

ANNUAL ARMY SEMINAR 2018/19

THE CHANGING CHARACTER OF GLOBAL CONFLICTS WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO SUB-CONVENTIONAL WARFARE IN REGIONAL CONTEXT IN THE NEXT TWO DECADES

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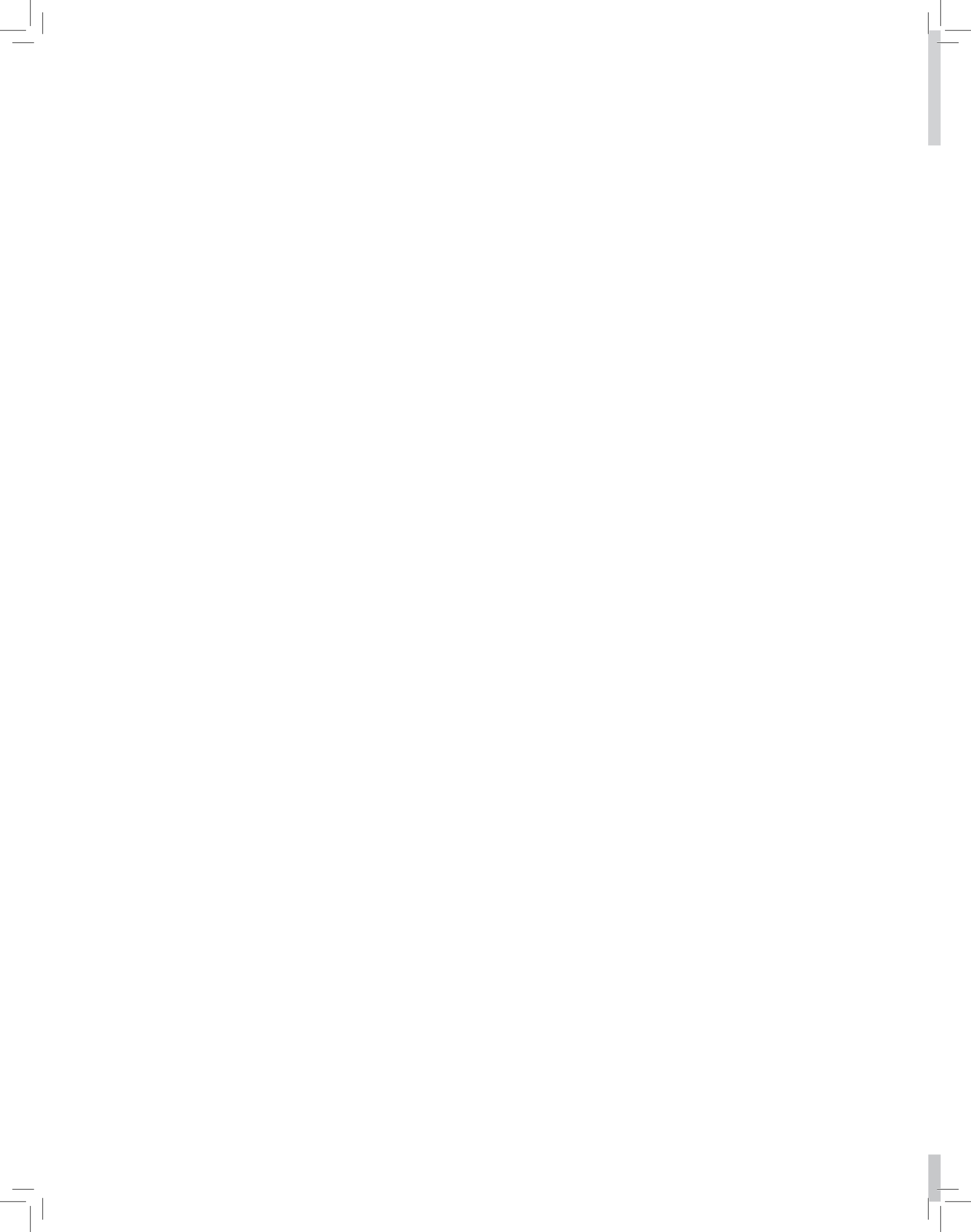
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Executive Summary

KEYNOTE ADDRESS (THE CHIEF OF ARMY STAFF)

Nations all around the world are dealing with sub-conventional threats in one form or another. While the balance of global power and possession of nuclear weapons by an increasing number of nation States has somewhat reduced the possibility of a total war at the global level; however, at the regional level, its risk remains.

An analysis of recent conflicts reveals the ever-changing nature of hybrid engagements—the blurring lines between conventional and non-conventional warfare, State and non-State actors, and regular and irregular conflicts.

Countering terrorist propaganda and preventing radicalisation remains a challenge for the world and India. There being no typical terrorist organisation necessitates that counter-terrorism strategies, as well as their responses, have to be tailored.

The 9/11 attack changed the global perception towards terrorism with the world realizing that the unprecedented reach and linkages of terrorist networks make it a global threat and not country-specific concern. Also, the support provided by inimical neighbours to non-State actors as an extension of State policy is increasingly not being accepted by the world community.

It is imperative to understand and incorporate contemporary technological feet in our proactive response to all future conflicts. Stand-off and remotely delivered weapon-systems and soft-power tools will be essential to defeat the enemy, blurring lines between combat and communication zones or combatants and non-combatants.

With India's expanding interests, other factors such as nuclear proliferation, the presence of extra-regional and potentially hostile powers, the growth of conventional and nuclear capabilities of inimical powers, internal security and insurgency, humanitarian assistance and disaster-relief are aspects that need to be viewed from the perspective of national security.

SESSION I: Changing Character of Global Conflicts with Specific Reference to Sub-Conventional Domain

Changing character of conflict apart from being related to weapons is intrinsically related to the complex issue of human behavior, viz, man is eternally vile, aspiring to dominate over other fellow human beings and aspires to use coercive force to achieve its self-interest. This philosophically is the root cause of all conflicts from the dawn of history.

With the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991, conflict entered a brand new paradigm related to the 'crisis of identity' giving rise to the role of fundamentalism, terrorism, and separatist movements. Technology has acted as a catalyst to influence conflict coupled with the advent of nuclear weapons and the weapons of mass destruction, in the era of multi-polar world.

While the twentieth-century eradicated the problem of food, the post-Information Age in the twenty-first century is poised to eradicate the problems of resources. Theoretically, in the twentieth century, one could afford to live tactically but in the twenty-first century we have to learn to live

strategically. This stark difference makes the twenty-first century more complex and polarized in terms of global power distribution and interdependence.

The changing contours of global conflict are dictated by the non-strategic dimensions of security, i.e. ecology, environment, pollution, energy, rights of the unborn, and political economy. Unless these are factored in the calculus of power and conflict among States which may or may not be geographically contagious or far apart from each other, our analysis will remain incomplete.

Sub Theme One: *Changing Character of Global Conflicts (Professor Brahma Chellaney)*

Changing nature of global conflicts very much reflects our changing world in the economic, technological, and geo-political sense in the last three decades. The pace of technological change has facilitated the rise of emerging economies and the Information Age has contributed to altering polity, society, economy, security, and international relations.

New innovations are accelerating weaponisation of science. Today, technological forces are playing a greater role in shaping geo-politics than at any other time in history. Economically, the fast pace of changes in technology, transportation costs, and regulatory environment have acted as a spur to the rise of Asia with its influence expanding Westwards.

Looking next 3 years ahead could bring as rapid a transformation as what has been witnessed in the last three decades. The caveat is—the systemic shifts in the global distribution of power that we are witnessing are occurring at an evolutionary pace, not in any revolutionary manner.

This underlines the following aspects: (1) the changing nature of power, even if the change is subtle in nature; and (2) the international order has entered an evolutionary phase. We're unlikely to see abrupt or dramatic shifts in the international order with threats becoming more subtle, yet no less potent. Many conflicts are reaching below the threshold of open war, yet the cost that they carry or that they impose is no less than the costs of the previous conflicts.

Present day unconventional challenges extend to climate-change, overfishing, degradation of coastal and other marine ecosystems, as well as the rise of illegal, non-State actors, terrorist groups, criminal syndicates, and sea-borne pirates. State-sponsorship of transnational terrorist groups is an open affront to international law.

Changing nature of global conflicts is also evident from economic aggression and the use of debt as a weapon to erode the sovereignty of economically vulnerable countries. "Debt entrapment" is a tool of conflict and carries serious consequences as defeat in the war for a small country.

Riparian pressures exerted through upstream hydro-engineering projects can weaponise water as an instrument in inter-State conflict. Influence operations against weaker States in various forms from legitimate activities such as lobbying to covert, corrupting actions such as meddling in the internal affairs of others, bribing their leaders, and seeking to sway their public discourse.

Cyberspace has become an arena to gain strategic advantage against adversaries. Long-range missiles remain the idiom of power and force in international relations. Significantly, nuclear weapons are acquiring a new salience as arms-control recedes. Some powers are developing new nuclear warheads which lead one to believe that we are entering a new era of unchecked nuclear weapons development.

Looking at the aggressions witnessed in the twenty-first century, there is one common element—the aggressor's readiness to defiantly flout international norms and rules. For example, China has managed

to fundamentally change the territorial and maritime status quo in a critical sea corridor that connects the Indian and Pacific Oceans. It first created artificial islands and then turned them into forward military bases that today host port facilities for warships, military airfields, and anti-missile weaponry. All this has been achieved in barely 5 years, without firing a shot.

The notion that the twenty-first-century world is governed by international law is a dangerous illusion; an illusion that can invite aggression. International rules are bendable and expendable for the strong. If one keeps aside civil wars and other internal conflicts, the nature of sub-conventional conflicts in today's State-against-State context, is very much linked with one side's open disregard for international rules and norms resorting to renegade and roguish actions.

Sub Theme Two: North-East: Present Scenario and Emerging Challenges *(Lieutenant General Gopal R)*

Overview of Insurgencies

Various insurgent groups differ from autonomy within the provisions of the Indian constitution [the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak Munivah) [NSCN (IM)], Kuki groups, the National Democratic Front of Boroland (NDFB/s)], outright secession [the Valley Based Insurgent Groups (VBIGs), the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang) [NSCN (K)], the United Liberation Front of Assam (Independent) [ULFA (I)], to pure extortion.

Nagaland: The Mother of Insurgencies

In the case of NSCN (IM), the demand for greater Nagaland is no more spoken about. Today, the status of the NSCN (IM) stands eroded. Aware of it they are on a massive outreach programme. Recruitment is going on and batches are passing out with reports of possible women enrollment into the fold (perhaps to exploit the rehabilitation package which may be soon coming).

Talks with NSCN (K) are on and should lead to some agreeable points. All over the North-East, student bodies call the shots. The Naga Students' Federation has come up with a new demand—make Inner Line Permit applicable to Dimapur. Arunachal government's means of dealing with issues include following a unified strategy and this will bear fruits in the future.

Manipur

While the overall violence is on the decline in the North-East, maximum violence happens in Manipur. The valley-based insurgent groups, especially the Meithis, target the security forces. The Forces are targeted even in the de-notified areas and outside too. The non-compliance of extortion demands by contractors and employees are brought to book by liberal use of grenades.

Assam

The ULFA (I) and the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) are carrying out activities which can be termed as bordering law and order/criminal while confining their activities to Upper Assam rich in coal, oil, tea, and timber. If they start targeting specific communities, the potential of flaring up exists. CI grid has been strengthened along the Southern Arunachal border by the security forces.

Mizoram

Peace has prevailed after the classic example of no insurgency subsequent to the Mizo Peace Accord in 1986 and State on the path to progress. The last round of talks for resettlement of those who fled from 1997 onwards to Tripura has failed. 25,000 of them are in camps in Northern Tripura. There is growing tension between the Mizo Young Association (basically the Lushai tribe) and the Chakmas. There are also inter-State clashes between Assam and Mizoram with regard to the boundaries of villages.

Tripura

The National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) and the All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF) are no more there but demand for a separate Tripura land is gaining momentum.

Meghalaya

With the elimination of Sohan Dalbot Shira (the leader of the Garo National Liberation Front), the insurgency has come to minimal levels. The security forces operating using the Army, Assam Rifles, the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) remain the preferred mode of response to Contai insurgency.

Security Issues and Challenges

Mushrooming Militant Organisations

Being the flavour of the environment wherein, as we talk with one organisation, another one comes up with the basic aim being extortion.

Modus Operandi

Even in the 1960s, all the groups had joint training, but now there are joint operations. In joint operations, core competencies are being marshalled. Security of movement out of any posts/camps is becoming difficult due to better mobile coverage and more women/children being mustered as eyes and ears.

Border Management Challenges

Indo-Myanmar border cannot be equated with any other border in the country. It's not a porous but an open border with cross-border linkages in terms of ethnicity, culture, etc. In border management, in addition to border-guarding, 11 other agencies are involved and hence, it becomes a complex opera which requires timely fine-tuning! Fencing is not a problem but it's unlikely to completely stop cross-border movement.

Myanmar Equation

From demonstrative action, the Myanmar Army is now transforming to real action. TADA—the Headquarter (HQ) of NSCN (K) has been occupied. Such actions earlier were limited to temporary dislocation.

The CSOs

Especially in Manipur, they have got frontal, social, and cultural organisations which takes up a minor

cause. We need to have a target-oriented public information campaign so that misinformation doesn't gain momentum, especially in Manipur.

Extortion

With the National Investigation Agency (NIA) stepping in, this issue has come to a stop. The contractors in order to ensure their cost overruns and time delays often enact this kidnapping and extortion drama, but things have improved with NIA's overwatch.

Media

While due attention is been given, however, no major media group has its footprint in the North-East. It is mostly stringer-based reporting. For example, Churachandpur even after being a very remote and backward area has 29 registered newspapers. However, no mainstream national media is present manifesting from the aspects of transportation, logistics, and other problems.

Connectivity Issues

The government is laying major emphasis on this. The road comes, commerce follows, resulting in overall development. With the key issues in connectivity remaining timely completion and maintenance.

Youth

Education groups like Amity, Apeejay, Manipal, etc., are now setting up their campuses so that the youth is mainstreamed, better guided, and given more career opportunities.

Sub Theme Three: Changing Dynamics of Sub-Conventional Conflicts in Left Wing Extremism and J&K (Mr Vijay Kumar, IPS (Retd))

Jammu and Kashmir

The Speaker flagged the aspect that in the CI operations/environment, it's not the team that is stronger but the team that is tilting the public opinion which seems and becomes stronger. It is not your individual brilliance but how you put your mediocre brilliance together and, how the team can synergise with other teams that matter.

Presently, there are about five main tanzems and approximately 300 terrorists. The year 2018 has been a very significant year in most measures to include terrorists being neutralised. There is nothing wrong in neutralising terrorists as long as we are not being muscular about it. Amarnath Yatra and panchayat elections were conducted without major incident. There are fewer stone pelters, less pellets, and more synergy between the security forces.

Presently, the foreign militants are not coming out in open and their hide-outs have gone outside the towns which either means that the public doesn't want them or that they are getting scared of our intelligence. Either way, it is good news. The Afghan School of Strategic Studies says that only 10 percent of the population supports the Taliban. Despite that, they have such a hold. This fits very well with the Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) scenario also. The majority does not matter; hence, the point to be underscored is having advanced so much, we 'should not' retreat now.

Collateral damage must be avoided. Collaterals, like pellet victims, become iconic photos and pictures that can go against us. The media and social media play a very important role. Much like water, land, and air, we need to fight in the cyber and space domains also. Joint training and synergy are of prime essence, especially in the context of mainstream television (TV) that has disrupted and played a negative role by stereotyping and demonising security forces operations.

