

# **Seminar Report**

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US Air Force, Air War College  
on

## **NATIONAL SECURITY AND MILITARY STRATEGY**

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# CONTENTS

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Detailed Report</b>	<b>10</b>
Introduction	
Rise of China and Security Dynamics	11
Weapons Acquisition and Doctrinal Changes of PLA	12
With Rise of China, Opportunities and Challenges for India in Strategic, Economic and Political Domains	14
US Policy towards the Persian Gulf	16
Nature of Future Warfare	18
Sea-Air Battle	19
Air-Land Battle in Indian Context	20
Role of Non-State Actors and Hybrid Warfare in Future Military Strategy	23
Conclusion	24
<b>Programme</b>	<b>26</b>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The concepts of traditional and non-traditional threats evolved in ancient India, dating back to almost 2,300 years during the reign of Chandragupta Maurya. Chanakya, who was the mentor and advisor of Chandragupta Maurya, highlighted what should be the role of a king against internal threats as well as external threats. This was the form of Warfare 2,300 years ago, however, the nature of the warfare has changed completely in modern times.

The *aim of the seminar* was to analyse the rise of China with implications on security dynamics and the nature of future warfare with reference to sea and air-land battle concepts. The aim of this joint seminar has been to encourage think-tank to think-tank interactions and exchange of ideas among the group of scholars from the US Air Force Air War College and that of CLAWS.

The key points discussed during the seminar are enumerated below:

- The economic centre of gravity has shifted towards the east, primarily due to the rise of Asian countries like China, India, ASEAN, etc. China is on the rise, and it is due to its spectacular economic growth, military modernisation and development in Science and Technology. China is also making its presence felt both through the continental routes and maritime routes.
- The Indo-Pacific region today has about 61% of world's total population. More than 64 countries are directly or indirectly affected by whatever happens in this region.
- Quoting Xi Jinping's statement on November 17, 2017, "Chinese military must be ready to fight. All work must adhere to a standard that is combat capability with a focus on ability to fight and winning the fight," it was highlighted that Xi Jinping urged to make the Chinese military into a world class military.

- In China, unlike the US, technology drives the doctrine or “technology determines tactics and this does not affect the strategy.” However, in the United States, whenever the military evolves a particular doctrine, it calls for the scientists and industries to come out with something which could be implemented according to the new doctrine. This line of thinking has not been seen in the Chinese strategy of war fighting.
- China has significantly invested in building the capabilities of its defence industry, which has yielded huge successes. China is focusing on mechanisation and informationisation of its armed forces. It plans to achieve the goal of modernisation of its national defence machinery and armed forces by the mid-twenty-first century.
- The focus of the PLA has been to develop a “System of Systems” which can work with individual systems and further integrate these “Systems of Systems” into one system as a whole, to enhance their overall fighting capability. There are five Operational Systems of Systems in PLA.
- 2017 reforms brought out by the PLA created a new service called Strategic Support Force which will include all the reorganised Cyber Units, Space Units and Electronic Warfare Units and will support the PLA in reconnaissance and intelligence.
- The weapons system of the PLA focuses on four major areas to include UAVs, Artificial Intelligence, Space and Cyber. The PLA has spent tremendous amounts of money in trying to connect soldiers with the systems, which has resulted in significant improvement of its combat capabilities.
- The GDP of China has grown up to US\$ 12.84 trillion (2017), with 6.9% year-on-year rise. Its foreign reserves were to the tune of US\$ 3.112 trillion (2018) and defence budget was US\$ 175 billion (2018).
- The rise of China has impacted the global balance of power and the dominance of the US is seen to be declining. The old partially

hegemonic order has changed into a multipolar order, shaped by the balance of power impulses.

- The rising China is the major challenge to the US unipolarity in the world and the power gap between the US and China is seen to be minimising, which is leading towards a change in the Asia-Pacific security architecture.
- As regards Sino-India relations, the attitude of the two nations at the international level has been positive, whereas at the bilateral level it has been negative for obvious reasons. At the international level, China and India have been partners but at the bilateral levels both nations have been rivals due to divergence in their interests.
- China's rise has brought a politically unstable and complex environment for India. Asymmetry in perception between the two nations has also been a key trigger. The concerns for India include the China's encirclement policy, namely, "The String of Pearls." Unresolved boundary has also been a key trigger point, where China has continuously been testing India's patience.
- The series of challenges comes up with strategic opportunities for India. This provides India to work with a range of partners and collaborators, in pursuit of its national interests. India needs to strengthen its strategic ties with the US and Japan. It also needs to proactively push its Act-East-Policy, QUAD and Asia-Africa Growth Corridor.
- China accounts for a fifth of India's overall trade deficit with the world. Total trade between these two countries is US\$ 84.44 billion (2017) and the trade deficit looms to US\$ 51.08 billion. The issue of trade deficit forms a critical aspect in the bilateral trade.
- The way forward for India is to have a proactive diplomacy rather than reactive, which India needs to ensure by tapping the commonalities to enhance the ties between the two countries.

