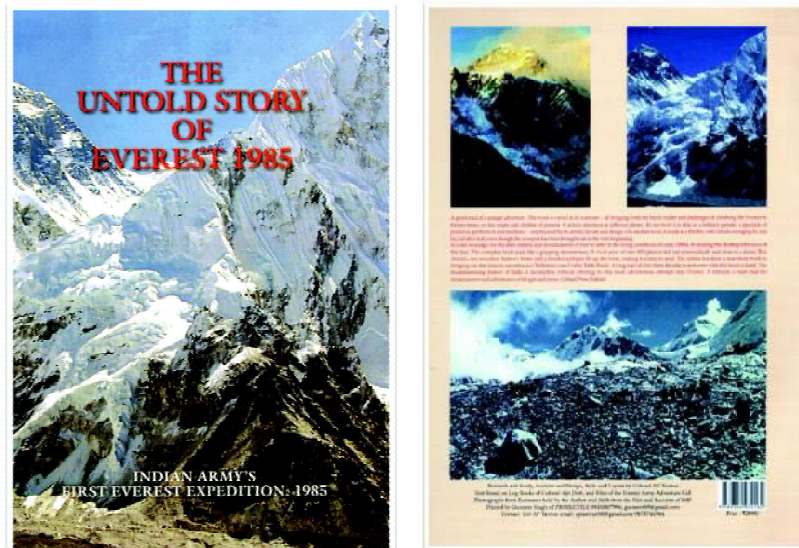
Endnotes

- ¹ 'Duty, Honour, Country' Address by Gen Douglas MacArthur at West Point in 1962.
- ² Defence National Rehabilitation Centre. Available at: - dnrc.org.uk
- ³ Army Order "AO/5/2020"
- ⁴ DGAfMS Medical Memorandum No. 203 – Artificial Limbs dated 2022
- ⁵ Promoting Successful Integration - Borden Institute of Medicine (US Army)
- ⁶ 'Borden Institute' – US Army Institute
- ⁷ 'DNRC | Repairing Our Seriously Wounded'.- United Kingdom
- ⁸ 'Borden Institute' – Care for the Combat Amputee

Review Articles and Book Reviews

The Untold Story of Everest 1985

Colonel Ashok Tanwar



Introduction

In 1985, the Indian Army launched an ambitious expedition to climb Mount Everest during the challenging post monsoon period from two routes: The formidable Southwest Face and the South Col route. The expedition required great skill, physical fitness, endurance, team work, courage, and determination.

Originally to be led by Lieutenant Colonel Prem Chand, regarded as 'One of the best climbers of his time', the expedition faced a sudden change in leadership when Lieutenant Colonel Prem Chand fractured his arm just before the expedition was set to begin. As a result, leadership passed to Brigadier Jagjit Singh while the team was enroute to Base Camp.

This team was considered one of the strongest ever to attempt the mighty Everest. However, the expedition, failed to summit and tragically, five officers lost their lives. In the aftermath, the expedition

The Untold Story of Everest 1985, by Colonel AP Tanwar, Pages 432, Price ₹ 1,117, ISBN-10 is 9354934161, and ISBN-13 is 978-9354934162, Publisher Projectile

Journal of the United Service Institution of India, Vol. CLIV, No. 638, October-December 2024.

underwent thorough scrutiny, with close analysis of its conduct, decision-making processes, leadership, and the personal ambitions of some of its climbers.

This book offers a first-hand account of that fateful expedition, shedding light on its events and providing invaluable lessons for future mountaineering endeavours.

About the Author

Colonel Ashok Pratap Tanwar, commissioned into 4 GUARDS in 1981, is a seasoned adventurer, photographer, and author of four books, including *A Triumphal Odyssey*. As a cadet, he completed the first Mountain Adventure Course at High Altitude Warfare School and undertook a 2,000 km 'Bike Hike'. He also documented the entire 76 km stretch of the Siachen Glacier. During the Everest Expedition, he rose from a support role to lead the first summit attempt, becoming the only surviving climbing officer of the South Col team. Post-retirement, he continues to contribute to adventure literature, drawing on records by Colonel Ajit Dutt.

About the Book

Climbing a mountain is not merely an exercise; it is a passionate devotion. Mount Everest, the highest peak in the world, commands respect and continues to draw mountaineers with its distinct physical, mental, and psychological challenges. It remains the ultimate challenge for humanity, with its summit reaching high above the liveable troposphere. Everest possesses its own aura, and the challenges it presents to climbers are uniquely daunting in scale and complexity.

As a climber ascends even to moderate altitudes, the air becomes thinner. At 5,500 m, there is only half the amount of oxygen available compared to sea level. While at sea level, blood is typically saturated with 98-99 per cent oxygen; at Everest's summit, this drops dramatically to only around 40 per cent. If the ascent continues steadily, increasing the climber's sleeping altitude each night, the body struggles to keep pace with the ever-decreasing oxygen supply, placing extreme physiological demands on the climber.

In May 1982, the then Army Chief, General Krishna Rao, PVSM announced that the Indian Army would launch an expedition to climb Mount Everest. Preparations commenced, including

selection trials where Indian Military Academy Gentleman Cadets (GCs) undertook climbs of Trishul and Kamet as part of their training. During the Kamet expedition, one of the members, GC Prem Prakash received the news that he had been commissioned into 2 MAHAR, marking a memorable moment in his journey.