South Kashmir is dominating in recruitment with towns such as Pulwama, Shopian, Awantipora, Tral, and Anantnag leading. Out of the 386 terrorist incidents, 140 are from Pulwama and Shopian. The Western neighbour is getting the bang for the buck, viz., for every dollar spent it is getting \$60—70 worth of our responses (fence, tactical interventions, fortifications, etc.).

Left Wing Extremism

Internal Orientation

The speaker mentioned that while China did meddle initially, it withdrew later. It is our own problem and our own people with no international borders. And hence, must be resolved with an internal orientation, with the whole of the government approach, by catering to the legitimate demands of the concerned populace.

Inter- and Intra-Force Synergy

When Muria Gonds were sent to the Counter-Insurgency and Jungle Warfare School (CIJW), there was a cross-pollination of ideas and new tactics were learnt, which yielded very positive results on the ground. Such efforts on the synergy of efforts must be pursued.

Left Wing Extremism Leadership and Present Canvas

Ganapathi, a little geriatric, has been finally able to demit and has handed over the Maoist territory to a person who is very dangerous and an improvised explosive device (IED) expert—Basava Raju; hence, an increase in the employment of IEDs by the insurgents must be appreciated in future.

Own Operations

We may try to mirror the adversary in asymmetric warfare, but he will change his modus operandi and tactics. Our tail (often administrative) is very long. We must thus be lightly equipped, agile, and launch operations based on specific intelligence and coordinate our efforts with social, cultural, and administrative well-being of the tribal population along with the concerned government authorities.

SESSION II: Envisaged Sub-Conventional Conflicts in the Indian Sub-Continent in the Next Two Decades [Chair: Lieutenant General PC Katoch (Retd)]

Conventionally weak nations often opt for sub-conventional means against their adversaries. The Chinese concept of unrestricted warfare states that national armies of today will not be able to cope with the dissent in the public and deal with the enemy using unconventional forces by simplistic methods.

Measures to be taken against unconventional forces cannot be limited only in the defensive domain and this perhaps may need the same methods as being used by the adversary. However, in our context, this does not mean encouraging terrorist activities in the adversary's territory.

Sub Theme One: *Envisaged External Conflicts [Lieutenant General A K Singh (Retd)]*

Internal and external domains cannot be isolated, they are inter-connected especially so when the internal domains tend to draw sustenance from across the borders. The potential for the external conflict certainly continues to remain on both the Indian flanks, viz, the Northern and Western.

Hence, in present context, India broadly faces likely conflict scenarios on the Western front, likely challenges on the Northern front and out of area contingencies.

Relation with Pakistan has been the one with a complex amalgam of historical legacy, a love and hate relationship mired in deep mistrust and strategic miscalculation. With increasing support from China and American ambivalence, Pakistan is embarked on a dangerous journey which could see a conflict with India sooner than later.

A nuclear-armed Pakistan with its opaque doctrine has made the situation more complex. India's quest for peace, a difficult but not impossible proposition! Of course, if this does not work there may be little choice left with India but to exercise the hard option. Hence, while pursuing the peace process with Pakistan, India should be prepared for adopting the hard option if all else fails. We must not permit the present status quo to continue indefinitely.

The present state of the Armed Forces is not at an optimum level. The budget allocation is just over 1.5 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and continuous tardy state of preparedness do not signal requisite signal to our adversary. As far as national security perceptions and capability development of the Armed Forces are concerned, it is utmost necessary that the Armed Forces and the government are on the same page.

As present status quo suits Pakistan and therefore it will not want to change it and hence India will have to take the hard option to change the status quo. In the same time frame, the stage should be set diplomatically, economically, and militarily. A number of contingencies are to be worked out and refined in the next two decades from a limited conflict to an all-out conflict with varying terminal objectives depending on what the politico-military strategy is. India should develop capabilities in the domain of conventional missiles, armed Unmanned aerial vehicle (UAVs), and precision fires so that our non-contact kinetic options become more viable.

The Indian Air Force and Navy will have to play a major role in the next conflict. With increasing foreign presence around the waters of Pakistan, the Indian Navy will have to relook at its strategy. Lastly, as far as Pakistan is concerned their nuclear bluff has to be called out and for this India should seek the support of the United States (US), Russia, and maybe even China.

With respect to China, there are issues of convergence as also divergence. Despite the positive progress in Indo-China relations in the last three decades unsolved border issues and mutual distrust still remains. Added to this is often the unpredictable behaviour on the Line of Actual Control (LAC). There is a massive development of dual-use infrastructure in the TAR and the related rapid deployment capabilities acquired by the People's Liberation Army (PLA). China, therefore, remains the long-term challenge to India's national aspirations. Not a threat but a challenge! Hence, India's China

Strategy must aim to engage China on multiple levels such as trade, commerce, cultural and political engagement, people-to-people contact but from a position of strength both in terms of infrastructure along the borders and military capability development for our Northern borders.

China's strategic orientation is acquiring global overtones. The connectivity projects of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), their interest for oil in the Middle East, their investments in Africa, and their increasing maritime dominance in the Pacific and Indian Oceans are all strategic and economic drivers which have to be analysed.

The purpose of the military establishment is to win wars. It must now diligently apply itself to an even higher order skill. Fixing the military time and again is not good enough! Unless you fix the politics too and develop civilian strategic expertise and capacities to tackle the strategic uncertainties in order to secure a better peace.

A realistic audit of a security environment will tell us that China's rise is not only inevitable but may also be in our interest to some extent. The trick will lie in keeping peaceful by measuring both the challenge and the opportunity. The challenge could be met through strategic thought and a politico-military revamp even as the opportunity needs to milk through diplomatic engagement and economic interdependence. You don't go to war with your bankers as stated by Hilary Clinton over the US war with China! Can we create similar linkages?

The responses short of war domain are not an expensive one! It calls for greater innovation, structural restructuring, and agility. All of which could be done with a greater imagination in our statecraft and military craft. In the prosecution of modern security challenges, if the instrument of force is to regain utility, India's politico-military construct and the pattern of civil-military relations must undergo concurrent change or reform.

Sub Theme Two: *Envisaged Internal Conflicts [Lieutenant General DS Hooda, (Retd)]*

Envisaged internal risks (not conflicts) are not in the security domain but do have security implications as far as India is concerned. Therefore, analysis of new risks leading to conflicts becomes crucial.

Future conflicts will be over identity, social exclusion, inequality, and over economic distress and this is going to affect a very large portion of the population. Hence, these are more serious than the current conflicts that are going on in India today exacerbated by climate change, worsened by technological disruption, and social media.

Rising India has a huge youth population thereby providing a huge window of opportunity and hence a demographic dividend till 2050. However, that is also going to drive consumption, with a very large section of the population having aspirations, desires, and hopes and those are the areas where we need to focus on, look at, and address.

Key global trends leading to insecurity in the world today are climate change and environmental degradation and these are putting enormous pressure on developing economies. Focus on identity; ethnicity, religion, etc., are a trigger for both external and internal conflicts. Migration is going up driven by conflict, borders are getting shut down. More and more nationalism, identity, politics, etc., is being evoked all around the world.

In the climate risk index, India ranks fourteenth. This leads to a number of pre-mature deaths because of air pollution in India some by transport, power plant, industries, etc. Our recognition of

this problem is limited! There is water stress and we have inter-State water disputes, there are rising sea levels in the Bangalore, Mumbai, Kolkata and by 2050 large parts of it could disappear! Problems in Bangladesh will lead to more migration to India.

Flood issues are omnipresent. Rescue rehabilitation for 2014 floods in J&K was done well; however, the subsequent recovery was poor and that led to a lot of dissatisfaction among the people of the State. There is an acute water shortage and the Niti Aayog report of 2018 suggests that 600 million people are facing acute water shortage, 21 cities are likely to run out of groundwater by 2020, and seventy percent of India's water is contaminated giving rise to health risks and problems.

Climate change reduces the farm output by twenty to twenty-five percent, leading to movement out of the farm sector and from rural to urban areas. By 2050, the urban population is going to exceed the rural population. There will be more mega cities. The shift from rural to urban areas is unplanned and leads to huge divide in terms of income differentials leading to exclusion and disparity.

Technology can mitigate challenges that the country faces but it is available to only a few sections of the society and hence, may by itself become a medium of triggering inequality. Finally, weaponisation of social media is creating a huge divide among communities by spreading fake news, obnoxious posts, and is polarising people. Good governance to address these issues is what is required and will be key to avoiding future conflicts.

Sub Theme Three: Conflict in Jammu and Kashmir (Dr Radha Kumar, Ex Interlocutor, Jammu and Kashmir)

The thought that the conflict in J&K could continue for two decades should cause panic for us. We ought to look other way and think can we resolve this conflict in 5 years? If we say that what steps do we need to take? Let us not delude ourselves that it may continue for another 20 years but the consequences over another two decades of the kind of conflict that we have in J&K are really very serious. And we should not consider these to be manageable perils.

According to us, first, despite 30 years of ongoing conflict of severe nature in J&K, time and time again the people of the valley have tried to look for a peace process to resolve it. That should be considered as an asset to build upon. Second, perhaps we are giving too much to Pakistan by focusing always on their ability to influence in the valley. India has the advantage of being on the ground and the fact that people in J&K deal with India on an everyday basis. Therefore, by giving Pakistan more importance we are diluting our case. Third, we may be erroneous in thinking that we deal with sub-conventional or asymmetric warfare by using the said means but that is not required actually and the conventional means might actually be very successful in dealing with sub-conventional warfare. Here conventional does not mean conventional military but in the sense of 'good, conventional means'.

Both the internal and external conflict situations when present together make the process of tackling very difficult. However, it is possible to separate some elements of external and some elements of internal and move forward. The military has time and again tried to contain the situation; however, the problem is with the political synchronisation. There is a need to go to talks with the entities that can pressurise Pakistan. More than this it is important to tackle the internal elements in the valley which means that we need to take everybody on board and have talks not just with the valley but also include Jammu and Ladakh. This would mean to conduct talks with Hurriyat as well even when we do not have any sympathy with them! Global attention and pressure are also required.

Internal conflicts are not new and need political intervention. The political and security domains need to strategise to tackle the internal conflicts. This has happened in Arunachal Pradesh earlier! There has been not any real discussion by the legislative assembly and the Indian parliament on J&K. Moreover, the civil society and military also need to work in congruence with each other in a democratic and transparent manner.

SESSION III: Response Options for Combating Future Sub-Conventional Threats by India **[Chair Lieutenant General BS Nagal (Retd)]**

Sub-conventional threats to India are in terms of internal and external conflicts, as also, psychological warfare. And holistic response options will require that the nation, Armed Forces, and the security apparatus are first aware of the threats and thereafter are fully prepared to deal with various contingencies.

Issues debated on national security in the global arena needs to be analysed as even that affects the security apparatus of the country, viz., issues like border management and illegal migration.

The demographic dividend may get mitigated by Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other smart technologies made available in the coming years and human skills may not be required that much. We must be prepared to tackle these underlying challenges.

Sub Theme One: Options in the Psychological Domain **[Lieutenant General SA Hasnain (Retd)]**

Psychological warfare is also referred to as perception management, information warfare, information operations, influence operations, etc., and is in the domain of influence. Kinetic domain affects physical warfighting capability, while the psychological primarily looks at mind-space.

In the future, influence operations are going to be a battle-winning factor. Technology has given it a boost, so in terms of effectiveness, it can compete with the kinetic or any other domain. Influence operations will surpass all other domains of warfare because the technology for influence operations is far more available to protagonists and rag-tag organisations who can exploit it for their gain, Islamic State being a classic example.

Pakistan Army recognised the power of information as a weapon rather well and much earlier than us, exploiting it in J&K in particular. Our focus has been on kinetic operations with the understanding that Military-Civic Action (MCA) programmes such as Operation SADHBHAVNA are psychological. This can't be further from the truth.

China beat the US to identify the true potential of influence warfare and by 1993, war under informationised conditions was already a PLA doctrine. Chinese military intelligentsia by 2003 had started speaking of doctrine to win wars without fighting wars. While it in no way put an end to preparing tools for kinetic operations, it simultaneously used that preparation to commence psychological messaging with full-spectrum military capability. China came up with the Three War Strategy, viz., cyberwar, media war, and legal war. We were subjected to it during the Doklam standoff in 2017.

Wars in the next two decades will primarily be hybrid with a preponderance of influence operations. Diplomacy and traditional statecraft will not be enough. We need information dominance and strategic

subversion to prevent problems from becoming crises, and crises from becoming conflicts. Victory is no more “black-and-white” and it is difficult to define victory.

The global system contains rather than solves problems. We have seen that in the case of J&K. To overcome this, one cannot follow just the kinetic route. Targeting of the mind-space is essential. Plausible deniability is more decisive than firepower in the Information Age. Undermining autocracies is easier than undercutting democracies. Ridicule is a powerful weapon against dictators. This is what the US is perhaps following against Putin—a supposed dictator.

We have come to an impasse in J&K so many times over. It is the civil society which has got to make a difference, but the all-of-government approach has not even looked at civil society as the ultimate, eventual target. The eventual target remains to be the person who carries the weapon. Academics, think-tanks, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and media can help the population become savvier consumers of information so that we don't fall prey to trolls.

War is essentially military, but the civilianisation of war needs to be understood. Let's learn to understand the true origins of what we see on the internet. In conventional operations, the real power of cyber may be paralysis of networks, but in sub-conventional operations, it continues to remain sabotage and influence on the mind of the population.

The Necessity of Influence Operations

The best weapons do not fire bullets. But unfortunately, most good warriors believe that the only good weapon is the AK 47. A good example is what Russia did in Ukraine.

Strategic subversion is what will win wars. Non-kinetic weapons like influence and deception will prove decisive. An educated population will be the strength to counter the adversary, which means that if you do not have a strategic culture in your country, the military can do very little. AI and social media churning out fake news complicate the situation. Influence operations will have to become an instrument of national power.

There are enough radical organisations of all hues in the country whose influence on society is detrimental to integrity. Potential time bombs with increasing demands for reservation and in the future, regional resources are going to be zealously guarded by locals and reluctantly shared with others. There are demographic threats too, which needs strategic level consideration.

Structure for Information Warfare in India

Except for the Armed Forces, no one else realises the importance of information. Pakistan aims to divide us on the basis of our faultlines. At the national level, there is a need for a constitutional body for strategic communication with domain experts from different sectors. It has to be a top-down approach.

Armed Forces have to develop operational concepts as part of their execution paragraphs. Information should no longer form a part of the command and electronics. It should be a part of the general staff, execution paragraph of the operation order. Structural changes have to take place bit-by-bit as experience is rare in this field. Work with academia and psychologists to develop training packages. Direct outreach is equally necessary and language skills are going to help. Content-generation has to be civilianised and the uniformed community has to be in a supervisory capacity.

Sub Theme Two: Options at the National Level (SM Sahai, IPS, Additional Secretary, NSCS)

Sub-Conventional Warfare (SCW) is nothing new and Chanakya spoke about in the Arthashastra including man's vices and weakness, and other types of wars that will need to be waged in the domains of psychological, clandestine, etc.

Sub-Conventional Warfare is often carried out to counter the disproportionate power of the adversary and for plausible deniability. Exploitation of offensive technology is a big priority with increasing unacceptability of human loss, especially by the civil society being another important factor.

In terms of offensive actions, we need to understand if our own population has an appetite for war. As countries mature up and evolve, they will desist from operations which involve large-scale human loss. SCW is also used to inflict a huge amount of economic costs on the target country, as also, it leads to a loss of prestige for the latter.

Threats of SCW also lie in the domains of technology and psychology. The electro-magnetic domain covers space (where all communications take place) and disruptions caused in space will be much more impactful than those that can be caused by sending armies. Miniaturisation, robotics, drones, and cyberspace are the areas which will be used.