- As regards the evolution of the US policy in the Gulf, it has been constant in preventing oil shocks to the global economy. The old narrative is now gone and replaced by a greater emphasis on arms sales and countering Iran and “Islamist terrorism.”
- Today the Islamist groups are posing more serious challenges in the Persian Gulf. Islamist threats have not been paid enough attention and Islamist ideologies are being advanced through charities, madrasas and social organisations. The Islamist groups are expanding their influence into civil society, education, judiciary, police and military as well.
- In view of the complexities of the region, the US is trying to navigate within a very complex GCC with its diverse members. US emphasis is on arms sales to the GCC members and allowing offshore balancing.

As regards *future warfare*, it was highlighted that the issues of killer robots, cyberspace and artificial intelligence have emerged from the realm of the artificial world into the real world. The threat of grey zone warfare is ever increasing. Some of the key issues highlighted regarding future warfare are as under:

- The threats and vulnerability of the nuclear command and control systems are ever expanding.
- There is a need to understand the benefits of Artificial Intelligence, Deep Learning, Autonomous Weapons System and Big Data in the context of future warfare.
- As regards peaceful use of outer space, the Outer Space Treaty of 1967 exists, however, there does not exist a mutually agreed code of conduct amongst the countries for the peaceful use of outer space.
- As regards Sea-Air battle, it was brought out that the Sea-Air battle is all about changes in the regional military and political order. The way the US has been keeping dominance in the entire region, has been weakened today. China today is too big, too rich and too powerful.

- As regards defence expenditure, it was emphasised that if a democracy has to choose between guns and butter (social welfare projects), it will choose butter.
- With regard to QUAD, it was highlighted that Australia depends upon five important commodities to sustain their economy and these are export of iron ore and copper, influx of foreign students, tourism, services and agriculture. The Australians would not do anything in the South China Sea to interrupt the balance with China.
- Talking about future warfare, it was brought out that future wars will be civil wars where the line between the civil and military will be thin.
- There are blurred lines between the Combined Air Operations and Air-Land Battle to support manoeuvre. However, there seems to be no likelihood of classical Air-Land Battle in the coming future.
- There has been reduction in the responsiveness at the lower levels of conflicts, particularly at the divisional level and below. Further, the Air Land Battle is a subset of multi-domain battle, wherein the focus remains on ground force capabilities with cross linkages.
- In the Indian context, there are certain facts which shape the strategic space, which includes presence of a nuclear state with unpredictable rationality on the western border. Chinese presence on, or as an outcome of, CPEC needs to be managed. The collateral damage must not lead to strategic consequences.
- As regards the strength and profile of the IAF, India has the ratio of 1.3:1 against the western front and further upgradation of the strength and profile of IAF is under progress. There is a philosophy of strong air defence on the western front and from 2015 onwards, India's shift has been towards Offensive Defence.
- As regards Northern Borders, the Indian strategy has been—gradual build-up of the superiority, preponderance of attack helicopters with task force and potent air defence in the TBA.



- Indian northern border encompasses mountains, hills and rugged and super high-altitude Himalayas. The western border contains riverine plains, semi-desert, desert and the Rann of Kutch. The terrain condition adversely affects the identification of targets, accuracy of engagements, reduces effectiveness, reduces lift capability of aircraft and helicopters as well as enhances vulnerability to the ground air defence.
- As regards non-state actors, there are civilised and uncivilised non-state actors. The non-state actors such as Hezbollah, Al-Qaeda, the Taliban and IS, today have the capacity to bring geopolitical impacts more than the organised army of the world.
- Hybrid war of today can be a tailored mix of conventional weapons, irregular warfare, criminal behaviour, terrorism and full range of military activities. Hybrid warfare does not mean that all components of the warfare will be utilised in the war. It could be in one form or the other, or it could be an amalgamation of many forms of war. The role of non-military means in achieving political and strategic goals has increased much further.
- The deterrence that we talked about today is not successful despite having such military superiority. We have to be prepared to fight a multi-domain war of a kind, which is against the hybrid threats.
- India needs more than one military strategy, in view of the wide variety of threats it faces. Our military strategy must encompass a greater number of strategies and needs to be interactive to fight insurgencies, western adversities or China. Military strategy must be dynamic in nature and not stuck into one role, in view of the dynamic nature of threats.

