

CENTRE FOR LAND WARFARE STUDIES (CLAWS)

**BORDER MANAGEMENT: GUARDING THE FRONTIERS
CHALLENGES TO BORDER MANAGEMENT**

17 JULY 2014

SEMINAR REPORT

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Introduction

India shares 15,106.7 km of its boundary with six nations, Pakistan, China, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar and Bangladesh. Its coastal boundary of 7,516 kms includes 5,422 kms of coastline in the mainland and 2,094 kms of coastline bordering the islands. The border runs through 92 districts in 17 states and the coastline touches 13 states and union territories. There are 1197 islands of India accounting for 2094 km of additional coastline. All states except Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Delhi and Haryana, have one or more international borders or a coastline. Indian frontiers are a mix of a variety of terrain including mountains, plains, hills, high altitude and riverine areas, deserts and also have a degree of ethnic mix and habitation. The complexities of our borders have a multi-faceted dimension due to varying ground realities, number of agencies guarding the borders and belligerent neighbours on our northern and western borders.

The 1999 Kargil War brought into focus vulnerability of our borders and the need to review border security in a holistic manner. The Kargil Review Committee Report emphasised on reforming the national security system. This resulted in the formation of a Group of Ministers (GoM) which set up four task forces, one of them was the task force on border management often referred to as Godbole report. Based on this report, (GOM) recommended a set of measures for effective border management of both, the land and coastal borders. The Division of Border Management (BM) was created in January 2004 in MHA in pursuance of GoM recommendations for paying focused attention to matters related with management of land and coastal borders, strengthening of border policing, creation of infrastructure like roads and fencing in border areas and implementation of Border Area Development Programme (BADP). The 26/11 attack in Mumbai highlighted the vulnerability of our coastal security system leading to a number of committees and task force on coastal security. There have been a number of commonalities in the various reports on the subject of Border Management but implementation has varied due to various compulsions.

The first thought that comes to mind when speaking of a Border is 'external threat'. But there are other dimensions to it, like illegal migration, drug trafficking, smuggling and infiltration of anti-national elements. A Border is an enabler, land bridge, fence and deterrence. How it is employed depends on the strategic significance of piece of land which is required to be guarded. Chanakya had said "Neighbouring states are most relevant as far as foreign policies and national security is concerned". The statement holds true even in today's world.

Actual Ground Position Line (AGPL) in Siachen glacier, Line of Control (LC) in J&K, International Boundary (IB) with Pakistan from J&K to Gujarat, Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China are the varying nomenclatures based on the ground situation as well as different claim lines. There are various forces looking after the border that include the Indian Army, Assam Rifles, Border Security Force (BSF), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB). The Indian Navy and the Coast Guard looks after the maritime frontiers. The dynamics of the border and the forces deployed keeps changing with the place and with time.

On the western side of the country, the LC and AGPL are looked after by the Army under the aegis of Ministry of Defence. BSF is deployed from J&K to Rann of Kutch in Gujarat. It also guards the Indo-Bangladesh border. The area from Eastern Ladakh region to Arunachal Pradesh is guarded by ITBP. The Indo-Nepal and Indo-Bhutan border is guarded by the SSB. Assam Rifles is deployed in Northeast India for counter-insurgency and guarding the Indo-Myanmar border. While there is one agency in charge of a border, there still exist inter agency and inter ministry issues in most areas though few issues have been taken care of by mechanisms that have evolved on its own with the passage of time.

The ground situation varies at India's borders. There is almost war like situation on AGPL and LC, a humanitarian problem on Bangladesh border due to illegal migration and relatively tranquil borders along China except regular incursions. Bhutan and Nepal borders are porous leading to smuggling and frequent crossover of inhabitants. The Myanmar border, due to thick vegetation cover and rugged terrain has been an easy conduit for drug smuggling as well as insurgent movement. Due to such large magnitude of concerns, border management remains the most complex operation during peace time. The Management of Border now encompasses Border security, Border infrastructure, economy i.e. trade and border trade, Border population and perception management. Every border is unique in respect of the challenges requiring unique solutions. These are:

- Illegal migration.
- Illegal activities, includes drug and Arms trafficking besides smuggling of goods.
- Induction of fake Indian currencies (FICN).
- Activities of Indian insurgent groups (IIGs).
- Terrain which poses another big challenge to border surveillance and security.