There is a strong linkage between crime and terrorism. Terrorism is no more about ideology, but about deliverables. Hence, the means don't matter. Every time the opium production in Afghanistan goes up, the capacity of the Taliban also goes up. Hence, to counter it, we require a multi-dimensional and not a silo approach.

Lack of international consensus is another issue. India proposed a common definition of terrorism to the United Nation (UN) 21 years ago, but till now, there is no common definition. As long as we are unable to arrive at an international consensus on SCW and terrorism, it will be continued to be used as an instrument of state policy by hostile powers.

How would technology facilitate SCW? Technology is only an accelerator. As we urbanise, we would be more dependent on the Internet of Things (IoT), in turn increasing our vulnerability. One has to be prepared for automation of decision-making processes, miniaturisation of attack devices, etc., coupled with the fact that all this involves the big danger of taking erroneous decision/s.

Hardening of networks and hardening of the cyber domain is required to protect against threats such as malware. Since we are not that well-networked presently, it would be good to take stock of the vulnerabilities now. In the context of cyber diplomacy, small nations can become big (Israel) and emphasised on the three domains in which we will have to work, viz, psychology, technology, and the military force.

Special covert operations remain an option and are carried out without the knowledge of the public. The legal option is something that we do not use often. Regulations of the domains such as AI, cyber, space, oceans, etc., will come up in the future. We have to be able to use it to our advantage.

Emergency Crisis Management

All these disruptions will lead to major disasters in physical and virtual space. So crisis management will play a critical role. In the psychological approach for countering SCW, the key is going to be the establishment of the credibility of the government. That has suffered hugely in the Information Age.

There is a need to evaluate our present state. Are we ready to absorb technology? Do we have a database of what the existing, emerging, and incubating technologies are? Do we understand what the threat is and how to counter it or will we think about it when the threat arrives? When these technologies emerge, are we in conversation with these companies globally for building those security features into our systems?

China has created the Strategic Support Force (SSF). They have understood the power of these domains. We should start looking at data as a strategic asset and bring in appropriate laws to enable its holding, analysis, and prediction.

Sub Theme Three: Strategy at Organisational and Structural Level to Defeat Sub-Conventional Conflicts [Lieutenant General Raj Shukla, GOC Chetak Corps]

While the spectrum of conflict is only expanding and growing with bounding opportunities with the addition of newer domains in war-fighting by the decade if not in years. Military budgets in most modern democracies are being challenged constrained by competing demands from other sectors.

Opportunities for the military leveraging in the statecraft and national interest are only growing but requisite resources are not always available. Hence, to exploit the available opportunities given the reality of budgetary head there are no options left but to exercise ourselves with military flab wherein the focus is not only in the finances but also at the organisational flab. So this is a necessary prerequisite! Once that is done opportunities are bound to be desirable. Look at the expanding domains which demand military resourcing and attention.

There is a need to focus on space, cyber, and internet. We have seen in the recent past how the ISIS organised with the seventh century Islamist ideology proved to be far more agile and adept than the 21st century American and British militaries in first understanding the deepest secrets of the internet and then leveraging various online tools to virtually weaponise social media with telling military consequences.

The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) realised that virality is more important than veracity! You take a fake event, create soft puppet accounts, and make that fake event go viral! Whereas traditional militaries like us we always give more importance to veracity. So it was Virality versus Veracity. We are told in reality matters, ISIS understood that the perception was more important than reality.

Similarly, disruptions in the online world and more specifically the social media, have challenged the traditional militaries in their operational philosophies of structures, organisations, and training methods. IDF, for example, have used these smarter methods against Hamas and therefore have been able to tackle the challenges posed by the latter. Therefore, militaries ought to be smart in the future.

The fundamental matrix of fire and manoeuvre are being increasingly challenged by those in space and precision with the latter often emerging as decisive arbiters in conflict. Examples from both conventional and sub-conventional domains in this aspect are the Gulf War Two through an unequal contest, innovative American leveraging of space and precision and fire power saw eighty-five percent of Iraqi Army and artillery being destroyed even before it could move.

Same superiorities have been leveraged in the sub-conventional domain to create modern kill chains that we know as a surveillance system and predator strikes to eliminate a terrorist in terror modules across the globe. But most critically traditional clause and beliefs predicated on hardcore kinetics and

perseverance in the use of force as primary instruments of statecraft are being pushed to the margins by the precepts of Sun Tzu. Through the smart leveraging of military pressure points, nations are achieving their strategic and foreign policy objectives often without a shot being fired. The South China Sea is a classic example in this case.

Force is being used increasingly to facilitate political settlements rather than fashion outright victory. There is a greater attraction for the instrument of force in the sub-conventional space rather than in the conventional space. We need to reflect on this axiom in greater depth for applicability in the Indian context. This is an arena that of low stakes and ambiguity, responses short of war which modern professional militaries are examining intimately in order to drive whole geo-strategic advantages.

We need to exploit disruptive technologies such as machine learning, AI, human-machine teaming, big data, robotics, 3-D printing, etc. None of these are aspirational technologies. They are being applied to military combat in varying degrees of expertise. Every technology is potentially game-changing but a disruptive technology is one which marries technological potential with an operational concept.

There will still be a need to continuously strengthen our operational capacities along the LAC to maintain ascendancy as also resource our surgical response options to a greater depth, effect, sophistication, and precision. In-fact such responsibilities will only grow as India travels in its aspirational profile from balancing to a leading power. The choice will be ours, there are options in the sub-conventional domain, in the soft use of hard power, hard use of hard power. The hard power should be usable and ready!

There are three major choices: from a finite pool of finances how best do we resource the text and context, our traditional prowess, and the game-changing potential of emerging domains of disruptive technologies. It is also of consideration that such resources that we do commit are not applied democratically or proportionally across the capacity spectrum or alternatively uses a deft combination of special forces, pace, and precision to simply overwhelm our Western adversary. Third, firm budgetary allocation and development of precise sub-conventional capacity we must follow through with some quite creative doctrinal calibration enabled possibly by a two-stage process.

Closing Remarks: *Lieutenant General (Dr) VK Ahluwalia (Retd), Director CLAWS*

While the character of warfare continued to evolve, the nature of warfare remained enduring, interactive, and volatile as also fundamentally political. However, with the kind of technology that we have today in the context of non-contact and non-kinetic war, economy war, water wars, we find that even the nature of warfare is also evolving. Therefore, the nature of conflict, as well as the character of conflict, is evolving and changing.

There is a requirement to continuously analyse the security and technology-related developments across the world, especially in our sub-continent. There is a need to ensure commensurate upgradation of our budgetary requirements, force equipping, and doctrinal and training aspects to enable us to formulate our response options to meet the ever-evolving sub-conventional and security challenges in a holistic and timely manner.

There has been more than 200 intra-State conflicts post-1945. Of those, only 7 percent have been resolved as a result of military intervention. About forty-three percent have been resolved because of political intervention, but with the availability of a strong military option.

An important question that needs to be asked is why is it that we are unable to resolve our insurgencies? Are we going to live with these sub-conventional threats facing our country? It must be remembered that the security forces can only bring security environment to a particular level, but the resolution is a political forte. We have had a situation where there was a progressive sharp decline in incidents of violence and killings in J&K from 2005 to 2010, and even later up to 2013. Security environment had improved to a reasonably good level. It appears we did not monitor the situation well enough to find a solution to the conflict.

According to reports by international institutions, while West Asia and North Africa (WANA) are the most violent and unstable region of the world then South Asia is ranked at the second position. Hence, we need to be watchful and therefore tackling sub-conventional warfare is an utmost important aspect of nation-building.

Apropos, we need a significant internal transformation to deal with the emerging threats and challenges; hence, we need to develop appropriate security structures to deal with them on priority.



Detailed Report*

A national seminar on “*The Changing Character of Global Conflicts with Specific Reference to Sub-Conventional Warfare in the Regional Context in the Next Two Decades*” was conducted on February 14, 2019 at Ashoka Hall, Manekshaw Centre, Delhi Cantonment.

Aim

The aim of the Seminar was to identify and examine the changing character of global conflicts with specific reference to sub-conventional warfare in the regional context in the next two decades and lay down India specific measures towards conflict reduction, its management (the whole of nation approach) and resolution.

Modalities of Conduct

The one-day seminar was conducted at Ashoka Hall, Manekshaw Centre, Delhi Cantonment on February 14, 2019. The participants were from the armed forces, strategic community, veterans, defence analysts, defence attaches, academia and students. Nominated army officers from field formations also participated in the seminar. The seminar was not open for the media.

Chair

Session I	Professor Gautam Sen	Distinguished Visiting Fellow, CLAWS
Session II	Lieutenant General PC Katoch, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SC (Retd)	Distinguished Fellow, USI
Session III	Lieutenant General BS Nagal, PVSM, AVSM, SM (Retd)	Former Director, CLAWS

Speakers Session I

- Mr Brahma Chellaney, Professor of Strategic Studies, CPR
- Lieutenant General Gopal R, UYSM, AVSM, SM, QMG
- Mr K Vijay Kumar, IPS, Former DG CRPF

Speakers Session II

- Lieutenant General AK Singh, PVSM, AVSM, SM, VSM, (Retd), Distinguished Fellow, CLAWS
- Lieutenant General DS Hooda, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, VSM** (Retd), Visiting Fellow, CLAWS
- Dr Radha Kumar, Ex Interlocutor J&K

* The aspects enumerated as part of this report are based on the deliberations by panelists. These do not necessarily conform to the views of the Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS) or that of the Indian Army or the Ministry of Defence, Government of India.

Speakers Session III

- Lieutenant General SA Hasnain, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM, VSM** (Retd), Chancellor of Central University of Kashmir
- Mr SM Sahai, IPS, Additional Secretary, NSCS
- Lieutenant General Raj Shukla, YSM, SM, GOC Chetak Corps

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE CHIEF OF ARMY STAFF



Keynote Address by the Chief of Army Staff

General Bipin Rawat, the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) underlined the fact that nations all around the world are dealing with Sub-Conventional Operations in some form or the other. These new and emerging challenges of future conflicts must be analysed and their implications are drawn especially for the Armed Forces. However, it does not mitigate the threat of conventional operations (especially in the regional context) and all modern armies must be prepared for it.

The COAS emphasised that the basic tenets and character of conflicts over the past three decades have been changing rapidly, wherein the balance of global power and possession of nuclear weapons by an increasing number of nation states has somewhat reduced the possibility of a total war at the global level. However, at the regional level, its risk remains. An analysis of recent conflicts reveals the ever-changing nature of hybrid engagements—the blurring lines between conventional and non-

conventional warfare, State and non-State actors, and regular and irregular conflicts. Therefore, it is essential to study, understand, and analyse this change and undertake timely measures to meet these across the spectrum challenges holistically.

General Bipin Rawat stressed upon the fact that trans-national terrorism and radicalism perpetrated by terrorist groups worldwide, pose a significant security threat to our society. Countering terrorist propaganda and preventing radicalisation remains a challenge for the world and our region. There being no typical terrorist organisation necessitates that counter-terrorism strategies, as well as their responses, have to be tailored. These groups can no longer be dismissed as regional drivers of violence. Technology and ideologies bind them together creating force asymmetries which have rendered conventional response mechanisms unsuitable.

The COAS brought out that Indian Armed Forces, the Indian Army, in particular, have a very vast and rich experience of operating against sub-conventional threats of varying forms. In the past, a view that dominated the thought process of the international community was that such challenges were peculiar to specific countries which were expected to find indigenous solutions. However, 9/11 changed that perception and the world realised that the unprecedented reach and linkages of terrorist networks make it a global threat indeed. The support provided by inimical neighbours to non-State actors is also a major cause of concern. One such nefarious example is our western neighbour. The duplicity in their narrative has become apparent to the entire world.

COAS highlighted that the rapid technological progression has made it imperative to understand and incorporate contemporary technological feet in our proactive response to all future conflicts. Stand-off and remotely delivered weapon-systems and soft-power tools will be essential to defeat the enemy. Such warfare will blur the lines between combat and communication zones or combatants and non-combatants. Such a response requires a whole-of-nation approach engaging multiple stakeholders enabled by the latest technologies.

Despite the talks between the US and the Taliban, the Af-Pak region remains a fountain-head of terror which has serious security implications. The eastward spread of Islamic State (IS) ideology from this hotspot is another cause for concern. The threat today does not only come from organisations motivated by nationalist grievances or separatist goals, instead, the main threat is that of the fundamental ideology that promotes a radical world-view. Thus, in its present manifestation, this threat comes overwhelmingly from young men following a perverse ideology. Increased radicalisation coupled with a threat to democratic structures regionally is another cause for concern.

The COAS emphasised that the changing character of conflicts has made the command-chain very complex. Cyberspace has already manifested as a new front and there is a wide gap between existing and desired capabilities. With India's expanding interests, other factors such as nuclear proliferation, the presence of extra-regional and potentially hostile powers, the growth of conventional and nuclear capabilities of inimical powers, internal security and insurgency, and humanitarian assistance and disaster-relief are aspects that need to be viewed from the perspective of national security. We need a significant internal transformation to deal with the emerging environment and develop appropriate security structures within our existing ones. COAS mentioned that the issues laid down by him are by no means exhaustive. In fact, they are evolving even as he spoke in the backdrop of the dynamic geo-strategic environment, especially in the regional context.

VOTE OF THANKS BY DIRECTOR GENERAL PERSPECTIVE PLANNING (DGPP)

Vote of Thanks by Director General Perspective Planning (DGPP)

Lieutenant General Taranjit Singh, DGPP, stressed upon the relevance of the subject of the Seminar and underlined the new nature of the conflict that has ravaged the world in the previous and this century. He emphasised that the fault lines in the ideological, religious, and sectarian realm and global power play have created a blurring battlefield with different frontlines and an invisible enemy, creating challenges and dangers for policymakers and security forces.

While laying out the board scope and objective of the Annual Army Seminar 2019, he expressed his deep gratitude to Chairpersons and Speakers of the Three Sessions planned for the day, as also, the veterans and participants of the Seminar.

SESSION I: Changing Contours of the Global Conflicts in the Twenty-first Century with Specific Reference to the Sub-Conventional Domain

Opening Remarks by the Chairperson (Professor Gautam Sen)



Chair and Speakers: Session I

The Chair began by saying that it was interesting to read the concept note (circulated earlier to all participants) which noted in the very first line that ‘Evolution of conflict is mainly evolution of weapons and their development coupled with the aspects of strategy, tactics, and logistics.’ From a military standpoint, ‘conflict’ according to the concept note has been intrinsically related to weapons which were a product of technology which in turn created policies of strategy, tactics, and logistics. However, the subject is a far more complex issue of human behaviour related to the evolution of conflicts. The contract theorists like Hobbs identified that as ‘a man in the state of nature’ which translated into the concept that ‘man is eternally vile, aspiring to dominate over other fellow human beings, and aspires to use coercive force to achieve its self-interest.’ This philosophical concept can be seen as the root cause of all conflicts and violence leading to wars from the dawn of history. Presently, it has been further complicated by the ‘crisis of identity’.

On the other hand, the Marxian ‘dialectics of conflict’ related to the conflict amongst classes and the inevitability of war between the capitalist and the proletariats. With the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991, conflict entered a brand new paradigm related to the ‘crisis of identity’ giving rise to the role

of fundamentalism, terrorism, and separatist movements. Acting as a catalyst has been the role of technology to influence conflict and war as never before in the last century with the advent of nuclear weapons and the weapons of mass destruction. Ideology to govern created the bi-polar world where the use of nuclear weapons remained in the realm of ideas and thinking of the unthinkable. However, the mass evolution of nation-states in the post-Second World War further complicated the concept of conflict in the post-Colonial Age which was initially controlled during the Cold War period by the two superpowers and in the post-Cold War period by the advent of multi-polarity.