# DETAILED REPORT

## Introduction

The concept of National Security is one of the most important concepts which needs to be deliberated in greater detail by the armed forces in order to look after the external threats and territorial integrity from external aggression. The non-traditional threats are as important as traditional threats. The thinking of the ancient Indians about traditional and non-traditional ways of securing their kingdoms needs to be given greater emphasis.

The concepts of traditional and non-traditional threats evolved in ancient India, dating back to almost 2,300 years during the reign of Chandragupta Maurya and Chanakya. Chanakya who was the mentor and advisor of Chandragupta Maurya wrote a book on statecraft, which was named as “Kautilya.” The book covered almost all the security aspects of a Kingdom in detail. Chanakya highlighted what should be the role of a king against internal threats as well as external threats, which are diametrically opposite to each other. Chanakya also emphasised that the king needs to be morally correct in dealing with internal threats. This was the form of warfare 2,300 years ago, however, the nature of warfare has changed completely in modern times.

In the modern era, the global economic centre of gravity has shifted towards the east, primarily due to the rise of Asian countries like China, India, ASEAN, etc. China is on the rise, primarily due to its spectacular economic growth, military modernisation and development in Science and Technology. China is also making its presence felt both through the continental routes and maritime routes. The Indian Ocean today is one of the major transit routes through which two-thirds of the world’s oil passes. Asia has emerged today as the new centre of economy, making it more dynamic. However, the region is beset with declared nuclear armed states, territorial disputes (both on land and on

the high seas), illegal migration and drug trafficking, all of which adds to the security challenges in the region. The Indo-Pacific region today has about 61% of world's total population. More than 64 countries are directly or indirectly affected by whatever happens in this region. With the presence of these challenges, India and the United States, along with other stakeholders, have a bigger role to play in shaping the political, economic, strategic and diplomatic arenas of the region.

The *aim of the seminar* was to analyse the rise of China and its implications on the security dynamics and the nature of future warfare with reference to sea and air-land battle concepts. Further, the aim of this joint seminar was to encourage think-tank to think-tank interactions and exchange of ideas between the group of scholars from the US Air Force Air War College and that of CLAWS.

### **Rise of China and Security Dynamics**

The three key issues that fuelled the rise of China were—cheap exports, investments and one-time gain from land resources privatisation. China has poured its huge resources with regard to security dynamics, in two major areas which include Militarisation of PLA and Militarisation of South China Sea. This might be seen as offensive strategy but essentially it is a defensive move.

It was brought out by the speaker that the growth of China has been fuelled largely by public spending. Private spending is just under 40% of the total GDP. In the past three years lending to the real estate sector has seen a rise of 73% and most of it has been from the foreign investors. Highlighting the common argument that China is spending a lot in helping foreign countries, the speaker gave the following statistics. China has poured about 360 billion dollars for Indo-Pacific region as compared to the US which has poured only 114 million dollars, but what is interesting to note is America's FDI inside Indo-Pacific is around 840 billion dollars. China promised the Philippines 24 billion dollars, but what the Philippines actually got was only 124 million dollars. The US realises that the push back against China shall be bilateral and in the zone of trade and technology.

Talking about West Asia, the speaker quoted ex-NSA of the US on Islamist groups posing challenges in the Persian Gulf. The speaker brought out that in a closed-door session, the former NSA of United States highlighted that the Islamist threats have not been paid enough attention and Islamist ideologies are being advanced through charities, madrasas and social organisations. The Islamist group has learnt from Turkey and has decided to expand its influence into civil society, education, judiciary, police and military as well.

### **Weapons Acquisition and Doctrinal Changes of PLA**

The speaker started by quoting Xi Jinping's statement on November 17, 2017, "Chinese military must be ready to fight. All work must adhere to a standard that is combat capability with a focus on ability to fight and winning the fight." The speaker mentioned that Xi Jinping urged to make the Chinese military into a world class military. The speaker also talked about the correlation between Technology and Doctrine in the Chinese Military Thinking. He said that in China, unlike the US, technology drives the doctrine or "technology determines tactics and this does not affect the strategy." However, in the United States, whenever the military evolves a particular doctrine, it calls for the scientists and industries to come out with something which could be implemented according to the new doctrine. This line of thinking has not been seen in the Chinese strategy of war fighting. China for years deeply believed that they could fight the war only with whatever they have. In China, it is not the doctrine that drives the technology but the technology which determines the tactics.