Indo-Pakistan Border

India's western border stretches from NJ 9842 in J&K to Rann of Kutch IN Gujarat. India shares almost the entire border of 3323 kms with Pakistan. India's 106 Km long border with Afghanistan is under Pakistani control in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir. India's border with Pakistan is divided distinctly in three segments. The first segment is AGPL which separates both the countries in Siachin Glacier area. The next segment is the LC, which extends from NJ 9842 to Sangam in J&K and the third segment is International boundary from LC endpoint till Rann of Kutch in Gujarat.

AGPL Indian troops have been deployed at Salto Ridge since 1984 to deny the Siachin Glacier area to Pakistan. The deployment was undertaken to thwart the impending Pakistani move to occupy Salto Ridge. As both countries differ on their interpretations of "*Area Northwards of NJ 9842*" as per the Shimla Agreement, the deployment has continued in the region since 1984. Both the armies face inclement weather conditions and are yet to formally demarcate the AGPL as well as own defended posts. The border is effectively managed by the army and the air force.

LC The LC extends from NJ 9842 to Sangam in J&K. It is guarded by army units along with BSF battalions which are under operational control of the army. The LC is a tense 740 km long deployment by both countries which is often prone to intermittent firing on a daily basis. According to one view, "LC is a geographic necessity, political blunder, soldier's nightmare, where peace is rare and which was supposed to be temporary but has been permanent". A continuous battle for moral ascendancy on the LC often leads to clashes as well as raids on posts more often by Pakistan though India has demonstrated tremendous restraint in countering such actions.

The situation at LC came under intense scrutiny when Pakistan started proxy war in J&K in early 1990s and began assisting the militants in crossing over the LC. This led to creation of LC fence which has added another dimension for the local population. As per Shimla Agreement, no defensive structures could be constructed in the near vicinity of LC, hence the fence has been constructed at varying distances from the LC keeping in mind the terrain and tactical aspects of domination and patrolling. The construction of the fence has led to sharp decrease in infiltrations from the Pakistani side as Indian troops have been able to effectively stymie the movement of insurgents. However, the construction of fence has led to hardships for the local population. Their lands have been taken away and the area ahead of the fence which cannot be effectively dominated due to ground dispositions, has been mined. The construction of crossing points on the LC has re-enabled people to people contact, which was initially cut off due to strained relations between both the countries.

India and Pakistan have been deployed on the LC for last 60 years, but there has not been any consensus mechanism between both the countries to regulate the activities. Even though ceasefire agreement has been in place since 2003, there are frequent violations leading to escalation of hostilities. Each side is suspicious of other's motives, leading to a near warlike state on a daily basis. The army and BSF units work in tandem with one another and there is synergy between both the organisations on the LC. The other stakeholders are intelligence agencies, local police and district authorities. Though there have been some concerns regarding culpability of the local administration during initial years of insurgency, by far, there are good working relations within all stakeholders.

International Border The 2289 km long international border with Pakistan is guarded by the BSF during peacetime. Its tasks include border surveillance, prevention of illegal crossings and smuggling. Deployed in 609 Border Outposts, 49 BSF Battalions are aided in their task by creation of a border fence in J&K and Punjab. As part of the BADP, 1958 kms of fence has already been constructed out of the planned 2044 kms at the sanctioned cost of Rs 1201 Crore.

There is synergy between the army, BSF and the civil administration. Glitches, if any are resolved locally during various interactions. The western border follows the principle of One Border – One Ministry. Guarding the AGPL and LC is the responsibility of Army which functions under Ministry of Defence and responsibility of guarding the IB is of BSF which functions under the MHA.

Challenges Pakistan deliberately refuses to recognise the IB in J&K, calling it a working boundary. This border has been used by them for infiltration and regular cross-border firing. There has been no confidence building measures over the last 60 years along the LC and IB due to mutual suspicion. Unlike the Bangladesh border, there are limited people trying to cross to India from Pakistan. The bigger concern along the Pakistan border is smuggling of arms and drugs.