At the onset, it is important to note as to how the twenty-first century differs from that of the twentieth century. While the post-Industrial Age eradicated the problem of food, the post-Information Age in the twenty-first century is poised to eradicate the problems of resources. This means that there will be more solutions to the problem than the number of problems. Theoretically, in the twentieth century, one could afford to live tactically but in the twenty-first century we have to learn to live strategically. This stark difference makes the twenty-first century, more complex, exciting, and more polarized in terms of global power distribution, interdependence, and the interplay of cultural and civilisational praxes combined with the crisis of identity.

The changing contours of global conflict are dictated by the non-strategic dimensions of security, ie. ecology, environment, pollution, energy, rights of the unborn, and political economy. Unless these are factored in the calculus of power and conflict among States which may or may not be geographically contagious or far part from each other, our analysis will remain incomplete no matter how much of technology incorporation may take place in a nation State to develop weapons for use in conflict or in wars of future. Does that mean that we are poised to enter a new world order? If so what would be the structure of the new world order in the post-Information Age? If the conventional form of warfare becomes a distinct impossibility, then what will the new world order poised to witness in the twenty-first century. How will nuclear weapons state small or large or in the superpower category behave towards each other? What will be the new concept of credibility and hence, what would strategic analysis entail to predict the future of war, conflict, and violence when terrorism has entered the international arena?

The earlier observation must lead us to think of the role of theory in international relations to conceptualise and provide a framework to analyse the behaviour of nation States at individual levels and towards each other in a complex mosaic of interdependence and independence. Hence, the sub-conventional domain will be more influenced by transformation in the conduct of war, resolution of conflict by transactional management. This may be the real explanation of the transformation being carried out in the Chinese Armed Forces. In each regional and sub-regional part of the world today, the character of conflict will be heavily influenced by the cultural and civilisational praxes. Identifying these cultural matrices and combining them with the assessment of the vitality of the nation States within those regions will be the key to assess not only the probability of conflict situations arising there but also a possible way to mitigate conflict or possible war.

In the Information Age, suspicion, supported by information and policies culled out by advocacy will lead to reactive policymaking towards an adversarial State, whereas facts supported by evidence and measured in terms of capabilities will produce preemptive policies to reduce the possibilities of conflict and possible war. The new world order is poised to face the uncertainties as never faced before. We must never forget that conflict, violence, and war are a cultural phenomenon and there are no technical solutions to them whether we incorporate the doctrines of asymmetric warfare, hybrid warfare or any other form of warfare to achieve comprehensive victory. The role of theory to

understand the causes of conflict and war remains seminal and necessary. While theory cannot replace experience and judgement, yet it will catalyze both to understand the changing character of conflict in the twenty-first century.

Sub Theme One: *Changing Character of Global Conflicts*
(Professor Brahma Chellaney)

The speaker underlined that the changing nature of global conflicts very much reflects our changing world in an economic, technological, and geo-political sense over the last three decades. The pace of technological change has been truly revolutionary since the 1980s opening the path for the post-industrial, information-based economies and facilitating the rise of the so-called emerging economies. The advent of the Information Age has contributed to altering polity, society, economy, security, and international relations.

The growing tide of new innovations is accelerating the weaponisation of science. Today, technological forces are playing a greater role in shaping geo-politics than at any other time in history. Economically, the fast pace of changes in technology, transportation costs, and the regulatory environment has acted as a spur to the rise of Asia and the phenomenon of emerging economies. The global shifts in relative economic weights promise to accentuate not only is global power shifting eastwards, but Asia's influence is also expanding westwards. Geo-politically the pace of change has been no less extraordinary.

Over the last 30 years, the world has been dramatically transformed in the geo-political realm. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, we have witnessed the most profound geo-political change in the most compressed time-frame in history. Looking ahead, the next 3 years could bring as rapid a transformation as what has been witnessed in the last three decades. The caveat is—the systemic shifts in the global distribution of power that we are witnessing are occurring at an evolutionary pace, not in any revolutionary manner. There are revolutionary power-shifts that occurred in modern history, for example in 1919, at the end of the First World War and in 1945, the end of the Second World War. Such power shifts arising out of bloody wars between great powers seem unthinkable today. The power-shifts are happening without any battlefield victories. The importance of military power, however, remains intact, yet power-shifts are happening without any major wars.

This underlines aspects, viz: (1) the changing nature of power, even if the change is subtle in nature; and (2) the international order has entered an evolutionary phase. We're unlikely to see abrupt or dramatic shifts in the international order. Against this background, if the changing nature of global conflicts is seen, it is apparent that the threats are becoming more subtle, yet the threats are no less potent; in fact, they are even more potent than before. Many conflicts are reaching below the threshold of open war, yet the cost that they carry or that they impose is no less than the costs of the previous conflicts.

Asymmetric warfare, for example, can impose enormous extended costs on a country. It is waged over a protracted period and designed to impose potentially maximum damage such as death by a thousand cuts. It is also waged with more limited goals such as changing the territorial and maritime status quo in a salami-slicing strategy. Unconventional challenges extend to climate-change, overfishing, degradation of coastal and other marine ecosystems, as well as the rise of illegal, non-State actors such as terrorist groups, criminal syndicates, and sea-borne pirates. State-sponsorship of transnational terrorist groups is an open affront to international law.

The changing nature of global conflicts is also evident from economic aggression and the use of debt as a weapon to erode the sovereignty of economically vulnerable countries. Debt entrapment is a tool of conflict and carries as serious consequences as defeat in the war for a small country. Foreign financing of infrastructure projects can be designed to facilitate the exploitation and export of natural resources to the investing country's home market.

Riparian pressures exerted through upstream hydro-engineering projects can weaponise water as an instrument in inter-State conflict. Influence operations against weaker States in various forms from legitimate activities such as lobbying to covert, corrupting actions such as meddling in the internal affairs of others, bribing their leaders, and seeking to sway their public discourse. In today's world, unconventional threats and conflicts dominate in comparison to conventional threats. This reality underscores the need for conventional military forces, to become less rigidly conventional and more flexible and innovative in terms of their doctrines, plans, preparedness, and strategies.

Technological change is altering the nature of the conflict in the twenty-first century. Cyberspace has become an arena to gain strategic advantage against adversaries. The global information wars are gunfights in which holding a knife makes no sense. Countries that fail to catch up with strategically important technologies will lose out. Long-range missiles remain the idiom of power and force in international relations. Significantly, nuclear weapons are acquiring a new salience as arms-control recedes. Some powers are developing new nuclear warheads. This leads one to believe that we are entering a new era of unchecked nuclear weapons development. In the coming years, military equations and conflicts will be shaped by emerging technologies, including AI which will allow countries to develop more efficient weapons making combat more lethal, quantum communications leading to communications which can't be decoded, the IoT networks that support critical infrastructure such as the power-grid, drones, including unmanned, under-water, ground/air/space vehicles both for combat and for surveillance, cyber weapons that can target critical systems such as air traffic control, electronic warfare, hypersonic weapons, and counter-space weapons. However, technology never has been and will not be the sole determinant in shaping how conflicts begin and end. It's an important determinant but not the sole determinant.

Looking the aggressions witnessed in the twenty-first century, there is one common element—the aggressor's readiness to defiantly flout international norms and rules has proved a more decisive factor than the use of cutting edge technology, for example, without firing a single shot or incurring any international cost, China has managed to fundamentally change the territorial and maritime status quo in a critical sea corridor that connects the Indian and Pacific Oceans. It first created artificial islands and then turned them into forward military bases that today host port facilities for warships, military airfields, and anti-missile weaponry. All this has been achieved on barely 5 years. From the Western Himalayas to the Western Pacific, shades of this kind of revisionism are apparent. This underscores one important fact that despite the profound economic, technological, and political change that we have witnessed over the past 30 years, the world in some fundamental aspects remains essentially the same since medieval times. Today, brute force matters more than international law. The notion that the twenty-first-century world is governed by international law is a dangerous illusion; an illusion that can invite aggression. International rules are bendable and expendable for the strong. The weak and the timid are likely to be the main victims of conflicts today as they have been in the past. A truly rules-based international order is a worthy aspirational goal and nothing more. It is against this background that we must discuss sub-conventional conflicts in a State-against-State model. If one keeps aside civil

wars and other internal conflicts, the nature of sub-conventional conflicts in today's State-against-State context, is very much linked with one side's open disregard for international rules and norms and its resort to renegade and roguish actions.

Sub Theme Two: North-East: Present Scenario and Emerging Challenges (Lieutenant General Gopal R)

The speaker brought out that North-East is a place where rains, river, ranges, and rifles dictate the rhythm of life, in addition to bandhs, blockades, boundary disputes, and the business of insurgency. The boom of weapons and business of insurgency is receding. No region in the world has given rise to so many insurgencies. The fallout of Partition was that a vibrant geographical area well-connected with all modes of transportation suddenly became landlocked. The North-East shares more borders with foreign countries than with the mainland India itself.

OVERVIEW OF INSURGENCIES

The Speaker mentioned that demands of various insurgent groups differ from autonomy within the provisions of the Indian constitution [NSCN (IM), Kuki groups, NDFB(s)], outright secession [VBIGs, NSCN (K), ULFA (I)], to pure extortion. With regard to autonomy, the number of autonomous councils in the North-East is mammoth, with 22 autonomous councils (Mizoram 3, Meghalaya 3, Manipur 6, Assam 9, and Tripura 1). If the problem has been ethnic insecurity and non-adherence of local governance and customs, the figures state something else. In fact, the first autonomous council had been established in Assam in 1951 itself. But obviously, the aspirations of the various ethnic groups have not been met. Hence, dealing with insurgency in the North-East requires dissimilar approaches, strategies, responses, and reactions from State-to-State and also within the same State.

Nagaland (The Mother of Insurgencies)

The Disturbed Areas Act 1976 has been extended till June 30, 2019, with the moot point being that since its establishment as a State in 1962, has the peace returned? We need to examine the construct of Nagas having one nation, one voice, etc. To quote SC Jamir 'A group of heterogeneous, primitive, insular, isolated diverse tribes with nothing in common'. In Nagaland, these people live in mutually exclusive valleys. In Eastern Nagaland, in 1962 when the State was formed, the Tuensang Hill Tract Area was merged with Nagaland. Today, Tuensang has been split into four districts, namely, Tuensang, Longleng, Mon, and Kiphire. These areas are still remote and backward. The importance of this border is well-known because of the Indian insurgent groups operating across the border. The spokesperson of the Eastern Nagaland People's Organisation has started demanding a separate State. This demand has been there from 2010 but of late there is more momentum. They have rejected a 300-crore economic package specially designed for Eastern Nagaland. This area is populated by six different tribes. They have started calling themselves the backward Nagas with reference to the rest of the Nagas. The Village Guards raised by the late Major R. Khathing withstood the onslaught of the Naga rebels in the 1960s when the insurgency was at its peak hold the key. If Village Guards are resuscitated, it will form the bulwark of our defences against depredation from across the border.

In the case of NSCN (IM), the demand for greater Nagaland is no more spoken about. The Framework Agreement has been signed on August 3, 2015—one week prior to the Nagaland Assembly

had endorsed the demand for greater Nagaland (Nagalim) for the fifth time. So the sole spokesperson status of the NSCN (IM) stands eroded. They are aware of it and are on a massive outreach programme. According to the 1997 Ceasefire Agreement, amended in 2001, they are authorised certain camps, they have to operate within certain parameters. The recruitment is going on, batches are passing out, reports of possible women enrollment into the fold. What is this for? This is perhaps to ensure the rehabilitation package, which may be coming soon.

There are efforts to create footprints outside Nagaland, especially in Arunachal Pradesh, and the turf wars especially in Manipur (Tamenglong and Churachandpur). The reported request is for new ceasefire ground rules which are asking for more and more concessions so that they can operate freely in Nagaland and adjoining areas. Why is the organisation asking for such relaxation is the moot question. Nagas and tribal unity is a mirage. There are eighteen tribes with Naga Hoho, being the apex body. Its state today is that the constituents of the Eastern Nagaland Peoples Organisation (ENPO) the Sumi and Lotha tribes are out of it. The Hoho does not call the shots anymore. In Oct 2013, the Action Committee Against Unabated Taxation came into being, with participation of locals due to taxation by militant groups, but elections approached, internal squabbles happened and a new organization, namely, the Public Action Committee has come into prominence, especially in the commercial capital Dimapur which is the hub of extortion, which is a good sign.

The talks with NSCN(K) are on and should lead to some agreeable points. All over the North-East, student bodies call the shots. The Naga Students' Federation has come up with a new demand, i.e. make Inner Line Permit applicable to Dimapur. According to the provisions of the Bengal Frontier Act-1873, one needs to have an Inner Line Permit (ILP) but not for Dimapur. What happens in Nagaland has a fall-out on Arunachal Pradesh also, especially the southern districts. The shortest route from insurgent areas from across the border to Upper Assam makes the areas trouble-prone. There is a perceptible change in the way in which the Arunachal government has been dealing with this problem and following a unified strategy, which will bear fruits. The last one was the modification of the list of scheduled tribes, especially Naga. Till the time this amendment came, they were known as Other Naga Tribes, but now they will be known by their tribal names. Vested interests were spreading rumours that if one is not known as a Naga tribe, the government facilities will be lost.

Manipur

As per MHA Annual Report of 2016-17, the overall violence is on the decline in the North-East. Out of the violence that happens, maximum happens in Manipur. The valley-based insurgent groups, especially the Meithis, target the security forces. The forces are targeted even in the de-notified areas and outside too. Non-compliance of extortion demands by contractors and employees are brought to book by liberal use of grenades. Many of the valley-based insurgents claim that they undertake an armed struggle for secession from the Union, but facts on the ground are different. The number of people joining the Armed Forces is phenomenal. The New Surrender Policy of Feb 2018, is very lucrative and is especially applicable to Kuki groups 23 of which are in suspension of activities in camps. Re-skilling is required for a career in Manipur. The Assembly had passed the Manipur Citizenship Bill 2018. It is a sensitive and emotive issue. The valley has a population of Marwaris, Biharis, Nepalis, etc. The North-Eastern Student Organisation has been spearheading the sensitive issues. They have castigated the Citizenship Bill.

Assam

In 1947, the whole North-East was the State of Assam and the kingdoms of Tripura and Manipur. The Brahmaputra and Barak Valley have been polarised on the issues of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and Citizenship Amendment Bill. Surrendered United Liberation Front of Assam (SULFA) has given a call that they will take up arms if Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB) or NRC is not changed. It is a sign of trouble. The ULFA(I) and NDFB are carrying out activities which can be termed as bordering law and order, i.e. criminal mostly confining their activities to Upper Assam rich in coal, oil, tea, and timber. If they start targeting specific communities, the potential for flaring up is there. CI grid has been strengthened along the Southern Arunachal border by the security forces.

Mizoram

Peace has prevailed. The classic example is of no insurgency after the Mizo Peace Accord of 1986 and the State is on the path to progress. The northern part is populated by Brus who are known as Reangs in Tripura. The last round of talks for resettlement of those who fled from 1997 onwards to Tripura has failed. There are 25,000 people who are in camps in Northern Tripura. There is growing tension between the Mizo Young Association (basically the Lushai tribe) and the Chakmas. Both have different laws pertaining to land rights, ownership, transfer, etc. There are also inter-State clashes between Assam and Mizoram with regard to the boundaries of villages.

Tripura

NLFT and ATTF are no more there but demand for a separate Tripura land is gaining momentum.

Meghalaya

With the elimination of Sohan Dalbot Shira (the leader of Garo National Liberation Front), the insurgency has come to minimal levels. The security forces operating using the Army, Assam Rifles, CAPFs remain the preferred mode of response to contain insurgency. Security-related expenditure by MHA over 1,700 crore has been paid over the last 5 years. Though the police have modernised, the facet of capability to deal with the insurgent groups or CI needs a relook.