The expedition, approved by General Arunkumar Shridhar Vaidya, PVSM, MVC**, AVSM, appointed Lieutenant Colonel Prem Chand as the team leader. In Aug 1984, the team was assigned the challenging South Col and South West Face routes. Following rigorous training and thorough preparation of essential equipment, the expedition departed from Delhi on 04 Aug 1985, beginning the approach march on 11 Aug from Jiri, a roadhead 180 kms from Kathmandu. The advance party had already begun their trek to the Base Camp two days prior. The first major obstacle arose when heavy rains washed away the bridge across the Dudh Koshi River at Numtala. The team responded by constructing an improvised ropeway to transport personnel and supplies across the river and building a log bridge near Namche.

The team established Base Camp on 26 Aug and began navigating the challenging Khumbu Icefall, setting up Camp I at an altitude of 20,000 feet on 07 Oct. The following day, they progressed towards Camp II through a crevasse-filled area, using ladders and ropes; Camp II also served as the Advanced Base Camp for both climbing routes. Camp III was established on the Lhotse Face by 14 Sep and was occupied by 20 Sep, at an altitude of 24,000 feet, after weather-related delays. The team then pursued two routes: the South Col and the more demanding South West Face, establishing Camps III and IV by 30 Sep at 23,000 and 23,700 feet, respectively. On the South Col route, after successfully navigating the Yellow Band and Geneva Spur, the first summit party left Base Camp on 27 Sep, reached the South Col on 02 Oct, and pushed the route to Camp IV at 25,500 feet by 05 Oct. However, the team was ultimately forced to abandon this summit attempt due to adverse weather conditions.

Following this, a second attempt was made by a team of eight climbers, including a Sherpa, led by Major KI Kumar. They reached the South Col and set off for the summit at 0600 hrs on 07 Oct, despite poor weather conditions. Battling through white-out conditions and knee-deep snow, they managed to reach within 'Handshaking Distance' of the South Summit by 1400 hrs but

were forced to abandon the attempt. A second team, led by Major Jai Bahuguna, followed them. Tragically, on the descent, Major KI Kumar slipped and suffered a fatal fall, plummeting 4,000 feet from the South Col and landing near Camp II.

As the weather deteriorated, the expedition leader instructed all teams to return to the Advanced Base Camp. The following morning, confirmation came that Major Jai Bahuguna's team was descending, having been advised that adverse weather conditions were expected to persist for several days. However, only ten climbers made it back to Camp II.

As the remaining climbers descended, they found Lieutenant Ramneet Bakshi in a deteriorated state, suffering from snow blindness and exhaustion. Opting to stay with him at the South Col, they informed Base Camp that they would attempt the descent the following day. However, severe weather, including winds reaching up to 100 kmph, made any movement impossible. While two members managed to descend on 09 Oct with great difficulty, Major Bahuguna, Lieutenant MUB Rao, Captain VPS Negi, and Lieutenant Bakshi returned to Camp IV at the South Col, unable to locate the ropes on the Lhotse face due to the blinding conditions. The next day, a rescue team attempted to reach them but was unable to get past Camp III. On 11 Oct, after a gruelling ten-hour effort, a second rescue team finally reached Camp IV, only to find that Lieutenant Bakshi and Captain Negi had already succumbed to the elements. Shortly after, Major Bahuguna passed away in the rescuers' presence. Lieutenant Rao, barely conscious, was carried by Havildar Gurung, who tragically slipped and fell 100 feet while attempting the descent. Miraculously, Gurung survived, but Lieutenant Rao sadly did not.

The climbers tackling the Southwest Face were instructed to return to Camp II due to deteriorating weather conditions. However, before withdrawing, they had made commendable progress, successfully opening a route up to just short of Camp VI.

At this critical juncture, Major General (later Lieutenant General) SK Pillai, PVSM, the Additional Director General of Military Training, flew into Base Camp with Lieutenant Colonel Prem Chand, who was reinstated as the team leader and he addressed the team members. Brigadier Jagjit Singh flew back in the same helicopter.

In the resilient 'Never say die' spirit of the Indian Army, the team resumed its attempt to scale the mountain on both routes, despite unprecedented snowfall that had damaged the pathways, requiring extensive re-fixing. By 27 Oct, they made a fifth attempt, only to be thwarted once again by near-cyclonic winds. The final push came on 28 Oct, but during the ascent, Lance Naik Anchuk was lifted by fierce winds and blown off the mountain. Naib Subedar Magan Bissa, who was roped to him, tried valiantly to arrest the fall but ended up tumbling 700 feet before coming to rest on a flat patch above South Col. Miraculously, they both survived. After six determined but unsuccessful attempts, the team, having tragically lost five officers, finally had to abandon their mission to summit Everest.

Incidentally, Major Jai Bahuguna's elder brother, the late Major Harsh Bahuguna, had also lost his life while attempting to climb Mount Everest in Apr 1971. Similarly, Major KI Kumar was the younger brother of the legendary Colonel 'Bull' Kumar, adding a poignant legacy of mountaineering dedication within their families.

The book is a treasure trove of anecdotes and insights. One notable account involves the team leader writing directly to General Vaidya before the expedition, expressing frustrations over bureaucratic obstacles. In response, General Vaidya summoned him to his office, stating, "Prem, it is not you who has failed. It is I, as your Chief, who has failed to provide you with the necessary support. Give me one month, and if the required support is still not in place, I will call off the expedition".