Indo-China Border

The northern border with China extends from Eastern Ladakh in J&K to Arunachal Pradesh. It is a very unique border as it is the most peaceful disputed border in the world. The last skirmish between both the countries took place in October 1975. There are various elements of the northern border with China. It includes the LAC, the Indian and Chinese perception of claim lines and the IB. In Ladakh, there are two LAC's, one what India perceives and the other is the Chinese perception, thus posing a challenge to border management. China is under illegal occupation of area in Aksai Chin. In the East, the LAC runs along the McMahon Line as per Indian perception whereas China claims that entire state of Arunachal Pradesh is Chinese territory and part of southern Tibet and India is under illegal occupation of Chinese territory. The Indo-China border management is with the ITBP with Indian army holding some stretches in Arunachal Pradesh.

The area of Ladakh and upper reaches of Arunachal Pradesh are sparsely inhabited. Due to low population levels, the state agencies were not keen on development of infrastructure along the border. The lack of infrastructure has now become a major stumbling block in quick deployment against Chinese incursions. Whereas on the other side of the border, Chinese have created a network of roads leading upto the IB. Chinese goods are easily available in Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh. Locals are getting more inclined towards China because of the people friendly policies.

India has a legacy of border dispute with China. Even though a number of agreements have been signed between both the countries, overcoming this dispute will take time and effort from both the countries. China has been making efforts in this regard and has managed to resolve its boundary issues with twelve countries. While resolving territorial issues, it has given away sixty four to eighty six percent of its territory. India also needs to find solutions regarding border management especially in regard to China. The Indo-China border is extremely sensitive, even small incidents can trigger an aggressive behaviour by either of the countries.

Challenges The resolution of border dispute with China is the most critical action to be taken by the Indian authorities. Indian response is hindered due to a large number of stakeholders. Though ITBP is primarily responsible for guarding the border, army gets involved due to its deployment along the border leading to inter agency issues. The army's contention for placing ITBP under operational command is another bone of contention. Also, the resolution of any incident along Indo-China border is handled by China Study Group (CSG). This is another thorny issue as MEA is responsible for resolution of all border dispute cases. A low level of available infrastructure along the border is another major challenge for the security forces. Only 13 roads had been constructed till 2012, out of the planned 73 roads.

Indo-Nepal and Indo-Bhutan Border

Indo-Nepal border is 1751 km long with Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Sikkim sharing border with Nepal. Indo-Bhutan border is 699 km in length. The states that share the border with Bhutan are Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, and West Bengal. These two borders are guarded by SSB. The main challenges faced due to a porous border are of illegal immigration for economic reasons, smuggling and terrorism.

Indo-Myanmar Border

India shares a 1643 km long border with Myanmar, of which 171 km is not demarcated. Till the 19th century, border was alien to the tribes. It was and still is irrelevant for them, posing a challenge for border management in the Indo-Myanmar border. Four northeast states share the border with Myanmar.

- Arunachal Pradesh 520 km.

- Nagaland 215 km.
- Manipur 398 km.
- Mizoram 510 km.

Terrain on the Indo-Myanmar border is semi mountainous with steep slopes covered with dense forest, perennial and seasonal rivers and nullahs with numerous waterfalls. Cross-country movement is extremely difficult and is restricted to existing tracks only. Thick vegetation restricts both ground and aerial observation. Small villages in the border areas have tribal population, who share affinity with population in Myanmar.

The Indo-Myanmar border is presently guarded by 15 Assam Rifles battalions. The battalions are deployed in Company Operating Bases (COB) on the likely routes of ingress and egress. Managing the border is difficult due to dense forests and a poor infrastructure including lack of connectivity on both sides. There is a proposal to handover the border guarding duties to BSF. It will entail raising of 41 additional battalions, 12 sector HQs and four frontier HQs. There is also a proposal to construct a barbed wire fence along the border.

Myanmar is important to India due to historical, ethnic and cultural ties. Myanmar is of great strategic importance as it is a gateway to South East Asia and holds huge economic potential for India. Myanmar also provides China a route to the second coastline into the Arabian Sea from Kunming through the Sittwe port. The border as well as the Arakan coast can become a vulnerability for India due to increasing Chinese economic ties with Myanmar. China has already made huge investments in Myanmar in terms of infrastructure development and construction of pipelines for purchase of oil and natural gas. India needs to engage Myanmar as it is important for the development of the North eastern region of India.