Challenges

Mushrooming Militant Organisations

Being the flavour of the environment wherein, as we talk with one organisation, another one comes up with the basic aim being extortion.

Modus Operandi

Even in the 1960s, all the groups had joint training, but now there are joint operations. In joint operations, core competencies are being marshalled. Security of movement out of any posts/camps is becoming difficult due to better mobile coverage and more women/children being mustered as eyes and ears.

Border Management Challenges

Indo-Myanmar border cannot be equated with any other border in the country. It's not a porous but an open border with cross-border linkages in terms of ethnicity, culture, etc. That's why our forefathers thought about the free-move regime also allowing for the transient route for the hit-and-run tactics of the insurgents. In border management, in addition to border-guarding, 11 other agencies are involved and hence, it becomes a complex opera which requires timely fine-tuning! Fencing is not a problem and no fence has stopped any movement including insurgency. In this area where cross-cultural linkages are there, trade is there, land holdings are there.

From demonstrative action, the Myanmarese Army is now transforming to real action. TADA—the HQ of NSCN(K) has been occupied. Earlier there was just temporary dislocation now they are transferring.

The Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

Especially in Manipur, they have got frontal, social, and cultural organisations which takes up a minor cause. We need to have a target-oriented public information campaign so that misinformation doesn't gain momentum, especially in Manipur.

Extortion

With the NIA stepping in, this issue has come to a stop. The contractors in order to ensure their cost overruns and time delays, often enact this kidnapping and extortion drama, but things have improved with NIA's over-watch.

Media

It is giving due attention, but no major media group has its footprint in the North-East. It is mostly stringer-based reporting. For example, Churachandpur even after being a very remote and backward area, has 29 registered newspapers. However, no main stream national media is present manifesting from the aspects of transportation, logistics, and other problems.

Connectivity Issues

The government is laying major emphasis on this. The road comes, commerce follows resulting in overall development with the key issues being timely completion and maintenance.

Guidance and mainstreaming the youth is a challenge because when Nagaland was formed, there were no colleges. Today, there are 64 colleges but there is not even a single Science college in the districts adjoining Dimapur. However, education groups like Amity, Apeejay, Manipal, etc., have now set up their campuses so that the youth is better guided and given more career opportunities.

Sub Theme Three: Changing Dynamics of Sub-Conventional Conflicts in Left Wing Extremism and Jammu and Kashmir ([Vijay Kumar, IPS, (Retd)]

Jammu and Kashmir

The Speaker flagged the aspect that in the CI operations/environment, it's not the team that is stronger but the team that is tilting the public opinion which seems and becomes stronger. It is not your individual

brilliance but how you put your mediocre brilliance together and, how the team can synergise with other teams that matter. Very often, commanders at the level of a company gather intelligence and execute it, at times, without help from local police in some cases. This means that connect with the local population is good.

The important point is that there are about five main tanzeems and approximately 300 terrorists. The year 2018 has been a very significant year in most measures to include terrorists being neutralised. Killing may seem morbid, but one has to account for the blood loss of your own men. So there is nothing wrong in neutralising terrorists as long as we are not being muscular about it. The border has been extraordinarily active. Amarnath Yatra and panchayat elections were conducted without major incident. There are few stone pelters, less pellets, and more synergy between the security forces.

In 2017 and mid 2018, we had a significant number of foreign militants. Presently, the foreign militants are not coming out in open and their hide-outs have gone outside the towns which either means that the public doesn't want them or that they are getting scared of our intelligence. Either way, it is good news. Places like Shopian and Pulwama are hotspots. Even when the Army went there, there were tremendous protests. Now things have changed and the same public wants them to stay back. This is what will happen in a CI environment if you are wise. The Afghan School of Strategic Studies says that only 10 percent of the population supports the Taliban. Despite that, they have such a hold. This fits very well with the J&K scenario also. The majority does not matter. The point to be underscored is having advanced so much, we 'should not retreat now'. The population of terrorists is approximately 300 in total, but the bulge can happen any time as there are terrorists waiting to cross over. It will depend on what we do with border management. Last time a brigade was wound up, Abu Qasim infiltrated followed by 20 to 25 foreign fighters. Hence, our thinning and thickening should be with due consideration.

In 2018, Militants killed/abducted 44 civilians. More importantly, 40 civilians have lost their lives in areas where an encounter with terrorists was going on. This is the collateral we must avoid/minimise. Collaterals, like pellet victims, become iconic photos, and pictures can go against us. The Indian Administrative Services officer Shah Faesal's resignation in Jan 2019 was given too much publicity. Much like water, land, and air, we need to fight in the cyber and space domains also. We need to take on media and social media. In the Nilofar rape case (May 2009), one of the two girls who alleged rape turned out to be a virgin. But by that time, the damage was already done. In the case of Burhan Wani agitations (Jul 2016), 70 people were killed. During the Amarnath agitation (2008), 44 people were killed. People were allowed to go from place-to-place and there was no immediate curfew (our response mechanism). We should have an 'Operations TALA', viz., lock people up. It does not matter if we are seen as repressive, it would be sagacious in retrospect as lives would be saved. Joint training and synergy are of prime essence, especially in the context of mainstream TV that has disrupted and played a negative role by stereotyping and demonising security forces operations.

South Kashmir is dominating in recruitment with towns such as Pulwama, Shopian, Awantipora, Tral, and Anantnag leading. Out of the 386 terrorist incidents, 140 are from Pulwama and Shopian. The western neighbour is getting the bang for the buck. Some reports suggest that for every dollar spent by the neighbour, it is getting \$60-70 worth of our responses (fence, tactical interventions, fortifications, etc.). Such is the situation that the moment any Army General, politician, or top leader in Pakistan is seen as dovish, he becomes persona non-grata.

Between 2000 and 2008, there were 25 terrorist incidents in India. But post-26/11 because of the smart responses, the number of such incidents from 2009 to 2018 came down to 6. Perception is very important in CI and must be managed with a pro-active approach. The need for optics remains high and it needs a policy intervention every 3 or 5 to 14 years. The power of media is such that Mustafa Nanyem was able to overthrow the President of Ukraine using Facebook in Nov 2013!

Left Wing Extremism

Internal Orientation

The speaker mentioned that while China did meddle initially, it withdrew later. It is our own problem and our own people with no international borders. And hence, must be resolved with an internal orientation, with the whole of the government approach, by catering to the legitimate demands of the concerned populace.

Inter and Intra Force Synergy

When Muria Gonds were sent to CIJW School, there was a cross-pollination of ideas and new tactics were learnt, which yielded very positive results on the ground. Such efforts on the synergy of efforts must be pursued.

Left Wing Extremism Leadership and Present Canvas

Ganapathi, a little geriatric, has been finally able to demit and handed over the Maoist territory to a person (Basava Raju) who is very dangerous and an IED expert. Incidentally, 80 percent of the last year's security forces' casualty was because of IED and hence, an increase in the employment of IEDs by the insurgents must be appreciated in the future. The Gonds are not separated by borders and spread into many States. This manifests into difficulty in coordination due to State borders and police being a State subject (Article 7). In 2006, the Soli Sorabjee Committee envisaged the New Police Act stating that whenever the security situation becomes very chronic, it should be taken over as a special security zone and brought under special dispensation of the Army/Police/CAPFs, etc., and the Centre should fund the collective effort. This remains a dream.

Own Operations

We may try to mirror the adversary in asymmetric warfare, but Naxalite will change his modus operandi and tactics. Our tail (often administrative) is very long and he will try to cut the tail like how the Germans' tail was interdicted in Arabia. We must thus be lightly equipped, agile, and launch operations based on specific intelligence and coordinate our efforts with social, cultural, and administrative well-being of the tribal population along with the concerned government authorities.

SESSION II: Envisaged Sub-Conventional Conflicts in the Indian Sub-Continent in the Next Two Decades

Opening Remarks by the Chairperson [Lieutenant General PC Katoch (Retd)]



Chair and Speakers: Session II

The Chair began by saying that in India at times we hear that war is an unlikely event. There are some people who only regard conventional war as war and not the sub-conventional ones, latter being unremitting and likely to happen in the coming years in forms such as insurgency, LWE, militancy, proxy wars, terrorism, etc. Conventionally, weak nations often opt for sub-conventional means against their adversaries.

War is a costly affair both in terms of economics and human life. The recent estimate of US expenditures on the global war of terrorism from 2001 to 2019 is \$5.9 billion. Global powers in recent trends are employing weaker nations coupled with proxy forces to maintain the balance of power in their favour. Thus, we need to look at SCW as part of hybrid warfare, and not in compartments, viz, only in Armed Forces sense for obtaining a holistic sense.

There has to be a mix of all sorts of warfares right from irregular warfare, sabotage, use of subversion, etc., to deter direct conflict. Examples exist of such forces being employed in Afghanistan and Iraq and today in Syria. In China, Sun Tzu talked of indirect methods of warfare, a balanced mix of all types of warfares. The Chinese concept of unrestricted warfare states that national armies today will not be able to cope with the dissent in the public and will not be able to deal with the enemy using unconventional forces by simplistic methods.

The last point the Speaker made was that measures to be taken against unconventional forces cannot be limited only in the defensive domain, and this perhaps may need the same methods as being used by the adversary. However, in our context, this does not mean encouraging terrorist activities in the adversary's territory.

Sub Theme One: *Envisaged External Conflicts* [[Lieutenant General A K Singh (Retd)]]

The Speaker highlighted that the internal and external domains cannot be isolated, they are interconnected especially so when the internal domains tend to draw sustenance from across the borders. What form the external conflict will take in the next two decades is difficult to predict but the potential for external conflict certainly continue to remain on both the Indian flanks, viz., the Northern and Western. What is debatable is what form the external conflict will take in the twenty-first century when there is a fusion of war and deterrence, coercion, and escalatory dynamics have been turned on their head in many cases. War is distinct from conflict; the latter is a vast canvas and includes all shades of discord including both State and non-State actors.

The Speaker brought out that there are various instruments to address the conflict portion but for the day's discussion he will talk about the military aspect of it. When we survey the strategic environment around India we see that there may be few others that are imbued with greater politico-strategic-military adversity. We face two neighbours that are potential challenges and in the active strategic domain. The two-decade perspective on warfare initially seemed to be too long and but then one can go back to the 1990s to ponder on the fact that during those times the focus was to completely solve the Western issue in a decade and then switch to Northern front. However, more than 20 years later the status quo remains unchanged! An ongoing proxy war like the one in J&K could lead to conflict. So what could be other possibilities that exist for the next two decades? The first of course is the ongoing proxy war leading to conflict like the one in J&K in the form of a hybrid war; A non-kinetic crisis like a Doklam escalating to a serious limited/all-out exchange; indirect kinetic exchange involving missile, cyber, and space and a full-blown kinetic war initiated on either flank and lastly, an Indian intervention among our neighbouring countries and also countries in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) based on their requirements and humanitarian and other considerations. Broadly put, likely conflict scenarios on the Western front, likely challenges on the Northern front, and out of area contingency India is likely to face.

Relation with Pakistan has been the one with a complex amalgam of historical legacy, a love and hate relationship mired in deep mistrust and strategic miscalculation. Having fought three wars and a Pakistani misadventure in Kargil in 1999, the two sides are still locked in a never-ending proxy war unleashed by Pakistan which is increasingly beginning to threaten the sanity and stability of Pakistan itself. Pakistan's hubris and misadventures have resulted in being boxed in the corner from where there seems to be no way out unless enlightened leadership takes charge—an increasingly difficult proposition. With increasing support from China and American ambivalence, Pakistan is embarked on a dangerous journey which could see a conflict with India sooner than later.

A nuclear-armed Pakistan with its opaque doctrine has made the situation more complex and dangerous. In fact, Pakistan has turned nuclear deterrence on its head and felt emboldened to pursue a high-risk proxy war against India under that umbrella. For India, being the stronger and more mature nation, the preferred option to deal with Pakistan has to be a soft option for establishing peace. But it takes two to tango! The ball being in Pakistan's court to reciprocate the Indian overtures been made

over a period of time. India's quest for peace, a difficult but not impossible proposition! Of course, if this does not work there may be little choice left with India but to exercise the hard option. In the realm of national security and foreign policy, a singular position may be a recipe for failure. Hence, while pursuing the peace process over the next couple of years with Pakistan, India should be prepared for adopting the hard option if all else fails. It cannot be anyone's case that we permit the present status quo to continue indefinitely.

By preparing for the hard option India hopes that necessary signals will move across to our western neighbour. The present state of the Armed Forces is not at an optimum level. The budget allocation is just over 1.5 percent of the GDP and continuous tardy state of preparedness do not indicate requisite signal to our adversary. In fact, some people feel that it is conveying a negative message. And as far as national security perceptions and capability development of the Armed Forces are concerned it is utmost necessary that the Armed Forces and the government are on the same page. For initiating the hard option if it comes to that few premises may be considered.

The conflict initiation is more likely to be by India when our patience runs out; we should, therefore, be prepared for this eventuality over the next 3 to 5 years. Because the present status quo suits Pakistan and therefore, it will not want to change it; hence, India will have to take the hard option to change the status quo. In the same timeframe, the stage should be set diplomatically, economically, and militarily. Ideally, the interest should be made harmonious with those of the US, Russia, and other great powers. A number of contingencies are being worked out and refined in the next two decades from a limited conflict to an all-out conflict with varying terminal objectives depending on what the politico-military strategy is. Our plan should exploit technology in the cyberspace and third dimension domain. Recent examples, in Syria and Ukraine, are evident in their usage. India should develop capabilities in the domain of conventional missiles, armed UAVs, and precision fires so that our non-contact kinetic options become more viable.

The Indian Air Force and the Indian Navy will have to play a major role in the next conflict if and when it takes place. With increasing foreign presence around the waters of Pakistan, the Indian Navy will have to relook at its strategy. Lastly, as far as Pakistan is concerned their nuclear bluff has to be called out and for this India should seek the support of the US, Russia, and maybe even China.

Coming to the Northern front, as far as China is concerned, there are issues of convergence as also divergence. Despite the positive progress in Indo-China relations in the last three decades unsolved border issues and mutual distrust still remains. Added to this is often the unpredictable behaviour on the LAC. However, what cannot be ignored by India is the massive development of dual-use infrastructure in Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) and the related rapid deployment capabilities acquired by the PLA. China, therefore, remains the long-term challenge to India's national aspirations. Not a threat but a challenge! So what should be India's strategy towards China? It should be to engage China on multiple levels such as trade, commerce, cultural and political engagement, people-to-people contact but from a position of strength both in terms of infrastructure along the borders and military capability development for our Northern borders.

In the 1990s, the US army coined a term violent, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) to describe the type of environment they would have to operate in the future. Each word of that VUCA acronym since then has acquired a deeper meaning. This term holds true equally for the Indian Armed Forces to use. Thus, at the surface and the mindset the nation and the Armed Forces have found strategic comfort in being focused on Pakistan, Doklam triggered a reality check for security analysts

and made them alike to the challenges that lurk on the Northern borders. Thus, two major strategic shifts are warranted in higher defence mindsets: from Western border-centric to Northern-centric orientation and from sub-conventional to conventional warfare preparedness.

Counter-insurgency operations have taken a yet to be fully analysed toll on our preparedness for a primary role, ie conventional war. In the conventional domain, we need to break down war scenarios to scenarios of skirmishes and limited sector conflicts as against an all-out war scenario. Strategies to deal with such scenarios call for a greater duration as the Kargil conflict and Doklam standoff have shown. Crisis level reorientation to our Northern borders is axiomatic fallout of these strategic shifts in our mindsets. It is also more than obvious that in geo-strategic terms while the Western borders demand our immediate attention, the Northern borders pose the long-term challenge. Yet the constant needling and frequent pokes from the Western adversary do not allow India to turn strategic gaze sufficiently to the North. In that sense, the two front challenges is already an everyday reality whether or not it manifests in all our conflicts.