Chinese defence industry is completely separated from civilian industry. China has significantly invested in building its defence industry's capabilities which has yielded huge successes. The war which the PLA plans to fight is largely based on the use of technology. The speaker also talked about how China is focusing on mechanisation and informationisation of its armed forces. It plans to achieve the goal of modernisation of its national defence machinery and armed forces by the mid-twenty-first century.

The speaker highlighted that the PLA does not focus on the type of

weapons they are going to fight with. They can buy a lot of weapons as for the most part they do not have to buy them from other countries but from their own defence industry. But the real challenge for the PLA is to operationalise these weapons systems and integrate them with the main system of war fighting. There are five Operational Systems of Systems in the PLA. First is the Command System which includes the command organisation system, command post system and command information system. The second is the Firepower Strike System that includes airspace, missiles, maritime and land systems. The third one is the Information Confrontation System which includes information attack and defence systems like cyber and defence capabilities. Fourth is the Reconnaissance Intelligence System which includes space and near space reconnaissance systems, maritime ground reconnaissance and intelligence system and operational reconnaissance system. The final one is the Support System which includes operational, logistics and informational support systems. The focus of the PLA has been to develop a “System of Systems” which can work with individual systems and further integrate these “Systems of Systems” into one system as a whole, to enhance their overall fighting capability. The reforms of 2017 brought out by the PLA created a new service called Strategic Support Force which will include all the reorganised Cyber Units, Space Units and Electronic Warfare Units and will support the PLA in reconnaissance and intelligence.

The weapons system of the PLA focuses on four major areas to include UAVs, Artificial Intelligence, Space and Cyber. The PLA has spent tremendous amounts of money in trying to connect soldiers with the systems, which has resulted in significant improvement of its combat capabilities. In a unique experiment, they have reorganised their infantry units and divisions. Most of the divisions have been organised into brigades and each brigade commands five to six battalions. The battalions are no longer moved by trucks but with the help of China-made Humvees, wherein each Humvee can carry 10 soldiers supported by Artillery. In a recent exercise of the Air Force, emergence of the Combat Control Teams has also been noticed. The Chinese today have got the requisite technologies and can build any desirable weapons system, but the major problem faced by the PLA is how to make these

technologies operationally functional. Hence, they lay emphasis on developing the system of systems.

### **With Rise of China, Opportunities and Challenges for India in Strategic, Economic and Political Domains**

The speaker quoted Napoleon Bonaparte, “Let China sleep, for when she wakes, she will shake the world” and said that these prophetic words have turned true today.

She highlighted the reasons for China’s rapid economic growth, which further led to the greater defence spending. China superseded Japan and became the world’s second largest economy in 2010 and later became the second largest military spender as well. The GDP of China has grown up to US\$ 12.84 trillion (2017), with 6.9% year-on-year rise. Its foreign reserves were to the tune of US\$ 3.112 trillion (2018) and the defence budget was US\$ 175 billion (2018). The rise of China has impacted the global balance of power and the dominance of the US is seen to be declining. The old partially hegemonic order has changed into a multipolar order, shaped by the balance of power impulses. The rising China is the major challenge to the US unipolarity in the world and the power gap between the US and China is seen to be minimising, which is leading towards a change in the Asia-Pacific security architecture.

As regards Sino-India relations, this has marked significant changes in two different binaries, which are at the bilateral and international levels. The attitude of the two nations at the international level has been positive, whereas at the bilateral level it has been negative, for obvious reasons. At the international level, China and India have been partners but at the bilateral levels both nations have been rivals due to divergence in their interests.

China’s rise has brought a politically unstable and complex environment for India. The key trigger in this case for India is power disparity versus rise of both India and China at the global level. Asymmetry in perception between the two nations has also been a key trigger. Before Dokhlam, India was perceived to be a second-tier

country by China and its primary source of threats were the US, Taiwan and Japan. However, after Dokhlam, there has been a shift in China's perception towards India. Meanwhile, the strategic distrust due to the vestiges of the past between India and China has narrowed with time.