In the book, Colonel Tanwar states that while the team was enroute to Namche Bazar, Army Headquarters appointed 55-year-old Brigadier Jagjit Singh as the new team leader instead of promoting Lieutenant Colonel Pushkar Chand, the deputy leader. Though Brigadier Jagjit Singh was a seasoned mountaineer, he was considerably older than the rest of the team members. Upon assuming leadership, he promptly reviewed the climbing plan and recommended cancelling the attempt via the challenging Southwest Face, a proposal that Army Headquarters ultimately rejected. Additionally, he made several changes to the team's appointments.

The book also highlights issues such as interference from the Military Training Directorate and the problematic supply of non-standard box tents, which further compounded the challenges faced by the expedition.

Conclusion

The book is an exceptional account of a unique adventure, capturing the multifaceted challenges of summiting Sagarmatha. Well-organised and enriched with remarkable photographs, it stands out as a testament to perseverance in the face of immense odds. It vividly illustrates how the overwhelming and unforgiving forces of nature ultimately thwarted the mission, making it a compelling read for those intrigued by tales of resilience and adventure.

What also stands out, is the profound camaraderie and unwavering bonds among the mountaineers. A poignant example is when Lieutenant Ranmeet Singh Bakshi, suffering from snow blindness amidst deteriorating weather, was steadfastly supported by his fellow climbers, who chose not to abandon him—even at the cost of their own lives. The book also highlights the courageous rescue attempts undertaken in perilous weather, including the determined efforts to retrieve the body of Major KI Kumar, showcasing the deep commitment and loyalty that defines the spirit of mountaineering.

The author has rendered an invaluable service by documenting the events of this expedition, vividly portraying the conditions of the mid-1980s that magnified the challenges and captured the very essence of the endeavour. The expedition, while ultimately labelled a 'Failure', provided foundational lessons and became a crucial stepping stone for subsequent successful ascents. The book is lucidly written, well laid out, and offers readers a compelling narrative rich with insights.

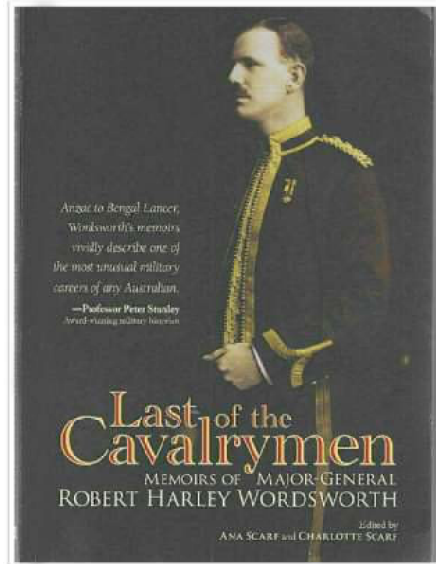
According to Colonel Narinder Bull Kumar, "All mountaineers need to read this book and ensure they do not repeat the mistakes of this expedition". However, this is not just a book for mountaineers; it is essential reading for anyone with a passion for adventure and for those who serve in uniform.

Colonel Tanwar's work serves as a valuable resource, shedding light on a significant chapter in India's mountaineering history. The book delves into the meticulous planning, rigorous training, and the physical and psychological endurance required for such a formidable endeavour.

Major General Jagatbir Singh, VSM (Retd)

Last of the Cavalrymen

Ana Scarf and Charlotte Scarf



Introduction

This book provides a first-hand account of the remarkable life of Robert Harley Wordsworth from New South Wales, Australia, who achieved military success in World War I with the Australian Army and later served with the British Indian Army, ultimately rising to the rank of Major General.

Post retirement, he returned to Australia, settling on his farm in Tasmania, where he embarked on another successful career in politics, serving as a Senator from Tasmania and later as the Administrator of Norfolk Island.

About the Editors

Encouraged by family and friends, Robert Harley Wordsworth, affectionately known as 'Wordy', gifted his daughter Ana Scarf and son David Wordsworth hours of recorded memories between

Last of the Cavalrymen: Memoirs of Major-General Robert Harley Wordsworth edited by Ana Scarf and Charlotte Scarf, Pages 273, Price AUD 49.95, ISBN 9780975640616, Publisher Forty South Publishing.

Journal of the United Service Institution of India, Vol. CLIV, No. 638, October-December 2024.

1979 and 1983. Ana and her daughter Charlotte took on the challenge of sharing his extraordinary story. This book is a compilation of those recordings, carefully organised, edited, and enriched with photographs, explanatory footnotes, and inputs from David and Ana's husband, Chris.

About the Book

The book is divided into three parts: the first covers Wordsworth's early years in Australia, his enlistment in the Australian 1st Light Horse Regiment, and his participation in the Battle of Gallipoli. It also details his role in the Sinai and Palestine Campaign, where he was 'Mentioned in dispatches' for his 'Conspicuous Bravery' in the Battle of Gaza.