With regards to the nature of the conflict with China, the Speaker opined that China is not an irrational player, it is unlikely to spoil its ascendant role by resorting to conflict with India. But this is very different; however, from deftly weaving force into its statecraft it aggressively pursues its interest and constricts India's geo-strategic space. It is also fairly evident that China's strategic orientation is acquiring global overtones. The connectivity projects of the BRI, their interest for oil in the Middle East, their investments in Africa, and their increasing maritime dominance in the Pacific and the Indian Oceans are all strategic and economic drivers which have to be analysed. The scale of the military push and ambition of China is indeed mind-boggling. Given the fact that Chinese defence spending is expected to exceed to that of the US by 2035 and 2040, some experts opine the question will not be whether American warships should stay 12 nautical miles off the Chinese coast but the other way round!

Contrast these developments with India's strategic predicament wherein our foreign policy and military strategy is entrapped in the LoC-LAC syndrome pushing us into a perpetual defensive crouch. We have little option but to muster the will and find the resources to not only steadfast but to be steadfast along the LAC-LoC but also acquire an outward orientation especially in the maritime domain. Failing which China's strategic squeeze will only get more strangulated. In establishing the strategic context we will do well to be informed of a few persuasions. Force has numerous stabilising uses both hard and soft in equal measure. Force helps to keep the peace, gives practice of diplomacy a robust veneer, it deters and is a useful tool for politico-military signalling, it is a critical component for the prediction of geo-strategic spaces, a means of protecting individual interests across the globe, a conduit for the delivery of humanitarian and disaster aid and when employed resolutely decisive arbiter in conflict. When wrapped in the imaginative statecraft its utility as a metric in the resolute pursuit of national interest cannot be over emphasised. Therefore, the real issue is not that the military force is failing or that it is no longer utilitarian but that we need to much more cognisant of its deft leveraging particularly in the non-kinetic non-contact domains and re-configure its use in the obtaining of politico-military context.

The professional ethos and ethics of the Indian Military naturally drive it towards delivery and excellence in the kinetic domain. Activity in alive domains such as non-contact non-kinetic, informational, digital and diplomatic realms for long has been viewed as stuff that real militaries do not do. With the grammar of conflict changing rapidly, militaries need to do much more in these domains

to built up such levels of capacity that the military opposition withers without conflict in the mould of what Sun Tzu dictum winning without fighting! In the context of China, in the recent Doklam episode our military agility and robustness helped in military closure albeit a temporary one. A good beginning by all means but the Indian Military will need to get far more proficient and savvy in this regard to enhance its own institutional relevance and align the utility of force with the larger needs of Indian statecraft. There are other posers as well in the northern front on the non-contact non-kinetic domain. We would often talk about air superiority on our Northern borders but what if our adversary saturates the aerial (AD) environment with a whole lot of S-400, S-300 missiles, etc. Do we have an answer to this? What if 300 non-nuclear missiles are targeted on military infrastructure and other critical? Do we have an answer to this? These are the questions that we will need to answer and ponder over the next two decades. The purpose of military establishment is of course to win wars. It must now diligently apply itself to an even higher order skill. How to avert them without losing face? Fixing the military time and again is not good enough unless you fix the politics too and develop civilian strategic expertise and capacities to tackle the strategic uncertainties to secure a better peace. War and conflict, after all, are not sports for the militaries to fight and for the civilians to observe from the sidelines.

The Speaker then summarised that what we could do is to move towards a favourable politico-strategic-military construct to facilitate the national security interests. It is high time Indian statecraft started firing on all cylinders and got far more imaginative given the sheer anonymity of the adversity around us specially the scale and pace of the challenges posed by the Northern adversary. India cannot simply afford a languorous incremental pace any longer. A realistic audit of a security environment will tell us that China's rise is not only inevitable but may also be in our interest to some extent. The trick will lie in keeping peaceful by measuring both the challenge and the opportunity. The challenge could be met through strategic thought and a politico-military revamp even as the opportunity needs to milk through diplomatic engagement and economic interdependence. You don't go to war with your bankers as stated by Hilary Clinton over the US war with China! Can we create similar linkages? Ironically, the incumbent President Trump has turned this dictum on its head. Funding for the development of asymmetric capacities is essential! While funding for the ultimate fight has to be the long-term perspective funding symmetric capacities to match the Chinese in the non-contact non-kinetic domain is not a difficult proposition.

The responses short of war domain are not an expensive one! It calls for greater innovation, structural restructuring, and agility. All of which could be done with a greater imagination in our statecraft and military craft. India's strategic military mandarins will have to relearn the "art-of-weaving" force into statecraft as part of everyday foreign policy contest and not only as an instrument of an all-out conflict. In the prosecution of modern security challenges if the instrument of force is to regain utility India's politico-military construct and the pattern of civil-military relations must undergo concurrent change or reform. Were we to do some/all of this in the light of the changing grammar of conflict and the evolving nuances of our strategic construct our security posture will emerge smarter, more focused and effective laying the groundwork for our military strategies to unfold.

Sub Theme Two: *Envisaged Internal Conflicts [Lieutenant General DS Hooda (Retd)]*

The Speaker at the onset expressed that he will speak on the envisaged internal risks and not on internal conflicts as the latter would mean discussion on LWE, insurgency, militancy, terrorism, etc., which many speakers have already covered. Risks, on the other hand, are not in the security domain

but do have security implications as far as India is concerned. Therefore, an understanding of the trends, trajectories, and their implications of internal risks is important. It is also important to ponder if these risks will lead to future conflicts! Therefore, the anticipation of the new risks becomes crucial.

Future conflicts will be over identity, social exclusion, inequality, and economic distress and this is going to affect a very large portion of the population. Hence, these are more serious than the current conflicts that are going on in India today. We are well-equipped to deal with J&K, North-East insurgency, and even LWE. Out of control situation is unforeseen. However, the risks mentioned earlier are going to be exacerbated by climate change, worsened by technological disruption and social media. Focusing on the positive aspects of the country, India is rising and has a huge youth population thereby providing a huge window of opportunity and hence a demographic dividend! India is the only country which has a demographic dividend right out till 2050. A large population in the working age group and middle class that is going to drive consumption, but again a very large section of the population will have aspirations, desires, and hopes and those are the areas where we need to focus on, look at, and address.

Key global trends leading to insecurity in the world today are climate change and environmental degradation and these are putting enormous pressure on developing economies. The world is ageing but South Asia is getting younger! While India does have demographic dividend but can we provide hopes and desired jobs, equal opportunities to the youth? Given the challenges already posed by global trends. Similarly, the technology could become disruptive if not managed well. Finally, focus on identity, ethnicity, religion, etc., are a trigger for both external and internal conflicts. Migration is going up driven by conflict, borders are getting shut down. More and more nationalism, identity, politics, etc., is being evoked all around the world. And this is also having an impact on India.

Climate and Environment

In the climate risk index India ranks fourteenth. This leads to a number of pre-mature deaths because of air pollution in India some by transport, power plant, industries, etc. Our recognition of this problem is limited! And there is a huge need to recognise the problem. There is water stress and we have inter-State water disputes over the Narmada; there are rising sea levels in the Bangalore, Mumbai, Kolkata by 2050 large parts of it could disappear! Problems in Bangladesh and will that lead to more and more migration to India and how that is going to be tackled? Flood issues are omnipresent. These are huge problems affecting large parts of the country and its population and until and unless these are tackled conflicts might rise! One of the issues in J&K in 2015 was that while the rescue rehabilitation for 2014 floods was done well the subsequent recovery was poor and that led to a lot of dissatisfaction among the people of the State. There is acute water shortage and the Niti Aayog Report of Jun 2018 suggests that 600 million people are facing acute water shortage, 21 cities are likely to run out of groundwater by 2020, 70 percent of India's water is contaminated, and 82 percent of Delhi's water contains plastic fibres. So how are we going to tackle the health risks and problems?

Heat wave exposures are getting increased and mostly affect the people working outside mostly the farmers and agricultural workers. Farm distress is also affecting India; the crop yield-production ration is going down. Climate change reduces farm output by 20 to 25 percent. Therefore, a whole community is under distress and are trying to move out of the farm sector and from rural to urban areas. By about 2050, the urban population is going to exceed the rural population and there will be more mega cities. The shift from rural to urban areas is unplanned and leads to a huge divide in terms

of income differentials and leads to exclusion and disparity. The large working age group that India has is less educated and the average is between 6 and 8.9 years of education. The migration to large cities is done with great hopes but the population gets trapped into the vicious circle of least opportunities. About 76 percent of males and females in South Asia work in the vulnerable environment. About 73 percent of the wealth generated in India went to only one percent of the population that is the kind of inequality that the country faces.

Technology even though has tackled many challenges that the country faces but is available to only a few sections of the society. Therefore, the technology itself becomes a medium of triggering inequality. Finally, weaponisation of social media is creating a huge divide among communities by spreading fake news, obnoxious posts, and is polarising people. Identity-driven sub-nationalism, etc., needs to be tackled and focussed as these could lead to increasing polarisation. Good governance to address these issues is what is required and will be key to avoiding future conflicts.

Sub Theme Three: *Conflict in Jammu and Kashmir [Dr Radha Kumar, Ex Interlocutor, J&K]*

The Speaker began by stating that the thought that the conflict in J&K could continue for two decades should cause panic for us. We ought to look other way and think can we resolve this conflict in 5 years? If we say that what steps do we need to take? Let us not delude ourselves that it may continue for another 20 years but the consequences over another two decades of the kind of conflict that we have in J&K are really very serious. And we should not consider that these are manageable perils. They are not manageable perils! If one looks at the last 30 years of conflict in J&K, we had to fight many wars with Pakistan, there has been intractable conflicts, but these were nothing compared to the kind of alienation that began to grow from the late 1980s onwards through the 1990s, then 2010s, and now in 2020s.

Speaker emphasised that each successive generation that grows up in conflict, not knowing anything other than conflict tends to be more hardened, embittered, and intransigent. This is an ordinary sociological fact! Knowing all of these, what are the options for us? First and foremost, one must bear in mind that despite 30 years of ongoing conflict of severe nature in J&K, time and time again the people of the valley have tried to look for a peace process to resolve it. That should be considered as an asset to India to build upon. Second, perhaps we are giving too much to Pakistan by focusing always on their ability to influence in the valley; of course, they have an ability to do so and during 1965 they have tried to implant cross-border terrorism interventions. But India has the advantage of being on the ground. The fact that people in J&K deal with India on an everyday basis, providing us intimate knowledge of all the issues concerning the state and its people. Therefore, by giving Pakistan more importance we are diluting our case. To use that understanding that the people of the valley are looking forward to India's growing role in solving the conflict, there is a bit of realism in that. In that case, what can we do to move forward and to strengthen that bond? Third, we may be erroneous in thinking that we deal with sub-conventional or asymmetric warfare by using the said means but that is not required actually and the conventional means might actually be very successful in dealing with sub-conventional warfare. Here conventional does not mean 'conventional military' but in the sense of 'good, conventional means'. First and foremost, as the demography has changed and there is more youth which needs to be absorbed in the job market at the same time the unemployment rate is going high! Most of the social and economic sectors are state-controlled and therefore, tackling the socio-economic issues would be the first step in the conventional sense. India has been pooling in a large

amount of capital to better the situation in the valley but has not done much to loosen up the State control of the sectors. Creation of training programmes that will offer employment is also required. So far it has not been able to do. This is not restricted to the valley only though and stands true for the entire region. Corruption is the biggest problem in the country and yet we do not have better checks and balances to tackle corruption. Corruption needs to be tackled in the valley and the government after government has done nothing to let go of corruption. The State government and the Central Government need to be in sync while the State government does not do much on many fronts even when the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) was responsive and confidence-building measures are difficult to handle, therefor. This was shared from personal experience when the Speaker served as the interlocutor of the Indian government in J&K.

According to the Speaker in the overall context, both the internal and external conflict situations when present together, make the process of tackling very difficult. However, it is possible to separate some elements of external and internal and move forward on that. The military has time and again tried to contain the situation; however, the problem is with the political synchronisation. This means that the timing of action for the government once the containment is done by the Military is very important. There are two elements of timing that we have faced, one is external with Pakistan. In the sense that when the peace process is going on suddenly we will see that Lashkar or other terrorist organisation will try to spoil the situation by planting a bomb somewhere and this we have not been able to address. This means that there is a need to talk with the entities that can pressurise Pakistan to not sort to this kind of activity. India should use its clout to do so. More than this it is important to tackle the internal elements in the valley which means that we need to take everybody on board and have talks to not just the valley but also include Jammu and Ladhak. Added to this, there is a need to extend the peace talks to the 'enemies' as well and not just to the 'friends' as you make peace with your enemies and not to your friends. This would mean to conduct talks with Hurriyat as well even when we do not have any sympathy with them! We should be able to deal and negotiate with them. Global attention and pressure are also required.

In the end, the Speaker highlighted that internal conflicts are not new but these would need political intervention. This does not mean that security is not needed but there has to be a discussion, strategy, and it needs to be in sync. The political and security needs to strategise to tackle internal conflicts. This has happened in Arunachal Pradesh earlier! There has been not any real discussion by the legislative assembly and the Indian parliament on J&K. Moreover, civil society and Military also need to work in congruence with each other in a democracy. Transparency is also required.

SESSION III: Response Options for Combating Future Sub-Conventional Threats by India

Opening Remarks by the Chairperson [Lieutenant General BS Nagal (Retd)]



Chair and Speakers: Session III

The Chair stressed upon the fact that the sub-conventional threats to India are in terms of internal and external conflicts, as also, psychological warfare. And holistic response options will require that the nation, Armed Forces, and the security apparatus are first aware of the threats and thereafter are fully prepared to deal with various contingencies.

The Chair brought out that the issues debated on national security in the global arena need to be followed as even that affects the security apparatus of the country. The national security issues perceived in the US recently were Russian meddling with the presidential elections of the US and President Trump intentions to build a wall at the Mexican borders to protect his own country's national security issues by combating illegal migration.

Similar trends can be seen in the Indian context as well, borders need to be protected and foreign meddling needs to be taken care of. The demographic dividend as envisaged, how much it stands true given that AI and other smart technologies will be available in abundance in the coming years and human skills will no more be required that much. Are we prepared to tackle these underlying challenges that development brings in? There has to be synchronisation in the politico-environment, as when in power the politicians speak one language but as soon as they are out of power the language also changes. Similarly, sync in the politico-military structure is also needed.

Sub Theme One: Options in the Psychological Domain
[Lieutenant General SA Hasnain, (Retd)]

The Speaker emphasised that this is an area, which the Indian Army does not look at, in a very focused way. Psychological warfare also referred to as perception management, information warfare, information operations, influence operations, etc., is in the domain of influence. The kinetic domain affects the physical war-fighting capability, while the psychological primarily looks at the mind-space.

In terms of the domains of war, influence would have remained stuck at the bottom of the ladder, restricting to the shaping of the battlefield, never being the war-winning factor. In the future, influence operations are going to be a battle-winning factor. Technology has given it a boost, so in terms of effectiveness, it can compete with the kinetic or any other domain. Going by what is happening around the world, influence operations will surpass all other domains of warfare because the technology for influence operations is far more available to protagonists and rag-tag organisations who can exploit it for their gain. The Islamic State is a classic example wherein 40,000 international fighters were influenced to come. In the Indian sub-continent, knowingly or unknowingly, we are already being subjected to it.

The Speaker wondered how and to what extent the Pakistan Army strategised and innovated when it raised Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR); however, Pakistan Army recognised the power of information as a weapon rather well and much earlier than us. They have used it in J&K in particular. Our focus has been on kinetic operations with the understanding that Military-Civic Action (MCA) programmes such as 'Operation Sadhbhavna' are psychological operations. This can't be further from the truth. One has to work overtime to convert anything that is MCA into influence operations.