The concerns for India include China's encirclement policy, namely, "The String of Pearls," which was defined by a US consulting firm. Under the Belt and Road Initiative, it has taken some roots as well. Unresolved boundary has also been the key trigger point, where China has continuously been testing India's patience. Dokhlam was one of the key outputs of that, leading to repeated tensions at the border. CPEC concerns have also been a major factor which directly relate to India's sovereignty and integrity in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK). Continuous increase of the Chinese footprint in the Indian Ocean Region through Maritime Silk Route and frequent presence of submarines in Colombo and Karachi signal major concerns for India.

The series of challenges comes up with strategic opportunities for India. This provides India the opportunity to work with a range of partners and collaborators in pursuit of its national interests. India needs to strengthen its strategic ties with the US and Japan. It also needs to proactively push its Act-East Policy, QUAD and Asia-Africa Growth Corridor.

Talking about the economic challenges for India against China, the speaker mentions that China accounts for a fifth of India's overall trade deficit with the world. Total trade between these two countries is US\$ 84.44 billion (2017) and the trade deficit looms to US\$ 51.08 billion. The issue of trade deficit forms a critical aspect in the bilateral trade because, as the deficit widens, there is also an increasing risk of protectionist measures being imposed. India can develop its industrial capacity and begin production of the goods and services that the Chinese market demands. India's manufacturing sector needs to become more cost-efficient as well as to diversify its exports. Some of the areas, where India can look into are machinery and machine tools, pharmaceuticals, auto-components, agricultural products, organic and inorganic chemicals and the dairy industry.

Political challenges for India against China lie in China's opposition to India's bid for UNSC as well as NSG, and also China's reluctance towards accepting Masood Azhar as an international terrorist. However, political opportunities for India are large. Forums such as SAARC, SCO, G20, East Asia Summit and Joint Initiative in counterterrorism, are some of the places where India and China can work hand in hand.

The leadership factor of both the countries, that is, Modi and Xi, has however, changed the dynamics of India-China relations both at the bilateral and multilateral levels, which was also witnessed during the Wuhan Summit. The way forward for India is to have a proactive diplomacy, rather than reactive, which India needs to ensure by tapping the commonalities to enhance the ties between the two countries.

### **US Policy towards the Persian Gulf**

Highlighting the evolution of US policy in the Gulf, the speaker said that US policy has been constant in preventing oil shocks to the global economy. According to the speaker, the old narrative is now gone and replaced by a greater emphasis on arms sales and countering Iran and "Islamist terrorism." Highlighting the complexities of the region, the speaker mentioned that the US is trying to navigate within a very complex GCC with its diverse members. The speaker highlighted that US emphasis is on arms sale to the GCC members and allowing offshore balancing. Talking about the Yemen crisis, the speaker said that the fight in Yemen is more about Saudi Arabia and its GCC allies versus Iran, and less about the value of Yemen. The speaker highlighted that the crisis of Saudi Arabia goes back to 1995. The speaker also highlighted that the US is discussing the creation of the Middle East Strategic Alliance (MESA), a Middle East NATO, to be headquartered in Riyadh.

The speaker highlighted the US policy in the Persian Gulf, core US interests in the Gulf and how the changing Gulf has shaped US policy. US policy in the Persian Gulf has evolved unevenly over a period of time and in response to the crisis, and has primarily been guided by certain core interests. US policy in the Middle East has been reflected in the policy over the Persian Gulf and consistency has been over three



main factors, which are Israel, Oil and Communism. These were the prime reasons for formulation of United States strategic interests in the Middle East and Arabian Gulf. The United States initially paid much attention towards the larger Middle East due to the Israeli-Arab conflict, rather than the Gulf, until the United States became much dependent upon Petroleum exports as a consequence of which policies began to shift. However, it was interesting to note that the US did not have its regional command in this region for a long time because of its greater emphasis on Asia and Europe than on the Persian Gulf.

The constant policy of the US in the region since the end of the cold war, has been centred on how to control and prevent oil shocks. However, the US till that time was happy in keeping relations with the autocratic regimes, which included Iran and countries which form the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). As a result of change in thinking about how stability is unfolded, another narrative of democratisation in which the US began to believe is a questionable assumption that democracies do not go to war with each other. Out of which the US tried to bring democracy not only to the Gulf countries but particularly to the GCC countries which resulted in no big change. Out of all the countries in the GCC, only one of them is partly democratic, that is, Kuwait.