The second and longest section of the book covers Wordsworth's transfer in 1917 to the 16th Bengal Lancers, his service on the North-West Frontier during the inter-war years, and his command of the regiment during its transition from horses to mechanisation. Rapidly promoted during World War II, he advanced from Brigade to Divisional Commander, serving in the Middle East, Iran, and later as Major General of the Armoured Corps at General Headquarters in Delhi. He resigned from the Army in 1946, feeling a need for financial stability to support his family. The third part covers his second career as a farmer, Senator, and Administrator of Norfolk Island, where he engaged closely with the local community, working actively to uplift the island.

After graduating from school in Australia in late 1912, he began his compulsory military training with the 41st Infantry, a militia unit. Shortly after, he was invited to raise a troop for the 9th Light Horse Regiment, where he received his commission. In 1914, he joined the Great War, reflecting that "There was no thought of how we would have to fight and the hardships and terrible slaughter we would have to endure". He expressed "Utter amazement that anyone could take on the great British Empire".

In Gallipoli, he quickly became aware of the harsh realities of warfare, describing it as 'A disastrous campaign'. They were ordered to "Take nothing ashore except what they could carry", leaving him with just a toothbrush he could not use due to lack of water and clothes he could not change for six months—only turning them inside out after knocking off the lice. Life in the trenches was

'Very Fatiguing', and rank offered no protection; he vividly recalls Major General Bridges, the Australian Divisional Commander, being killed by a sniper.

He recalls the Allied August Offensive which was launched with two new British Battalions who were 'Badly Trained' who never pushed ahead and were busy cooking breakfast on the beach while the General commanding the Corps was in still in bed in his cabin on warship anchored near the harbour. He was amazed how well the Australians fought.

He then fought in the battles of Romani, Magdhaba, Rafa, and Gaza, where his unit even captured a Turkish General, only to be ordered to retreat just as the enemy began to surrender. Shortly afterward, General Allenby took over command from General Murray.

He transferred to the Indian Army after facing unreasonable orders from General Allenby regarding the spit-and-polish standards of his troops during wartime, especially given that no cleaning materials were provided. During the inspection, he was 'Chewed up and spat out in no uncertain manner', which ultimately prompted his decision.

He recalls that the 'Army was the highest form of social life in India' and 'Very hard to get into', noting that if he had not joined during the war, he would 'Never have been accepted' as he might not have been able to 'Keep up the standard'. His success, he says, was largely due to his skills as a horseman and polo player, with 'Buying, selling, and training polo ponies' providing him with a modest private income.

He describes his retinue of staff and their caste system, stating that "It was one man, one job, and no man could do a different job from the one he was brought up in". The book covers regimental life in detail, explaining how it varied with the seasons and the type of station where they were posted. There were three types of stations: ones for Internal Security, others to safeguard the frontier, and a third from where units could be moved overseas for 'Imperial Defence'.

Their Regimental mess had a highly polished antique table, which was adorned with fine silver. Following their time in China, where they had been given 'Permission to loot', they acquired

gold curtains, Ming vases, and pure gold temple bells—one of which was sold for GBP 1,00,000 in the 1920s, with proceeds used to buy a farm, among other purchases. In 1922, the regiment was re-designated as 6 DCO Lancers and remains part of the Pakistani Army today. Wordsworth commanded the regiment in Delhi, describing the role of a commanding officer as being the *Mai Baap* (guardian), and with his wife, Margaret, by his side, they shouldered these responsibilities with distinction.

However, they were ‘Unprepared for modern war; in 1939’, as parliament had never ‘Taken the necessary steps to modernise’. At the time, the 21 Cavalry Regiments did not have a single tank. It took considerable time to determine the future of the Cavalry, eventually deciding to convert them into Armoured Regiments equipped with tanks and armoured cars. Instead, they were initially provided with off-road buses, and horsemen had to learn to drive these. British officers were reluctant to give up polo and focus on teaching their men driving and maintenance skills. The transition from horses to tanks is thoroughly explored, with the reluctance to embrace change clearly highlighted. Ultimately, it was the remarkable fighting qualities of the Indian soldier that prevailed.

He left his regiment in 1940 and, over the next six years, commanded an Armoured Brigade, initially stationed in Risalpur, which then moved to Malir near Karachi, where each regiment was issued with only one tank instead of the authorised 45. In Jun 1941, he took command of an Armoured Division, leading it into Iran, where they ‘Soon became the best division in tank warfare’. He notes that “Hitler missed one of the greatest opportunities of the war” by focusing on Stalingrad instead of the oilfields of Persia and Iraq.

His command took him to Turkey, Italy, and Cairo, and he even served as Army Commander for four months, remarking that, in the Army, “The higher up you go, the more lonely one becomes”.

Conclusion

In reading the book, several impressions emerge. Firstly, there is a sense of disappointment regarding Wordsworth’s role in the two World Wars. There is also a feeling that, as an Australian without a private income, not from Sandhurst, and without Staff College

credentials or 'An old school tie', he lacked certain traditional advantages. However, he compensated for these with his exceptional skills as a horseman and polo player.

A Regimental soldier, he spent most of his service with 16 Bengal Lancers, later re-designated as 6th Duke of Connaught's Own Lancers, which remains part of the Pakistani Army today. At Independence, the Regiment's Jat Squadron was transferred to 7 Cavalry and the Sikh Squadron to 8 Cavalry. The likely reason for the Regiment going to Pakistan was its assets being located there.

The other was his belief in the 'Right and might' of the British Empire, offering an insight into the life of the raj the *shikar* (hunt), polo, fishing trips, social life and servants as a result he never had to 'Tie his shoelaces'.