Even before the US recognised the power of the emerging media and other tools of information warfare, consequent to CNN's coverage of the Gulf War, it was China's PLA which identified the true potential and by 1993, war under informationised conditions was already a PLA doctrine. The Chinese military intelligentsia by 2003 had started speaking of a doctrine to win wars without fighting wars. While it in no way put an end to preparing tools for kinetic operations, it simultaneously used that preparation to commence psychological messaging with full-spectrum military capability. China came up with the Three War Strategy, viz., cyber, media and legal war. We were subjected to it during the Doklam standoff in 2017.

Wars in the next two decades will primarily be hybrid with a preponderance of influence operations. The Speaker quoted Sean McFate from *The New Rules of War: Victory in the Age of Durable Disorder*, 'There is more to war than warfare, and more to warfare than killing. Understanding this is the key to [the] de-escalation of conflicts, but many do not get it. Battlefield victory is obsolete now.' Today's war is decided in the information space. We will get caught in 'strategic atrophy' if we do not realise this. The battlefield will remain an important factor nonetheless. Diplomacy and traditional statecraft are not enough. We need information dominance and strategic subversion to prevent problems from becoming crises, and crises from becoming conflicts. Victory is no more black-and-white and it is difficult to define victory. Non-State actors always have resources that are dissipated. It is through the route of influence operations that it can get those resources back to any area of choice. An example would be ISIS.

The global system contains rather than solves problems. We have seen that in the case of J&K. To overcome this, one cannot follow just the kinetic route. Targeting of the mind-space is essential.

Plausible deniability is more decisive than firepower in the Information Age. This is driving the war into the shadows. Undermining autocracies is easier than undercutting democracies. Ridicule is a powerful weapon against dictators. This is what the US is perhaps following against Putin, a supposed dictator. Can this concept be applied elsewhere in sub-conventional conflicts? Modern victory is won and lost in the information space and not in the physical battlefield which means that civil society, rather than the government, may prove more decisive in future wars.

We have come to an impasse in J&K so many times over. It is the civil society which has got to make a difference, but the all-of-government approach has not even looked at civil society as the ultimate, eventual target. The eventual target remains to be the person who carries the weapon. Academics, think-tanks, NGOs, and media can help the population become savvier consumers of information so that we don't fall prey to trolls.

War is essentially military, but the civilianisation of war needs to be understood. Let's learn to understand the true origins of what we see on the internet, the real power of cyber. In conventional operations, the real power of cyber may be paralysis of networks, but the real power of cyber in sub-conventional operations continues to remain sabotage and influence on the mind of the population.

The Necessity of Influence Operations

The Speaker said that 'The best weapons do not fire bullets'. But unfortunately, most good warriors believe that the only good weapon is the AK 47. A good example is what Russia did in Ukraine. Russia could have blitzkrieged through Ukraine; instead, it used covert means like proxy forces, little green men, militias, special forces, etc., all the while waging a disinformation campaign. Russia has not put out anything on what it is doing. It focused on killing with confusion.

The Speaker said that anonymity is the weapon of choice. Strategic subversion is what will win wars. Non-kinetic weapons like influence and deception will prove decisive. An educated population will be the strength to counter the adversary, which means that if you do not have a strategic culture in your country, the military can do very little. AI and social media churning out fake news complicate the situation. Influence operations will have to become an instrument of national power. The realisation that influences operation is a greater threat than kinetic warfare has to penetrate the military and the quasi-military mind. Equally, if used offensively, it is a greater tool in our hands.

There are enough radical organisations of all hues in the country whose influence on society is detrimental to integrity. Potential time bombs with increasing demands for reservation and in the future, regional resources are going to be zealously guarded by locals and reluctantly shared with others. There are demographic threats too. All these need strategic level consideration.

Structure for Information Warfare in India

According to the Speaker, we need not replicate ISI / ISPR, nor do we need to jump into the concept of information warriors without giving it a deep thought to the nature of information threats that we are subjected to. Except for the Armed Forces, no one else realises the importance of information. Pakistan aims to divide us on the basis of our faultlines. At the national level, there is a need for a constitutional body for strategic communication with domain experts from different sectors. It has to be a top-down approach.

The Armed Forces have to develop operational concepts as part of their execution paragraphs. Information should no longer form a part of the command and electronics. It should be a part of the general staff, execution paragraphs of the operation order. Structural changes have to take place bit-by-bit as experience is rare in this field. We raised the Information Warfare Brigade much before the British raised the 77 Brigade. We raised it in 2004 and wound up in 2005 for want of ideas and the conceptual doctrines to be made available to them. We have to be willing to experiment and the Army has to be the seed force because the warrior understands the importance of influence operations. Culture and History have to be introduced as basic subjects for induction. Work with academia and psychologists to develop training packages. We need to break out of the 'not-our-job' syndrome. In sub-conventional operations, everything is your job until peace is finally attained. Direct outreach is equally necessary and language skills are going to help. Content-generation has to be civilianised and the uniformed community has to be in a supervisory capacity.

Sub Theme Two: *Options at the National Level* (Mr SM Sahai, IPS, Additional Secretary, NSCS)

The Speaker eluded that sub-conventional warfare is nothing new and our own ancient strategic doctrine has talked about it. The dimensions of sub-conventional warfare that Chanakya spoke about in the *Arthashastra* includes man's vices and weakness, and the type of wars that will need to be waged in the domains of psychological, clandestine, etc.

What is often perceived in the modern era with respect to sub-conventional warfare is that it is usually initiated by the weaker side, but not always, and the primary objective is always psychological, not military. It is carried out to counter the disproportionate power of the adversary and for plausible deniability. Strategic reason is that you now have a globalised world and it is difficult to send armies against each other. Exploitation of offensive technology is a big priority with increasing unacceptability of human loss, especially by the civil society being another important factor.

If you are thinking in terms of offensive actions, you have to understand if your own population has an appetite for war. As countries mature up and evolve, they will desist from operations which involve large-scale human loss. Sub-conventional warfare is also used to inflict a huge amount of economic costs on the country that is trying to protect itself. More importantly, it leads to a loss of prestige for the country that becomes a victim of sub-conventional warfare.

Threats of sub-conventional warfare also lie in the domains of technology and psychology. The electro-magnetic domain covers space (where all communications take place). The disruptions that can be caused in space will be much more impactful than those that can be caused by sending armies. Miniaturisation, robotics, drones, and cyberspace are the areas which will be used.

Another area of concern is the inter-linkage and the chaos that is emerging in society. There is a strong linkage between crime and terrorism. Terrorism is no more about ideology, but about deliverables. Hence, the means don't matter. Every time the opium production in Afghanistan goes up, the capacity of the Taliban also goes up. Hence, to counter it, we require a multi-dimensional and not a silo approach.

Law-enforcement is getting increasingly challenging in closed communities of the virtual world like WhatsApp. There is no international consensus on dealing with this problem. India proposed a common definition of terrorism to the UN 21 years ago, but till now, there is no common definition.

As long as we are unable to arrive at an international consensus on sub-conventional warfare and terrorism, it will be continued to be used as an instrument of State policy by hostile powers. The economic cost of 26/11 was Rupees 4,000 crore only in Mumbai without factoring in the cost to the nation and the impact on tourism.

How would technology facilitate sub-conventional warfare? Technology is only an accelerator. As we urbanise, we would be more dependent on IoT, in turn increasing our vulnerability. One has to be prepared for automation of decision-making processes, miniaturisation of attack devices, etc., coupled with the fact that all this involves the big danger of taking erroneous decision/s.

Hardening of networks and the cyber domain is required to protect against threats such as malware. Since we are not that well-networked presently, it would be good to take stock of the vulnerabilities now. The Speaker quoted the Prime Minister of Israel who stated that in the context of cyber diplomacy, small nations can become big and emphasized on the three domains in which we will have to work, viz., Psychology, technology, and the military force.

Special covert operations remain an option and are carried out without the knowledge of the public. The legal option is something that we do not use often. Regulations of the domains such as AI, cyber, space, oceans, etc., will come up in the future. We have to be able to use it to our advantage.

Emergency Crisis Management

All these disruptions will lead to major disasters in physical and virtual space. So crisis management will play a critical role. In the psychological approach for countering sub-conventional warfare, the key is going to be the establishment of the credibility of the government. That has suffered hugely in the Information Age. How do you handle the new phenomenon of social media? Do they *jawans* in the forces know how to handle smartphones?

In terms of diplomacy, the Speaker highlighted the need to charter as to how we approach other countries on these issues. In terms of intelligence, he said that it's not just gathering information, but being able to assess the information space, wherein, automation will help in analysis and predictions. The eco-system for threat analytics programme should be created. Our top colleges should be networked to research on this. All our efforts must lead towards Leadership de-capitation of the adversaries, not just physically but also their reputation/credibility.

The Speakers laid out the following pointers:

1. Are ready to absorb technology?
2. Do we have a database of what the existing, emerging, and incubating technologies are?
3. Do we understand what the threat is and how to counter it or will we think about it when the threat arrives?
4. When these technologies emerge, are we in conversation with these companies globally for building those security features into our systems?

China has created the Strategic Support Force (SSF). They have understood the power of these domains and data as a strategic asset. Our conversations on data privacy centre around trying to protect the individual against the State. When the individual is attacked, who is going to protect him? The technology companies or the State? Hence, we should start looking at data as a strategic asset and bring in appropriate laws to enable its holding, analysis, and prediction.

Sub Theme Three: *Strategy at Organisational and Structural Level to Defeat Sub Conventional Conflicts (Lieutenant General Raj Shukla, GOC Chetak Corps)*

The Speaker highlighted that the central challenge for strategising even in the sub-conventional domain in the backdrop of the changing character of global conflict is one of contrarian pulls. While the spectrum of conflict is only expanding and growing with bounding opportunities with the addition of newer domains in war-fighting by the decade if not in years. Military budgets in most modern democracies are being challenged constrained by competing demands from other sectors.

Hence, while the opportunities for the military leveraging in the statecraft and national interest is only growing, requisite resources are not always available. So if we are to exploit the available opportunities that are growing in the sub-conventional domain given the reality of budgetary head wins there are no options but to exercise ourselves with military flab wherein the focus is not only in the financial but also at the organisational flab because militaries, as we all know, are notorious for displaying lack of agility and flat-footedness. So this is a necessary prerequisite! Once that is done opportunities are bound to be desirable. Look at the expanding domains which demand military resourcing and attention.

The Speaker stressed that we all are aware of the good old primary domains of land, air, and seas to which we have been added space, cyber, and now the world wide web, that is, the internet. We have seen in the recent past how the ISIS organised with the seventh-century Islamist ideology proved to be far more agile and adept than the twenty-first-century American and British militaries in first understanding the deepest secrets of the internet and then leveraging various online tools to virtually weaponise social media with telling military consequences.

Hence, the use of information has become an increasingly important tool. The American and British militaries understood information but it was the ISIS which understood the internet far better than the former and therefore it was the ISIS and not these twenty-first-century militaries which weaponised social media. The ISIS realised that virality is more important than veracity! You take a fake event, create soft puppet accounts, and make that fake event go viral! Whereas traditional militaries like us we always give more importance to veracity. So it was virality versus veracity. We are told reality matters; ISIS understood that the perception was more important than reality.

Similarly, disruptions in the online world and therefore more specifically the social media have challenged the traditional militaries in their operational philosophies of structures, organisations, and training methods. IDF, for example, have used these smarter methods against Hamas and therefore have been able to tackle the challenges posed by the latter. These people in the IDF are key to the defence organisation and are not only from the Army but are content creators, photographers or social media nerds. Therefore, militaries ought to be smart in the future.

Also, in each of these emerging domains is not some 'airy fairy techno bubble' but arenas with distinct military attributes and characteristics as also fertile terrain for strategic military leveraging in both conventional and the sub-conventional domains. The operational realm similarly is today witnessing a great churn. The fundamental matrix of fire and manoeuvre are being increasingly challenged by those in space and precision with the latter often emerging as decisive arbiters in conflict. Examples from both conventional and sub-conventional domains in this aspect are: the Gulf War Two through an unequal contest, innovative American leveraging of space and precision and fire power saw 85 percent of Iraqi Army and artillery being destroyed even before it could move. In the face of

overwhelming superiority in space and the precisionary system, there was neither manoeuvre nor fire.

The same superiorities have been leveraged in the sub-conventional domain to create modern kill chains that we know as a surveillance system and predator strikes to eliminate a terrorist in terror modules across the globe. But most critically traditional clause and beliefs predicated on hard core kinetics and perseverance in the use of force as primary instruments of statecraft are being pushed to the margins by the precepts of Sun Tzu with his renewed emphasis on non-contact warfare and victory without bloodshed, winning without fighting, deception, guise, and superiority of knowledge. As nations rediscover the utility of force we are witnessing in the modern era the realisation of strategic foreign policy objectives through the smart leveraging of military pressure points. Through the smart leveraging of military pressure points, nations are achieving their strategic and foreign policy objectives often without a shot being fired. The South China Sea is a classic example in this case.

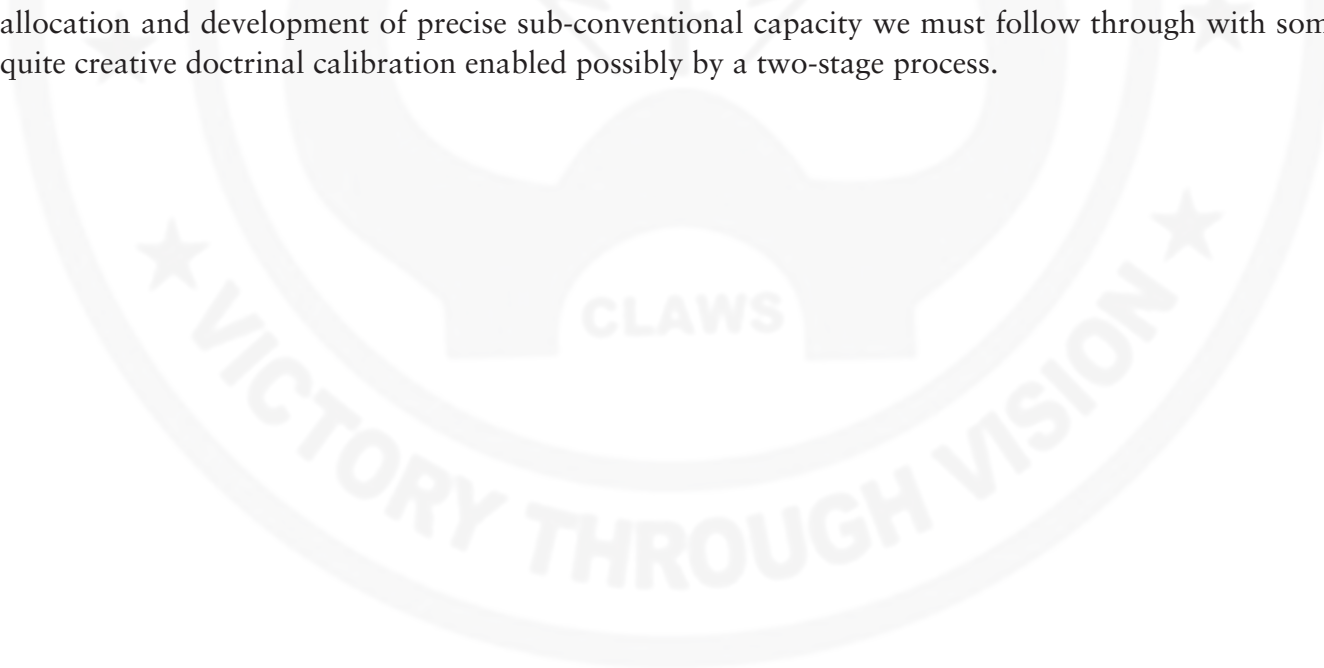
Speaker mentioned that force is being used increasingly to facilitate political settlements rather than fashion outright victory. There is a greater attraction for the instrument of force in the sub-conventional space rather than in the conventional space. We need to reflect on this axiom in greater depth for applicability in the Indian context. Rational nation States even those with powerful military disposal may be loathed spoiling their ascendant economic role by resorting to an all-out conflict. This is very different, however, deftly weaving statecraft into aggressively pursue their interest while constricting the adversaries use of strategic spaces. Why go for all-out conflict when you can realise the strategic foreign policy objectives by keeping force just below thresholds? That is a simple question! This is an arena that of low stakes and ambiguity, responses short of war which modern professional militaries are examining intimately in order to drive whole geo-strategic advantages. We in India may consider doing likewise! Do we wish to use such strategies in a more institutionalised manner? If the widening spectrum of conflict was not an opportunity or challenge enough we now have the prospect of disruptive technologies such as machine learning, AI, human-machine teaming, big data, robotics, 3-D printing, etc. None of these are aspirational technologies. They are being applied to military combat in varying degrees of expertise. Every technology is potentially game changing but a disruptive technology is one which marries technological potential with an operational concept. Militaries have to find that operational concept to make an emerging technology disruptive. What does disruptive technology do? It radically alters the symmetry of the military power between competitors.