Challenges

Identical tribes live on both sides of the boundary, which never had the culture of boundaries. Nagas and Chin tribes live on stretches extending from Myanmar to India. Thus, free movement cannot be refused as people in the Indian side of the border have families staying on the other side. Also, a 16 km free trade zone exists between both the countries which makes frequent checking, a laborious process. The northeast region has been facing insurgency since independence. Many insurgent groups have their training camps in Myanmar. Dense forest cover, small pockets of population and limited roads afford easy movement to the insurgent groups.

The Indo-Myanmar border is vulnerable due to narco-terrorism, smuggling of arms, and FICN making it imperative for the security of this border to be addressed in a holistic manner as compared to other Indian borders. Intelligence inputs indicate that a major modernization drive of the Chinese Army has released vast quantities of old weapons, some

of which are being offloaded to arms dealers in Myanmar to reach insurgent groups. Security concerns along Indo-Myanmar Border need to be viewed holistically, particularly with reference to the influence and physical presence of China in socio-economic and military affairs of Myanmar. Proximity of Indo-Myanmar Border with the “Golden Triangle” is one of the important aspects to be considered while deciding the doctrine of deployment. The junction of India, Bangladesh and Myanmar is also vulnerable due to the Chakma problem and frequent infiltration of Muslims from Myanmar to Bangladesh.

Border management on Indo-Myanmar should involve deployment for physical domination of the border, counterinsurgency operations to restrict movement of insurgents, synergy with state agencies for checking drug smuggling, seamless integration between agencies of India and Myanmar and nominated points for trade. The border surveillance cannot be achieved by construction of a fence due to nature of terrain and cultural similarity of people. The present proposal of raising a border guarding force by BSF will lead to deployment of almost 50,000 troops. Also, construction of the fence alongwith a border road network will cost almost 10,000 crores. The desired levels of surveillance will still not be achieved by deployment in BoPs. Hence, deployment in COBs with an effective intelligence network amongst the local population will provide tangible dividends.

Indo-Bangladesh Border

The 4096.7 km Indo-Bangladesh border is guarded by the BSF with 77 battalions deployed in 809 BoPs. Another 308 additional BoPs are under various stages of construction. The Indian side of the border is contiguous to West Bengal (2216.7 km), Assam (263 km), Meghalaya (443 km), Tripura (856 km) and Mizoram (318 km). The terrain comprises of plains, low hills, forests and riverine segments. The entire area is heavily populated with cultivation right upto the IB.

The domination of IB by BSF is in the form of foot Patrolling, mobile patrolling, zero line patrolling, observation posts, fence gate management, special operations on information. BSF is responsible for operations within one km of the IB. Area beyond one km is secured by the local police. A barbed wire fence has also been constructed along the border. A distance of 2762 km has been fenced of the planned 3359.59 km. Also, 3585 km of border roads have been constructed as part of BADP to aid local population as well as the security agencies.

Challenges The biggest challenge on Indo-Bangladesh border is illegal migration of people from Bangladesh to India. Majority of the illegal migration takes place for economic reasons. Due to ethnic similarity of both sides of the border population and habitation rights up to zero line, detection of illegal migrants becomes difficult. The problem is further compounded by local state politics which wants to integrate the immigrants for vote bank gains. According to one of the panellists, the fence is cut 800 times on a daily basis. It highlights the desperation of the people of Bangladesh to migrate to India as well as the difficulties faced by the local authorities in maintaining the fence. The continuous illegal

migration has led to alteration of demographic patterns along the border districts. As per 2001 census, nine border districts of Assam have a Muslim majority.

The next major challenge is rampant smuggling across the border. Electronic items, silk yarn, raw jute, fruits, eatables and clothing items are smuggled in large quantities from Bangladesh. Timber, finished goods are smuggled from Indian side. Indian insurgent groups from northeast states have their training camps in Chittagong Hills area and have often sneaked across to Bangladesh when the security forces launch their operations against these groups in India.

The boundary issues with Bangladesh were addressed in the Protocol to the Agreement between the governments of India and Bangladesh dated 6 Sept. 2011. Its implementation on ground is awaiting ratification. The total of 6.10 km of boundary is not demarcated. 2595.67 acre of Indian land is under adverse possession of Bangladesh and 3068.44 acre of Bangladesh's land is under adverse possession of India. There are 111 Indian enclaves spread over an area of 17158.138 acres in Bangladesh whereas in India, there are 51 Bangladeshi enclaves covering an area of 7110.02 acres. Though by exchanging each other's enclaves, India will lose out on many acres of land, but this would make border management easier.