He provides insight into the Non-Cooperation Movement following the Rowlatt Act and the Jallianwala Bagh incident, stating that General Dyer 'Saved India from another mutiny' and viewing him as 'A hero and saviour of the Raj'. Wordsworth reflects on how the British ultimately turned against Punjab, the region that had provided the most manpower in World War I and helped shift the tide of the war. Yet, even years later, some still believe Dyer was justified, and, notably, a fund for him at the time raised GBP 1,00,000.

The book provides valuable insight into Army life, its diverse roles, and the transformation it underwent between the two World Wars. However, at its core, it reveals the insular world of British colonial rule, where figures like Wordsworth lived 'A rich man's life on a poor man's income' without ever bridging the gap with the Indian soldiers who served alongside them. The only Indian mentioned is his orderly, Jalal Khan, to whom he wrote annually until 1970, underscoring the bubble, he inhabited and what he deemed significant, unlikely so many others who maintained deep ties with the Indian Army they served in. For those interested in military history and colonial India, 'Last of the Cavalrymen' provides a compelling and informative read. The prose is engaging yet meticulous, appealing to both military history enthusiasts and casual readers interested in the nuanced journey of military transformation.

Major General Jagatbir Singh, VSM (Retd)

Aatma Nirbhar and Viksit Bharat @ 2047 Forging Ahead in Amrit Kaal by Brigadier (Dr) Rajeev Bhutani, Pages 377; Price 1,495; ISBN 978-93-340-3052-5; Published

Introduction and Theme

Through the writings of Brigadier (Dr) Rajeev Bhutani, edited by Professor Ashwani Mahajan, the concept of *Aatma Nirbharta* or self-reliance takes centre stage. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for *Aatma Nirbhar Bharat* or Self-Reliant India in 2020 set the groundwork for an even greater mission: *Viksit Bharat* by 2047 (Developed India by 2047), marking a century of Indian independence. India's journey toward becoming a developed nation by 2047 is anchored in self-reliance—a premise that runs throughout the book, culminating in each of its parts and sections. The foundation for *Aatma Nirbhar Bharat* was laid during the COVID-19 pandemic when India developed its own vaccine and supported other nations with their vaccination needs. Initially used for India's own population, the vaccine was subsequently extended to friendly nations. The book is divided into two distinct parts, with 11 chapters.

Foundations of Self-Reliant India

The first part of the book, serving as its foundation, focuses on India's challenges and opportunities, covering aspects from its historical background to the developmental hurdles and prospects it faces. This section presents a thorough descriptive research work. The author has both suggested and complemented various government initiatives with innovative ideas. Additionally, the author proposes supplementary solutions to government initiatives, aiming to achieve the vision of *Aatma Nirbhar Bharat* alongside *Viksit Bharat*.

This book initially addresses India's historical trajectory in political economy. Between the first and 17th century AD, India is estimated to have held the largest economy in the ancient and medieval world, controlling between one-third to one-fourth of global wealth. The five-year planning initiative was introduced in 1951, with the Planning Commission overseeing its implementation until 2017, when it was replaced by NITI Aayog, which introduced the first three-year action plan in 2017. Following this, the introduction of Goods and Services Tax marked a major tax reform, providing

'One country, one market, one tax' and replacing multiple direct taxes. This facilitated the seamless interstate movement of goods across India.

The emerging international environment was the next topic of discussion. The author opines that a bipolar Cold War-like world is unlikely to re-emerge, and that the world may be heading towards multipolarity, where nations will join or leave alliances based on their national interests, with strong leaders playing a decisive role in shaping the global order.

The author defines the way forward as assimilating technology and innovating upon it to produce advanced indigenous versions. At the apex level, a new organisation, proposed as the National Innovation Foundation 2047, is needed with the aim of making India a technological superpower by 2047. Complete national funds for all types of research and development, representing a fixed percentage of gross domestic product, should be allocated to this organisation, with any unspent amounts carried forward into the next financial year.

I commend the author's thorough and dedicated approach; the first part of the book provides a well-researched historical overview, effectively establishing context in a way that is both engaging and concise, offering a refreshing perspective on India's journey.

Pathways to Self-Reliance

The second part addresses India's pursuit of self-reliance and development in line with the PM's vision for *Aatma Nirbhar* and *Viksit Bharat*. This section explores the attainment of economic power through sectoral growth, military strength via reforms and improved funding, and informational power by recognising information as a critical national asset. It highlights India's diplomatic role, its advancements in science and technology at a rapid pace, and ultimately, the country's emergence as a global Soft Power.

In his first tenure, Prime Minister Narendra Modi set forth the vision of a New India, with the National Democratic Alliance government launching a range of policy initiatives and schemes to realise this goal. In his second tenure, the NaMo mission emphasised building a self-reliant India, or *Aatma Nirbhar Bharat*. While these initiatives are commendable, their success ultimately

hinges on effective implementation and achieving the intended outcomes. The author underscores that India's solutions should be rooted in harnessing indigenous resources, emphasizing that the shift from *nirbharta* to *aatma nirbharta* (reliance to self-reliance) is essential for sustainable development.