Today the emphasis of US policy in the region is on Counterterrorism, Iran and Arms Sales. On the one hand the United States has emphasised its presence, and on the other, it has emphasised “offshore balancing” with a hope that if the United States strengthens these countries through arms sales then it can remove its presence from the region. The Arab Awakening has also brought some significant yet temporary changes in the region and it has been relatively stable. However, the real challenge for the GCC and the United States have been in Yemen. Politics of Islam and rise of Iran have become much more complicated with more instability. Saudi Arabia has risen significantly and has become a primary player in the GCC. It has been undergoing significant internal changes and has strengthened its relations with the Trump Administration as well. Trump’s first international visit to Saudi Arabia has been of significant importance for the US strategy in the region. The

religious dimension in this context is important because Saudi Arabia has taken as the lead actor in Sunni Islam.

The US emphasis on Arms Sales and offshore balancing has been for the strategic interests. US Arms has put itself in offshore balancing as well as transformation in the quality of the regional military particularly in the Saudi Army. This has reduced the cost for the US to operate in the region as well as coordination of the US with the regional armies. In 2017, Saudi Arabia remained the top purchaser of US arms after Poland and Japan. However, for India, the region is a kind of threat as it is just next to Pakistan and an important source of petroleum.

There can be a point in future when the US can begin to withdraw its forces from the region. The current administration has some articulated plan to withdraw from some of these regions and in that case it is a good opportunity for India since it has long-standing cultural, political and economic ties in the region. The American presence has been very expensive and long and it hopes that the sale of arms in the region will ultimately allow it to withdraw its forces. It is a great opportunity for India to move in and exert its own influence. The Yemen crisis is one of the region's major vulnerabilities, however, it is an opportunity for Iran to play in the backyard of the GCC and it is also an opportunity for Saudi Arabia and the UAE to demonstrate their military capabilities in the region, but unfortunately Yemen has turned into a quagmire for everyone in the region. However, according to the most recent reports the Saudi Arabia is unable to establish dominance in the region.

### **Nature of Future Warfare**

The chair setting the context for the future warfare highlighted the issues of killer robots, cyberspace and artificial intelligence and how it has also entered into the academic debate. The issues of killer robots, cyberspace and artificial intelligence has emerged from the realm of the artificial world into the real world. The speaker highlighted the threat of grey zone warfare citing the example of artificial islands in the South China Sea. The chair also mentioned about the threats and vulnerability of the nuclear command and control systems. The chair

in the end also emphasised about harnessing the benefits of Artificial Intelligence, Deep Learning, Autonomous Weapons System and Big Data in the context of future warfare. Talking about the peaceful use of outer space, the chair said that even though the Outer Space Treaty of 1967 exists, there does not exist a mutually agreed code of conduct amongst the countries for the peaceful use of outer space.

### Sea-Air Battle

The speaker setting the context of the Sea-Air battle said that Sea-Air battle is all about changes in the regional military and political order. Talking about the change in the regional military order, the speaker brought out that the Chinese have developed ASAT and missiles and have the ability to push the US back in the Indo-Pacific. He added that the way the US had been keeping dominance in the entire region, has been weakened today. Some of the key points highlighted by the speaker are:

- According to the speaker, the China today is too big, too rich and too powerful.
- In order to build the deterrence against China, the US has built capabilities which can bring equilibrium. The US in its nuclear posture has talked about SLCM with low-yield nuclear weapons.
- The speaker said that unlike Russia where there is one big base called NATO, there could be a real problem with keeping a dedicated war fighting team given the Chinese capabilities.
- Talking about defence expenditure, the speaker highlighted that if a democracy has to choose between guns and butter (social welfare projects), it will choose butter. He cited the examples of the UPA and NDA governments and their defence expenditure in this context.
- Talking about QUAD, the speaker said that Australia depends upon five important commodities to sustain their economy, and they are, export of iron ore and copper, influx of foreign students,

tourism, services and agriculture. The Australians would not do anything in South China Sea to interrupt the balance with China.

- Talking about India, the speaker said that India has strategic partnership with almost all countries such as Mongolia, Burkina Faso, etc. He suggested that India should start focusing on big powers around the world.
- Talking about future war, he said that future wars will be civil wars where the line between the civil and military will be thin.

### **Air-Land Battle in Indian Context**

Talking about the whole idea of Air Land Battle, the speaker quoted a Vietnam War veteran, who stated, ...“Will to fight is the hub of all defence mechanism. Look for ways to ‘break his will’ and ‘capacity to resist.’” The speaker highlighted the following main points in his talk:

- Quoting a few wars of the past, including the Bangladesh War (1971) and Gulf War (1991), he states that there are blurred lines between the Combined Air Operations and Air Land Battle to support manoeuvre. However, there seems to be no likelihood of classical Air Land Battle in the coming future.
- There has been reduction in the responsiveness at the lower levels of conflicts, particularly at the divisional level and below. Further, the Air Land Battle is a subset of multi-domain battle, wherein the focus remains on ground force capabilities with cross linkages.
- Talking about Indian context, the speaker said that there are certain facts which shape the strategic space:
  - India’s western neighbour is a nuclear state with unpredictable rationality, therefore, threshold management is an imperative.
  - Chinese presence on, or as an outcome of CPEC, must be managed. The collateral damage must not lead to strategic consequences.