Maritime Security

It is often seen that when faced with a territorial dilemma people tend to equate far more with a land-centric dispute because it can be seen whereas any maritime dispute is generally invisible from the public eye and may be of lesser significance in public perception. The legal dimensions of territorial waters, contiguous zone and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) are generally not well known. India's coast line is 7516 km long which includes 1197 islands with nine maritime states and four Union Territories. There are 13 major and 187 minor ports alongwith offshore infrastructure which has to be secured.

India's maritime neighbourhood is characterised by close proximity to major sea lines of communication and energy lines, drug centres of Golden Crescent and Golden Triangle and two major hot-spots of piracy i.e. the Horn of Africa and Malacca. India's maritime security policy has to take into account the regional maritime concerns and thus plan a comprehensive security policy.

Indian Navy is responsible for overall maritime security including coastal security. It is assisted by the Coast Guard, State Marine Police and by other State agencies in this task. Coast Guard is responsible for coastal security in territorial waters including areas to be patrolled by coastal police. It is also responsible for overall coordination between central and state agencies in all matters relating to coastal security. Marine Police is responsible for patrolling and surveillance of infrastructure of coastal areas.

Coastal security has been considerably enhanced post 26/11 attack. The National Committee on Safety and Maritime Security has been instituted. The Committee is mandated to oversee implementation of recommended measures and is headed by the Cabinet Secretary. The committee will also ensure effective coordination among central ministries/ agencies and coastal states governments and Union Territories.

The objective of Coastal Security Scheme is “to strengthen infrastructure for patrolling and surveillance of coastal areas, particularly shallow areas close to coast”. The scheme aims at improving capabilities, indulge in capacity building, improve communication among multiple agencies etc. under this scheme, a uniform system of registration of vessels has been adopted. It has also been instituted that all ships give a pre-arrival notification and an International Shipping and Port Security Code has also been instituted. A surveillance network has also been set-up. Phase-I of this network encompassed networking of forty-six remote radar sites. Phase-II is aimed at achieving real-time coastal surveillance from remote location. State maritime boards have been constituted in many states like Maharashtra and Gujarat. Joint Operation Centres have been created in many cities like Mumbai, Kochi etc. which are being manned by the Indian Navy. The purpose of these centres is to maintain complete situational awareness.

Challenges India has one maritime dispute, resolution of Sir Creek boundary dispute with Pakistan. However, the greater challenge has been the comprehensive review of coastal security post 26/11 attack. Though a number of measures were recommended post 26/11 and are being implemented, a structured and comprehensive coastal security plan is yet to be achieved. The draft coastal security bill is still under consideration even after six years since 26/11.

Areas of Concern

Policy on Border Management India does not have a border policy or a national security policy. The National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) has formulated the Draft National Security Policy, which is still under consideration. Though the Department of Border Management was created under the Ministry of Home Affairs in 2004, the critical issues of command and control have not been resolved even after ten years. India is the only country in South Asia which has not yet settled its boundary issues with any of its neighbours. India does have many policies and systems in place along with multiple ministries working on the border issues. This has led to chaos and competition on the field among the different agencies.

Multiple Stakeholders MEA is responsible for the demarcation of the international borders; whereas MHA is given the responsibility to manage borders. MEA is hampered due to low staffing levels and does not enjoy much leverage with state governments due to limited interaction. Also, army under the MoD is responsible for border defence, it is not responsible for guarding the border except in J&K. Given multiple ministries and large

number of border guarding agencies, there are competing and multiple instructions trickling down leading to a lot of confusion on field.

Border management does not just include guarding, defending and managing the borders but it also includes the local people, the trade, growth and development of the region. There is a subtle difference between border guarding and border defence and border management. While border guarding is a policing task, border defence as the name indicates is a security task and management is an all-encompassing task. The management policies should be laid down clearly and should be the responsibility of the MHA.

The other stakeholders like, Indian Army, ITBP and BSF need a proactive approach for closer cooperation. Inter agency rivalries at higher echelons tend to impair cohesive working environment at functional level. Also, India's land border and coastline runs along 22 states. These states have a stake in the management of borders with other stake holders. With such a large number of stakeholders, a comprehensive policy has to be formulated and more importantly, implemented.