Historical Perspectives and Narration Style

Brigadier Bhutani has skilfully crafted this book as an anthology, with one of its strengths being the clear and concise presentation of Indian history from 3300 BC to modern times—a feature I found thoroughly engaging. The book opens a stimulating conversation, encouraging further questions and reflections that could add depth to its thought-provoking content.

The author's extensive military background and academic pursuits lend depth to his analysis, providing readers with a nuanced understanding of the strategic imperatives driving India's development agenda.

Conclusion and Recommendation

I can confidently recommend this book to people who are looking to read a concise if not one-sided account of India's path of glory and its forging. Additionally, the book serves as a valuable resource for policymakers, scholars, and those seeking to understand the dynamics of *Aatma Nirbhar* and *Viksit Bharat*.

Colonel Ravinder Kumar Sharma (Retd)

Military Operations: Legal Framework for Multi-Domain Warfare by UC Jha, Kishore Kumar Khera, (New Delhi: Vij Books) 2024, Pages 444, Price Hardcover ₹ 1420 and Paperback ₹ 1250, ISBN: 9788119438099.

“Modern armed conflicts often involve highly advanced and devastation weaponry. International Humanitarian Law aims to limit the suffering and destruction that such weapons can inflict. They set boundaries on the types of weapons that can be used and the methods of warfare that are permissible. The principle of proportionality and distinction require military commanders to weigh the potential harm to civilians and civilian objects against the military advantage gained from an attack. This careful consideration can help prevent excessive harm destruction”.

The above passage from the book, succinctly encapsulates its core message and the purpose that propelled the authors to come up with their work. It emphasises how international humanitarian law (IHL) seeks to mitigate the human cost of advanced and devastating weaponry used in modern conflicts. The authors underscore the principles of proportionality and distinction, which mandate military commanders to weigh the potential harm to civilians and civilian infrastructure against the anticipated military advantage of an operation. This balancing act, they argue, is crucial in preventing unnecessary suffering and destruction—a theme that resonates throughout the book.

Modern warfare has undergone profound transformations with the integration of advanced technologies, complex battlefields, and diverse domains of conflict. 'Military Operations: Legal Framework for Multi-Domain Warfare' by UC Jha and Kishore Kumar Khara is a timely and comprehensive exploration of the legal dimensions surrounding these transformations. It is an invaluable contribution to the relatively niche but increasingly significant field of military operational law.

The authors adopt a methodical approach to demystify intrinsic terminologies; legal frameworks relevant to diverse military operations and the necessary protections warranted within these contexts. They provide readers with clear explanations of applicable legal regimes, emphasising protections warranted for civilians and combatants under international law. The focus is primarily on explaining intrinsic terminology, applicable legal regimes, and the necessary protections warranted within these contexts. Discussions on command responsibilities and operational issues enrich the text, offering a pragmatic perspective on the execution of laws in active military scenarios.

The inclusion of environmental considerations is particularly noteworthy. Modern warfare increasingly intersects with environmental concerns, and the authors address how military operations can adhere to legal obligations to minimise ecological damage. This dimension adds depth to the book's coverage and aligns it with contemporary global concerns.

One of the book's standout qualities is its ability to present complex legal concepts in a lucid and engaging manner. The smoothly flowing text traces the relevant contours of its subject

matter in an accessible and illustrative manner. The explanatory approach, using straightforward language to highlight relevance, is likely to engage and retain the readers' interest. This is especially commendable given the technical nature of military law and the intricate legal principles governing modern warfare. Whether for a seasoned military professional, a diplomat, or a student of international relations, the book's relevance and clarity are likely to resonate strongly.

The book's title itself captures the essence of the book, underscoring the necessity of clear articulation of legal principles for military personnel and stakeholders involved in national security. As such, the book serves not just as a legal primer but also as a guide for ethical and strategic decision-making in multifaceted conflicts.

This work fills a critical gap in the literature on military operational law, offering insights across diverse combat platforms and operational machinery. Its broad scope ensures it will be of keen interest not only to military formations and units but also to the diplomatic community and academic institutions specialising in international law and relations. With its balance of theoretical analysis and practical insights, the book is a valuable resource for anyone involved in the complex interplay of law, policy, and warfare.

In conclusion, 'Military Operations: Legal Framework for Multi-Domain Warfare' is an authoritative and indispensable guide to understanding the legal intricacies of modern military operations. Jha and Khera have crafted a work that is not only timely but also essential, providing clarity and direction in an increasingly complex and interconnected world of conflict. This book is highly recommended for professionals and scholars alike who seek to comprehend the evolving dynamics of law and warfare.

Major General Nilendra Kumar, AVSM, VSM (Retd)

RESULTS OF ESSAY COMPETITIONS 2024

USI GOLD MEDAL ESSAY COMPETITION

**Subject: Non-Contact and Non-Kinetic Warfare in the Indian
Context: Concepts and Pathways**

First	36727-R Flt Lt Vatsalya Yadav D Ops (IEW) Air HQ (VB) Rafi Marg New Delhi-110 106	Gold Medal, Cash Award of Rs. 15,000/- and entry accepted for publication.
Second	IC 64349Y Col Vikram Tiwari Army War College Mhow- 453 442	Cash Award of Rs. 10,000/- and entry accepted for publication.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL SL MENEZES MEMORIAL ESSAY COMPETITION