- The military strategy for northern borders is distinct in application.
- The speaker brought out the larger picture in the Indian context, which is as under:
  - Highlighting the strength and profile of the IAF, he says that India has the ratio of 1.3:1 against the western front and further upgradation of the strength and profile of IAF is under progress.
  - There is a philosophy of strong air defence on the western front and from 2015 onwards, India's shift has been towards Offensive Defence.
  - As regards Northern Borders, the Indian strategy has been—gradual build-up of the superiority, preponderance of attack helicopters with task force and potent air defence in the TBA.
  - The terrain factor is also one of the most important considerations for any operation on the western as well as northern borders. While the northern border encompasses mountains and hills of Kashmir and rugged and super high-altitude Himalayas, the western border contains riverine plains, semi-desert, desert and the Rann of Kutch. The terrain condition adversely affects the identification of targets, accuracy of engagement, reduces effectiveness, reduces lift capability of aircraft and helicopters as well as enhances vulnerability to the ground air defence.
- The speaker brought out the modernisation plan and the philosophy of the PLAAF against India. He gave the details of modernisation activities undertaken by the PLAAF in the recent past as well as in the present-day period. He also gave the details of air effort, which is likely to be deployed by the PLAAF against India in case of a conflict.
- Similarly, the speaker highlighted the modernisation activities and the employment philosophy of the PAF against India. He also brought out the air efforts likely to be deployed by PAF against India in case of a conflict.

- The speaker highlighted the significant aspects of the Joint Doctrine (2017), which deals with the air land battle and these are as under:
  - The speed and reach of air power for rapid engagement of surface targets within and outside the battle space.
  - Degradation of enemy air power to minimise interference.
  - Real-time intelligence, surprise and shock on objectives and simultaneity and depth of operations.
- Discussing about Air Doctrine in the context of Air Land Battle, the speaker red-flagged certain issues, which are often the cause of concern for the land commanders. These are lack of support for BAS, SEAD in TBA and control of air resources with air commander.
- The speaker highlighted the nature of the “War of Tomorrow,” wherein, he states that the desired end state would be the collapse of the enemy’s will to fight. This would however, be achieved by the combined efforts of all three elements of the armed forces, that is, Army, Navy and Air Force.
- The speaker argued that the scope of Air Land Battle exists despite the constraints of terrain and threshold. There are three strike corps, with potency and mechanised prowess. He has given out an appraisal of successful prosecution which includes ability to look deep and strike deep, IPB based target profiling, effective command and control structures, mutual comprehension of nuances of enemy, joint operations and joint training and integral as well as integrated capabilities of Army and Air Force.
- Lastly, the speaker gave out the way forward which includes capacity building, attack helicopters being part of Army inventory, higher degree of comprehension of nuances of operations particularly in field areas, asset sharing in surveillance domain, refinement of existing command and control structure and greater representation at division and below level.

## Role of Non-State Actors and Hybrid Warfare in Future Military Strategy

Talking about the non-state actors, the speaker brought out that there are civilised and uncivilised non-state actors like Al-Qaeda, Taliban, and ISIS, etc. The non-state actor is a misnomer in itself. Greenpeace, WikiLeaks and Amnesty International are also examples of non-state actors and they exist in variety. Some non-state actors such as Citibank can manipulate economies with the power it holds. The key issues highlighted by the speaker are as under:

- The non-state actors such as Hezbollah, Al-Qaeda, the Taliban and ISIS, today have the capacity to bring geopolitical impacts more than the organised armies of the world. Many of the non-state actors continue to demonstrate weaknesses of the state in following the agenda of utilisation of power and information.
- If we look back into history, it emerges that hybrid warfare in some form or the other has always existed since 2,000 years and it is the form of warfare for today as well as tomorrow. War of today encompasses all these hybrid qualities. Hybrid war of today can be a tailored mix of conventional weapons, irregular warfare, criminal behaviour, terrorism and the full range of military activities. Hybrid warfare does not mean that all components of the warfare will be utilised in the war. It could be in one form or the other or it could be an amalgamation of many forms of war, for example, in 2007, Estonia the country which has the largest amount of Internet resources, was brought down to its knees by the Russians.
- The role of non-military means in achieving political and strategic goals has increased much further. Now, the question arises as to how a nation like India forms military strategy in an era of such uncertainty.
- The deterrence that we talked about today is not successful despite having such military superiority. We have to be prepared to fight a multi-domain war of a kind, which is against the hybrid threats. The political leadership have to lay down what is to be done exactly in terms of strategy. Wars are first fought in the minds of

political leadership and not the generals of the armed forces. We need a hierarchy in strategy which must be involved at all levels of political decision.

- India needs more than one military strategy, in view of the wide variety of threats it faces. Our military strategy must encompass a larger number of strategies and needs to be interactive to fight insurgencies, western adversities or China. Military strategy must be dynamic in nature and not stuck in one role, in view of the dynamic nature of threats. Military strategy which encompasses attrition, firepower, mechanised warfare that has won past successes, cannot win the war of tomorrow. The adversaries are rapidly analysing our capabilities and adopting them at a very fast pace, faster than we think.

## Conclusion

China's rise has brought a politically unstable and complex environment for India. Asymmetry in perception between the two nations has also been a key trigger. Before Dokhlam, India was perceived to be a second-tier country by China and its primary source of threats were the US, Taiwan and Japan. However, after Dokhlam, there has been a shift in China's perception towards India. The concerns for India include China's encirclement policy namely "The String of Pearls." Unresolved boundary has also been the key trigger point, where China has continuously been testing India's patience.

However, the series of challenges comes up with strategic opportunities for India. This provides India to work with a range of partners and collaborators, in pursuit of its national interests. India needs to strengthen its strategic ties with the US and Japan. It also needs to proactively push its Act-East Policy, QUAD and Asia-Africa Growth Corridor. The leadership of both the countries has, however, changed the dynamics of the India-China relations both at the bilateral and multilateral levels, which was also witnessed during the Wuhan Summit. The way forward for India is to have a proactive diplomacy, rather than reactive, which India needs to ensure by tapping the commonalities to enhance the ties between the two countries.



The Indo-Pacific region today has about 61% of the world's total population. More than 64 countries are directly or indirectly affected by whatever happens in this region. Therefore, with these challenges India, along with the United States and other stakeholders, has a bigger role to play in shaping the political, economic, strategic and diplomatic arenas of the region.



# PROGRAMME

0930-1000h	<b>Tea &amp; Registration</b>
1000-1005h	<b>Welcome Remarks by Lt Gen (Dr) VK Ahluwalia, PVSM, AVSM,** YSM, VSM (Retd), Director, CLAWS</b>
1005-1010h	<b>Opening Remarks by Dr Amit Gupta</b>
1010-1150h	<b>Session 1: Rise of China and Security Dynamics</b>
1010-1020h	<b>Opening Remarks by Chair: Maj Gen BK Jain, VSM (Retd)</b>
1020-1040h	<b>Weapons Acquisition and Doctrinal Changes of PLA by Dr Xiaoming Zhang, PhD</b>
1040-1100h	<b>With Rise of China, Opportunities and Challenges for India in Strategic, Economic and Political Domains by Ms Amrita Jash, Associate Fellow, CLAWS</b>
1100-1120h	<b>US Policy towards the Persian Gulf by Dr David Sorenson</b>
1120-1150h	<b>Q &amp; A</b>
1150-1210h	<b>Tea Break</b>
1210-1335h	<b>Session 2: Nature of Future Warfare</b>
1210-1220h	<b>Opening Remarks by Chair: Dr Jyoti M Pathania, Senior Fellow, CLAWS</b>
1220-1240h	<b>Sea Air Battle by Dr Amit Gupta</b>
1240-1300h	<b>Air-Land Battle in Indian Context by Lt Gen Vinod Vashisht, AVSM, VSM** (Retd)</b>
1300-1320h	<b>Role of Non-State Actors and Hybrid Warfare in Future Military Strategy by Lt Gen Rakesh Sharma, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, VSM, PhD (Retd), Distinguished Fellow, CLAWS</b>
1320-1350h	<b>Q &amp; A</b>
1350-1355h	<b>Concluding Remarks by Lt Gen (Dr) VK Ahluwalia, PVSM, AVSM,** YSM, VSM (Retd), Director CLAWS</b>
1355h	<b>Lunch &amp; Dispersal</b>