Border Dispute Resolution Indian approach to resolving border disputes is hampered by the Parliament resolution which decrees to take back every square inch of land under illegal occupation, whether in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir or China. As long as India has this resolution, no political party will have the will and motivation to work out a compromise. It is important for the government to work out a compromise in its boundary issues. Also, a dedicated department is needed for resolving border issues.

India and Pakistan have to evolve a mechanism for a peaceful coexistence. Decades of rivalry, Pakistan's unstinted support to militants for fermenting trouble in India and perceived threat in Pakistani mindset from India have negated any meaningful discourse. Though several secretary level talks and track II diplomacy initiatives have been held, they have had limited impact on improving the relations. Pakistan Army's over-reaching influence is the main stumbling block in lowering of tensions along the Indo-Pakistan border. Increased trade and strengthening of democratic structures may have desired impact due to prevailing security and economic conditions.

The Indo-China boundary dispute has been unresolved due to differing perceptions and claim lines. China has resolved its boundary issues with all countries except India and China. Shortcomings in understanding the nuances of the border with China by different agencies is a challenge. All stakeholders, MEA, MHA, Indian Army, ITBP need to be one thought process. Each agency has different perceptions and at times differing maps marked with differing claim lines, whereas the Chinese authorities have always presented a single view. The length of border needs to be clearly articulated and quoted as such in all interactions by all stakeholders. There is a requirement of having a special cell to look border issues. It has been often noticed that the same Chinese interlocutors have been part of various committees for long periods of time.

Different Borders Need Different Approaches India shares its border with seven countries. Each border requires a different border management. There are three types of borders:

- Hostile enemy on one side and leading to armed infiltration.
- Benign state on one side but armed infiltration taking place.
- Benign state and benign border.

Each of these borders requires a different policy orientation and policy instinct. In the context of India, the Indo-Pak and Indo-China border can be categorised as an aggressive border. However, armed infiltration is taking place from Pakistan but not from China. At the same time the Myanmar border is a benign border for India. Historically it has acted as a buffer between India and China.

The change of responsibility of guarding of Myanmar border requires re-consideration. Assam Rifles battalions have cultural affinity with the region. Its operations based on COBs have yielded the desired results over the years. As 31 of its battalions are deployed in counter-insurgency role, there is seamless passage of information and synergy between the units. Raising 41 BSF battalions on all India class recruitment and their deployment on Punjab model of BoPs will be counterproductive. The construction of a fence alongwith border roads network will entail expenditure of almost 10,000 Crores.

One surveillance technique which has been successful in the context of India and Pakistan has been border fencing. However, between India and Bangladesh, the border-fences would make matters worse. Bangladesh is bordered by India on three sides and by the sea on the fourth. It would not be a good neighbourhood policy to encircle Bangladesh. Illegal immigration can be curbed only by giving work permits and not by fencing the country.

Economic Perspective Indian borders with its neighbours are characterised by low volumes of trade. A large amount of illegal trade between India and Bangladesh can be legalised to earn revenue. Trade between India and Pakistan has a lot of potential. It is prudent for India to import certain items from across the border than to get it from other parts of the country. For Pakistan too, trade relations can boost its flagging economy.

Role of Media The media has become a major player in disseminating information on security. In today's digitised world, all activities are under the scrutiny of near instant and pervasive media glare. A tactical aspect assumes strategic proportions due to limited knowledge and information. Thus, Public opinion at times gets formulated in a particular way which may preclude any gains made in resolution of border disputes.

Recommendations

- **Border Management Policy**

India needs to formulate and promulgate its policy on border management. The

policy must enunciate clear cut response mechanisms and issues of command and control. The border management policy must take into account the peculiarities of each border and evolves a comprehensive strategy to amalgamate all available resources for effective border management. The management of disputed and unresolved border must be the responsibility of Indian Army functioning under the MoD. The management of other borders must be with the CAPFs, functioning under MHA. All the organisations should seek directions and be accountable to one nodal agency during peace and war. In event of more than one force on a particular border, the chain of command must be clearly laid down.