**Subject: Meghna Heli Bridging Ops 1971 War: Appraisal and
Lessons**

First	IC-64109F Col Vikas Yadav Col QHQ 57 Mtn Div C/o 99 APO, Pin- 908457	Cash Award of Rs. 10,000/- Certificate and entry accepted for publication
Second	Lt Col Ravindra Singh Bangari (Retd) B-2, Chandana Apartments 82 Infantry Road Bengaluru Pin- 560001	Certificate

**USI- WAR WOUNDED FOUNDATION JOINT ESSAY
COMPETITION**

**Subject: Caring for the War-Disabled – How will their
Treatment Impact Future Recruitment into the Armed Forces?**

First	33345B Sqn Ldr Aryan Raj Chowdhary P- 153/504 Shekhon Vihar Palam New Delhi-110010	Cash Award of Rs. 15,000/-, Certificate and entry accepted for publication
Second	04545-B Cmde Varghese Mathew P-8/3, 12 Acres Complex, Ullan Batar Road, Metro Pillar- 242, Delhi Cantt, New Delhi- 110010	Cash Award of Rs. 10,000/- and Certificate

MEMBERSHIP

The following are eligible to become members of the Institution:

- Officers of the Armed Forces.
- Class I Gazetted Officers of Group 'A' Central Services.
- Any category mentioned above will be eligible even though retired or released from the Service.
- Cadets from the National Defence Academy and Cadets from the Service Academies and Midshipmen.

For further particulars, please write to Director General, USI of India, Rao Tula Ram Marg, (Opposite Signals Enclave) Post Bag No. 8, Vasant Vihar PO, New Delhi – 110057.

USI LATEST PUBLICATIONS; 2023-2024

Pub Code	Type	Title of Publication and Author	Price '₹'	Year
CMHCS-8/2024	Book	Valour and Honour: Indian Army through the Ages edited by Maj Gen Ian Cardozo, AVSM, SM (Retd) and Maj Gen Jagatbir Singh, VSM (Retd) M/s Pentagon Press	1495	2024
CMHCS-7/2024	Book	Alha Udal Ballad Rendition of Western Uttar Pradesh: A War Rendition of India by Author and Translator Dr Amit Pathak Manohar Publishers & Distributors	1695	2024
CMHCS-13/2024	Book	The Diplomatic Dimensions of Military History edited by Mr Anubhav Roy M/s KW Publishers Pvt Ltd	1280	2024
CMHCS-10/2024	Book	Udbhav: India's Military Heritage-Evolution of Indian Military Systems, War Fighting, and Strategic Thought, from Antiquity to Independence. Catalogue compiled by Indian Institute of Heritage (IIH), under the guidance of Sqn Ldr Rana TS Chhina, MBE (Retd) (Exhibition Catalogue) M/s KW Publishers Pvt Ltd	-	2024
CMHCS-11/2024	Book	Udbhav A Compendium of Activities and Events 2023-24 by CMHCS and The Indian Army	-	2024
CS3/R-117/2024	Book	The Victoria Cross Icon: Vision and Legacy by Maj Gen Shashikant G Pitre (Retd) M/s Vij Books of India Pvt Ltd	1,550	2024
CMHCS-9/2024	Book	India's Historic Battles Series – Imphal Kohima 1944 by Mr Hemant Singh Katoch HarperCollins India	399	2024
CMHCS-12/2024	Book	We Too Were There: Indians at Gallipoli by Col Tejinder Hundal, VSM, PhD M/s Manohar Publishers & Distributors	3,195	2024
Adm-Mil Ops/2024	Book	Military Operations: Legal Framework for Multi-Domain Warfare by Gp Capt Kishore Kumar Khera, VM (Retd) and Wg Cdr (Dr) UC Jha (Retd) M/s Vij Books of India Pvt Ltd	1,750	2024
Adm-7 UNPO/2024	Book	India and the UN Peace Operations: In Service of Humanity and Global Peace by Colonel (Dr) Kulwant Kumar Sharma (Retd) M/s KW Publishers Pvt Ltd	1,880	2023
Adm-SYB/2023*	Year Book	Strategic Year Book 2023 Editor-in-Chief: Maj Gen BK Sharma, AVSM, SM** (Retd), and edited by Lt Gen GS Katoch, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd), Gp Capt Sharad Tewari, VM (Retd), and Dr Jyoti Yadav M/s Vij Books of India Pvt Ltd	2250	2023
M-1/ 2023*	Monograph	India Tibet Relations 1947-1962 by Mr Claude Arpi M/s Vij Books of India Pvt Ltd	395	2023
OP-9/2023*	Occasional Paper	Fourth General KV Krishna Rao Memorial Lecture Theaterisation in Light of the Malayan Campaign and The Fall of Singapore in World War II, held at Manekshaw Centre on 29 Dec 2022 by Gen MM Naravane, PVSM, AVSM, SM, VSM (Retd) M/s Vij Books of India Pvt Ltd	350	2023
OP-8/2023*	Occasional Paper	First Lt Gen PS Bhagat Memorial Lecture Legacy of Lt Gen Prem Bhagat – A Visionary and Strategic Leader, held at Manekshaw Centre on 14 June 2023 compiled by Ms Tanya Jain M/s Vij Books of India Pvt Ltd	350	2023
OP-7/2023*	Occasional Paper	Analysing the Indus Waters Treaty 1960: Beyond the Hype, Hoopla and The Hyperbole by Col Anurag Jyoti and Prof (Dr) Raj Kamal Kapur M/s Vij Books of India Pvt Ltd	250	2023
OP-6/2023*	Occasional Paper	ORBAT and Decorations for The Azad Hind Fauj by Mr Neelotpal Mishra M/s Vij Books of India Pvt Ltd	350	2023
OP-5/2023*	Occasional Paper	A Joint Concept of Operations by Air Mshl (Dr) Diptendu Choudhury, PVSM, AVSM, VM, VSM (Retd) M/s Vij Books of India Pvt Ltd	250	2023
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OP-2/2023*	Occasional Paper	The Great Helmsman and the Generalissimo: A Personal Feud That Endures by Col Sanjay Kannothe, VSM M/s Vij Books of India Pvt Ltd	250	2023
OP-1/2023*	Occasional Paper	The Ukrainian Conflict: Heavy Metal still Rocks the Charts by Maj Gen Jagatbir Singh, VSM (Retd) and Maj Gen VK Singh, VSM (Retd) M/s Vij Books of India Pvt Ltd	250	2023
CS3/R-116/2023	Book	Comprehensive Development of the Northeast – Window to India's Act East Policy by Mr Jitesh Khosla, IAS (Retd) M/s Vij Books of India Pvt Ltd	1,250	2023
R-115/2023*	Book	Grey Zone Warfare: Way Ahead for India by Lt Gen Dushyant Singh, PVSM, AVSM (Retd) M/s Vij Books of India Pvt Ltd	1,450	2023