Nodal Ministry

- The nodal ministry for management of unresolved and disputed should be MoD. Other borders must be managed by MHA.
- The resolution of border disputes is the responsibility of MEA. At present, MEA is not able to handle the resolution mechanism effectively due to low staffing levels and limited leverage with state governments. The responsibility must be re-allocated to MoD for unresolved borders and MHA for other borders. MEA functionaries can be part of border resolution committees.
- Each ministry must have a dedicated section working on resolution of border disputes. It can be composed of experts from various fields. There must be continuity in the dialogue process with one thought process. It can be the nodal agency for issuing guidelines, directions and illustrations to all the stakeholders.

Restructuring of Border Guarding Forces

Border guarding responsibility is recommended to be changed as under:

- **Indian Army.** To be given the responsibility to manage all unresolved and disputed borders, i.e, AGPL, LC and LAC. CAPFs deployed on such borders should be under the army's operational control.
- **Assam Rifles.** To retain the responsibility of guarding the Myanmar border. The present proposal to hand over the responsibility of guarding the Myanmar to the BSF is **NOT RECOMMENDED.**
- **BSF.** To guard the Bangladesh border and the IB section of the border with Pakistan. It is recommended that the BSF be constituted into two wings, East and West, for better management due to different nuances of each border.

- **ITBP.** To be placed under the Operational Control of the Indian Army for border guarding duties on the India-China border. The ITBP should be reconstituted as a para military force on the lines of the Assam Rifles and not be a CAPF.
- **SSB.** To continue to guard the Nepal and Bhutan borders as hitherto fore.

Composition of Units deployed on border guarding duties is recommended as under:

- The battalions deployed on border guarding duties should have a significant proportion of local youth in its ranks to exploit their knowledge of terrain, language and most importantly, cultural and historic links to the region. The local troops can also be utilised as acclimatised quick reaction forces in case of unforeseen transgressions/intrusions in high altitude areas.
- Territorial Army battalions based on ex-servicemen should be raised, which can form part of border guarding CAPF. As army soldiers retire at a relatively younger age profile, a significant number can be re-enrolled in border guarding forces.

Involvement of Stakeholders

Stakeholders in border areas are the people living in border areas, the state administration, border guarding forces and Central agencies involved in border development. Little coordination exists between them. In addition, as some of the border areas have sparse population, the development of such areas by the state and the Centre are at times neglected. The following is recommended;

- The development effort in border areas must be done taking all stakeholders on board.
- State governments must be actively involved in the process of finding solutions to the border issues.
- The area of responsibility for conduct of operations between the state police and the border guarding force must be institutionalised to do away with local arrangements.
- Formal interaction between army and CAPFs must be institutionalised by means of courses of instruction and joint training.

Technology

At present, border guarding is excessively man power intensive. A greater infusion of technology into border guarding must be done, taking into account the peculiarities of each

border segment, taking into account the perceived threat, terrain and local population sensitivities. The following is recommended: _

- Use of state of art technology for border surveillance. Drones should form a major part of the surveillance effort in difficult and sparsely populated areas. Modern C4ISR capabilities need to be employed to cover gaps, particularly in remote/inaccessible areas, and to supplement human surveillance and patrolling.
- Use of GIS and digitisation of maps.
- Formation of technology committee to oversee quick procurement and Implementation.

Maritime Security The maritime security policy needs to be implemented in full earnest. As seen from the 26/11 attack, coastal areas are most vulnerable due to large length and relative ease of movement. Regular audits must be carried out to check efficiency of marine police and state structures.

Myanmar Border

The major challenges on the Myanmar border arise from insurgent movement across the border, gun running, drug smuggling and illicit trade. Myanmar is a friendly country with no hostile intent towards India. We have a 16 km free movement agreement in place to allow the people on either side of the border to visit with each other, most having family relations developed over centuries. We also have no illegal immigration concerns with respect to Myanmar. The major concern with respect to Myanmar is hence not border guarding but better internal policing and good intelligence network to control illegal smuggling, drug and gun running and to curb the movement of militants. The following is therefore recommended: -

- The management of Myanmar border should continue to rest with Assam Rifles as the requisite infrastructure for border management already exists. Also, there is a seamless integration between Assam Rifles units deployed in counter-insurgency role for quick passage of information and joint operations. The Assam Rifles troops also enjoy greater affinity with the region due to higher proportion of local youth within their ranks and cultural similarity with local population.
- The proposed construction of a fence along Myanmar border should be immediately scrapped. Construction of a fence will alienate the border population and will be detrimental to India's national security concerns. Construction of a fence in the difficult terrain will in any case be an exercise in futility due to the difficult nature of the terrain and the vast number of troops required to constantly guard the fence

which even then can be easily breached. No useful purpose is hence served by constructing the fence. On the other hand, it will have negative consequences in terms of alienating the border population whose support is essential for border guarding. It will also negatively impact on the improving India- Myanmar relations.

- BSF has been tasked to take over the responsibility of guarding the Myanmar border. This order is recommended to be reversed and the task of border guarding kept with Assam Rifles. The raising of 41 BSF battalions for this task is consequentially redundant.
- Better results can be achieved by soliciting the assistance of villages on the border, enhancing the efficacy of local police forces, improving intelligence capability and using technology to assist in border management.

Bangladesh Border

The major threat on our border with Bangladesh remains illegal migration from Bangladesh. Other concerns relate to movement of insurgents, smuggling and the like. The following is recommended: -

- Registration of citizens and non-citizens especially in border districts should be taken on priority. A pilot project has already been completed in which Multipurpose National Identity Cards (MPNIC) have been issued to some of the population both in the border districts and in the interiors. All doubtful cases should be issued with a separate identity card, till their identity is established. Aadhar card project needs to be stopped and all the data should be merged with MPNIC project.
- Work permit system could be considered.
- Residence record of villages should be maintained and updated in border districts.
- Citizenship Act should be amended to prohibit automatic grant of citizenship by birth of children of illegal migrants.
- Single statute by merging the Indian passport act of 1967 and Indian passport act of 1920.
- Provision of enhanced punishment for those violating the Indian Passport Act and including abetment clause to fix those helping illegal migration.
- Incentive must be given in terms of finances to those who detect illegal migrants.
- Amended law to provide for a minimum punishment of five years in the case of illegal immigration.

Economic Cooperation

Trade must be enhanced with neighbouring countries to benefit economically as well as build the trust factor. Presently, the trade with Pakistan is minimal and the goods are transhipped via Dubai or Kabul. Smuggling of goods often termed as informal trade is almost equal to formal trade along the India-Bangladesh border. This is a drain on our economy and those involved are prone to anti national activities. The following measures can offset or minimise this illegal activity:

- Open border trade of local produce in the form of border haats. A few of them have already been opened on the Tripura and Meghalaya borders with Bangladesh. It has been found to be very popular among the locals. More such haats need to be opened all along the border areas wherever feasible.
- Generate local employment by encouraging small scale cooperative farming of products of that area.
- Open more ICPs and Land Custom Section (LCS) apart from the planned 13 ICPs for facilitating the expanding trade.

Development of Border Infrastructure

Border infrastructure must be developed on a fast track basis by providing all the necessary clearances using a single window clearance system. A combination of road, rail and river transport system will provide the requisite connectivity as well as enhance economic cooperation.

- The border road network especially along the China border needs to be expedited in Ladakh, Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim as the sanctioned roads are almost five to eight years from completion.
- The north south corridor road from Calcutta to Siliguri and further to Guwahati is a major link to Chinese border and northeaster region. Widening the road link to accommodate both economic transportation and security moves is a priority. This corridor needs to be further linked to the border by link roads at a number of places not only to facilitate trade and passenger traffic but also faster security moves.
- A number of rail connectivity points need to be activated for trans border transit routes from India to Bangladesh.
- The present river connectivity from Calcutta to Karimganj and beyond is limited to the monsoon period only when the minimum depth is available for transportation. This is the cheapest method of transportation and shortest route to feed our north eastern region. The waterways division needs to make a serious study to facilitate this connectivity which can extend to Bangladesh also.

- The Kaladan Multi Mode Transportation Project must be commissioned earliest to provide an alternate economic link for northeast states and Myanmar.
- Border population is a very vulnerable community and this aspect needs to be looked into so that the sympathy of the border population always remains with India. It is a known fact that cellphone signals of Pakistani and Chinese operators are available in border areas. The state governments must make it mandatory for own telecom service providers to install high power towers in border areas. There is need for recruitment of locals of border population in central forces.