USI

(Estd. 1870)

OUR ACTIVITIES

Centre for Military History and Conflict Studies (CMHCS)

The CMHCS was established in Dec 2000 at the behest of the three Service Headquarters for encouraging an objective study of all facets of Indian military history with a special emphasis on the history of the Indian Armed Forces. It focuses on diverse aspects of the history of Indian military evolution, policies, and practices—strategic, tactical, logistical, organisational, socio-economic, as well as the field of contemporary conflict studies in the broader sense.

Centre for Emerging Technologies for Atma Nirbhar Bharat (CETANB)

The centre was established on 01 Jan 2024 and also includes Cyber Centre of Excellence (CCoE) as part of it in conjunction with Cyber Peace Foundation. The centre's objective is to forge emerging technologies with geostrategic and geopolitical situations with a view to make the services self-reliant by making possible the indigenous production of defence equipment and spares. The CCoE trains military personnel in artificial intelligence, cyber, and machine learning in addition to cyber forensic analysis in its well-equipped lab.

Gold Medal Essay Competition

Every year the Institution organises a Gold Medal Essay Competition open to all officers. These essays, the first one of which was introduced in 1871, constitutes a barometer of opinions on matters that affect national security in general and the defence forces in particular.

USI War Wounded Foundation Joint Essay Competition

This essay competition was instituted in 2021 after the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between USI and the War Wounded Foundation. The competition is open to all across the globe and must be on the subject of issues relating to the experiences and/or rehabilitation of war disabled personnel of the Indian Armed Forces.

Lt Gen SL Menezes Memorial Essay Competition

This has been instituted from 2015 on a subject related to armed forces historical research. The essay competition is open to everyone, all across the globe.

Lectures, Discussions, and Seminars

A series of lectures, discussions, and seminars on service matters, international affairs, and topics of general interest to the services are organised for the benefit of local members in Delhi.

MacGregor Medal

This medal is awarded to armed forces personnel for valuable reconnaissance and adventure activity they may have undertaken.

Centre for Strategic Studies and Simulation (CS3)

The erstwhile Centre for Research and its resources have been merged into the new centre named as CS3 w.e.f. 01 Jan 2005. The centre aims at conducting detailed and comprehensive enquiry research, and analyses of national and international security related issues, and gaming and simulation of strategic scenarios, to evolve options for wider discussion and consideration.

Centre for UN Peacekeeping (CUNPK)

The centre was established in 2000 and functioned with USI to organise workshops, seminars, and training capsules for peacekeepers, observers, and staff officers, both Indian and foreign. It also oversaw the practical training of Indian contingents. In Aug 2014, CUNPK moved out under the Integrated Headquarter of Ministry of Defence (Army). The USI has now established a United Nations (UN) Centre which is focusing on operational, strategic, and policy issues related to UN Peacekeeping. It also organises seminars and conferences on such issues.

Correspondence Courses

The Institution runs regular correspondence courses for officers of the armed forces to assist them in preparing for promotion examinations, and for the entrance examinations to the Defence Services Staff College and the Technical Staff College. Over the years, this has been significant and well-received activity.

USI Journal

The USI Journal is the oldest surviving defence journal in the country and in Asia, having first appeared in 1871. In the era when there is a feeling that free expression of views by defence personnel is not looked upon kindly by the establishment, the journal in fact provides just such a forum, without regard to seniority and length of service in the armed forces, subject to propriety and quality of the written work.

Library and Reading Room

The library holds over 68,000 books and journals, including some books from the 17th, 18th, and 19th Centuries, on an astonishing variety of subjects. While the principal emphasis is on strategy and defence, there are a large number of works on different vistas of Indian life. There are memoirs, biographies, recollections, diaries, journals and manuscripts for scholars and researchers. The reading room is air-conditioned, spacious and well-stocked in terms of current reading material. Library was automated in 2002.