The productive military embrace of such technologies, therefore, could significantly outdate the doctrines, operational philosophies, and combat organisations of the adversary across domains conventional and sub-conventional alike. Such is the value and power of disruptive technologies that are knocking at military doors. Analysts often describe the text and context of conflict in context of professional militaries, wherein, the text refers to the blood in the war in the fundamental combat be it in terms of proficiency in conventional combat. The salience of the text shall remain unaltered but the expanding power of the context, the cyber, and digital fights that now accompany the physical fight, the renewed emphasis on non-contact warfare, the advent of precisionary, the game-changing opportunity, offers through the gamut of disruptive technologies, the context is just as significant and salient which traditional militaries like ours loathe to recognise.

Not only do proficiencies in the context burnish military capacities in the text they also help to sharpen our statecraft by providing value additions and complementary or escalatory options to the political class in accord with the need of the unique strategic circumstances. The skillful embrace of the context by professional militaries is particularly relevant in sub-conventional warfare. There will

be need to continuously strengthen our operational capacities along the LAC to maintain ascendancy as also resource our surgical response options to a greater depth, effect, sophistication, and precision. Our response in the proxy war, the operational tempo, the complete framework of kinetics and non-kinetics ascendancy shall remain undiluted. So will the demand for conventional deterrence, missile and techno-centric combat as also those that lie in the wider realm of war fighting and defence. In fact such responsibilities will only grow as India travels in its aspirational profile from balancing to a leading power. The choice will be ours; there are options in the sub-conventional domain, in the soft power, soft use of hard power, and hard power. The hard power should be usable and ready!

The Speaker also focused on strategic choices, challenges, and opportunities that stare our statecraft in the face as we seek to navigate challenges that lie in our security path in the coming decade primarily in the realm of the sub-conventional domain. There are three major choices: from a finite pool of finances how best do we resource the text and context, our traditional prowess and the game-changing potential of emerging domains of disruptive technologies, and in real time to keep investing in brain counts. This needs distant game-changing capacities in the emerging domains of the disruptive technologies of the future. Second, military statesmanship demands that we urgently revisit such a propensity. It is also of consideration that such resources that we do commit are not applied democratically or proportionally across the capacity spectrum or alternatively use a deft combination of special forces, pace, and precisionary to simply overwhelm our western adversary. Third, for too long the militaries have focused narrowly on the use of force only some kind of last resort option as a decisive arbiter in conflict. We must actively consider the attainment of higher proficiency in grey zone warfare. To achieve this ambiguity and indistinctiveness are required. When used, strategically grey zone or hybrid warfare fares very well and delivers strategic lasting outcomes. Firm budgetary allocation and development of precise sub-conventional capacity we must follow through with some quite creative doctrinal calibration enabled possibly by a two-stage process.



CLOSING REMARKS



Closing Remarks by Lieutenant General (Dr) VK Ahluwalia (Retd), Director CLAWS

Director CLAWS said that there were two broad parts of the Seminar, viz., the changing character of conflict and the sub-conventional warfare in the next two decades. He mentioned that all the sessions were extremely important, as they were dealing with threats being faced on a day-to-day basis. The third session, which focused on the response options, threw up a number of practical solutions.

While the character of warfare continued to evolve, the nature of warfare remained enduring, interactive, volatile as also fundamentally political. However, with the kind of technology that we have today in the context of non-contact and non-kinetic war, economy war, water wars, we find that even the nature of warfare is also evolving. Therefore, the nature of the conflict, as well as the character of conflict, is evolving and changing.

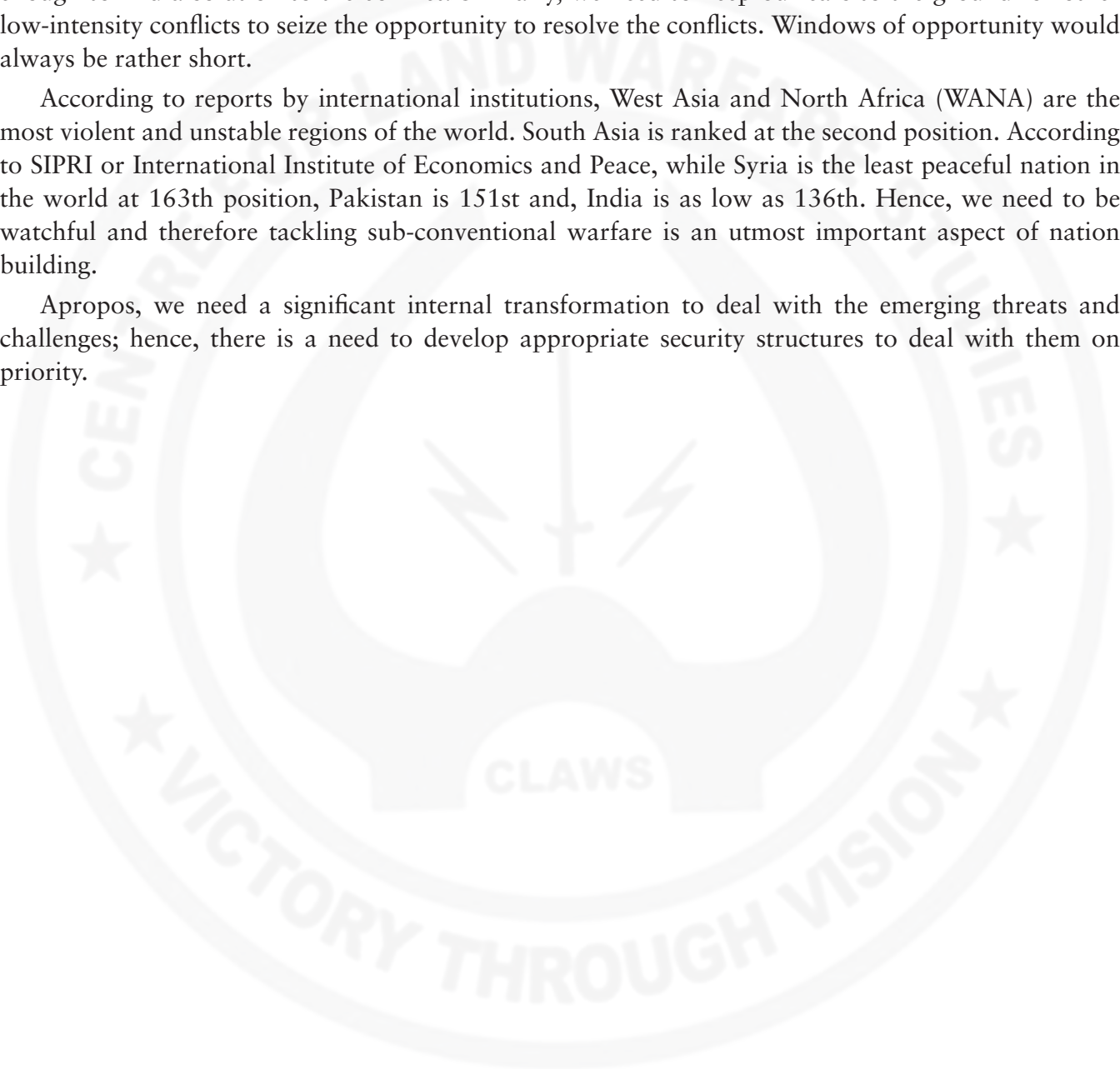
The requirement is to continuously analyse the security and technology related developments across the world, especially in our sub-continent. There is need to ensure commensurate upgradation of our budgetary requirements, force equipping, and doctrinal and training aspects to enable us to formulate our response options to meet the ever-evolving sub-conventional and security challenges in a holistic and timely manner.

There are more than 200 intra-State conflicts post-1945. Of those, only seven percent have been resolved as a result of military intervention. About 43 percent have been resolved because of political intervention, but with the availability of a strong military option. We have to identify the centre of gravity of each conflict, so as to resolve them.

An important question that needs to be asked is why is it that we are unable to resolve our insurgencies? Are we going to live with these sub-conventional threats facing our country? It must be remembered that the security forces can only bring security environment to a particular level, but the resolution is a political forte. We have had a situation where there was a progressive sharp decline in incidents of violence and killings in J&K from 2005 to 2010, and even later up to 2013. Security environment had improved to a reasonably good level. It appears we did not monitor the situation well enough to find a solution to the conflict. Similarly, we need to keep our ears to the ground for other low-intensity conflicts to seize the opportunity to resolve the conflicts. Windows of opportunity would always be rather short.

According to reports by international institutions, West Asia and North Africa (WANA) are the most violent and unstable regions of the world. South Asia is ranked at the second position. According to SIPRI or International Institute of Economics and Peace, while Syria is the least peaceful nation in the world at 163th position, Pakistan is 151st and, India is as low as 136th. Hence, we need to be watchful and therefore tackling sub-conventional warfare is an utmost important aspect of nation building.

Apropos, we need a significant internal transformation to deal with the emerging threats and challenges; hence, there is a need to develop appropriate security structures to deal with them on priority.



Concept Note

“In all fighting, the direct method may be used for joining [the] battle, but indirect methods will be needed in order to secure victory.”

– Sun Tzu

INTRODUCTION

Evolution of conflict is mainly the evolution of weapons and their development coupled with the aspects of strategy, tactics, and logistics. Ironically, violence or conflict is deeply rooted in the inbuilt diversity and sense of self-preservation intrinsic to human nature often manifesting in the collective conscious of a nation State when at conflict with its proverbial adversaries. In a world where nations have divergent ideologies, incompatible interests, different religious denominations, antithetical social, economic and political systems, conflict of interests with the potential to lead to conflict are bound to occur. These problems get compounded in nation-States, which have an unstable and turbulent environment. The scope of present-day security paradigm has got enlarged to include aspects like economic dimensions, narco-terrorism, psychological warfare, cyber/hybrid warfare, and various other modes of waging low-intensity conflict. In view of the increasing sophistication in the means of waging war, there is a need to create specialist structures for conflict reduction and management.

Present Day Canvas

Our world is increasingly witnessing the unleashing of other forms of warfare over the traditional forms of war. Post the First Iraq War (Operation Desert Shield: 1990/91), we have not witnessed a conventional war in the true sense but mankind has been suffering from other modes of warfare wherever it faces man-induced destruction in our world today, viz., the Middle East, South Asia, etc. Hence, our endeavours to avoid wars/destruction can only bear fruit if we are fully prepared for the entire spectrum of warfare with a special emphasis on the sub-conventional character of conflict in the emerging world order. In fact, without being prepared for the latter, we cannot be fully prepared for any form of war given the American experience in Iraq or Afghanistan, wherein, a ‘Comprehensive Victory’ still eludes the mightiest conventional military of our world. Hence, one may safely assume that the warfare of tomorrow most certainly will be a hybrid one, with the lines often blurring between one to another form of warfare.

Challenges for the Armed Forces

In any Army, at any time, the purpose of ‘leadership’ is to be prepared for war in all its dimensions and forms. Nature of future war, which remains a complex interaction of political objectives, human emotions, cultural and ethnic factors, and above all military skills in an ever-blurring line between war and peace in the present-day context. Hence, competent military leaders/scholars must continuously endeavour to keep their organisation updated in the very realm of warfighting and its manifestation. In order to develop trust, inspire confidence, clarify objectives, build teams, set example, and rationalise sacrifice.

OBJECTIVE OF THE SEMINAR

The Objective of the Seminar was to identify and examine the changing character of global conflicts with specific reference to sub-conventional warfare in the regional context in the next two decades and lay down India specific measures towards conflict reduction, its management (the whole of nation approach) and resolution.

CONDUCT

The Seminar was conducted over one day in three sessions. The four sessions of various sub-themes with respective topics are as under:

- (a) **Sub Theme One:** Changing Character of Global Conflicts with Specific reference to Sub-Conventional Domain.
- (b) **Sub Theme Two:** Envisaged Sub-Conventional Conflicts in the Indian Sub-Continent in the Next Two Decades.
- (c) **Sub Theme Three:** Response Options for Combating Future Sub-Conventional Threats by India.

PROGRAMME

Plenary Session Numbers I and II forecasted the emerging world order till 2040 and resultant changes in the character of global conflict (specific reference to sub-conventional warfare in a regional context). The last sessions were devoted towards laying down India specific response options at national and organisational levels, as also in the psychological domain, in the realm of a whole of nation approach.

- (a) **Plenary Session I:** Herein, the sub-theme of Changing Character of Global Conflicts with Specific reference to Sub-Conventional Domain, was covered with the Global Canvas with especial reference/ focus on Asia, the Indian Ocean Region, and Indo-Pacific.
- (b) **Plenary Session II:** The sub-theme of Envisaged Sub-Conventional Conflicts in the Indian Sub-Continent in the Next Two Decades was covered in this Session to include rapid changes in technology and geo-political environment and their impact on the character of conflict. It also covered aspects of economic dimensions, narco-terrorism, psychological warfare, hybrid warfare, cyber warfare, and various other modes of waging low-intensity conflict which has blurred the line between war and peace in the present-day context.
- (c) **Plenary Session III:** The last session covered the sub-theme of Response Options for Combating Future Sub-Conventional Threats by India, to include the External, Internal, and Psychological Warfare Dimensions in the realm of Whole of the Nation Approach. With the aim to keep the Nation and its Armed Forces and Security Establishments fully prepared for the entire spectrum of Warfare.

MISCELLANEOUS DETAILS

- **Participants:** The participants and audience comprised the Armed Forces fraternity, defence analysts, defence attaches, officials of the MoD, DRDO / DPSU officials, captains of the Industry, academia, and students. The Seminar was not open to the media.
- **Venue:** Ashoka Hall, Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi.
- **Project Coordinator(s):** Colonel Puneet Doval, SM, Senior Fellow, CLAWS and Ankit Kumar, Research Assistant, CLAWS.

Programme

ANNUAL ARMY SEMINAR 2018-19

THE CHANGING CHARACTER OF GLOBAL CONFLICTS WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO SUB-CONVENTIONAL WARFARE IN REGIONAL CONTEXT IN THE NEXT TWO DECADES

February 14, 2019, 09:00 h/16:30 h, Manekshaw Centre, Delhi Cantonment

09:00 – 09:30h	Tea and Registration
09:30 – 09:50h	Address by The COAS
09:50 – 10:00h	Vote of Thanks by DG PP
10:00 – 11:40h	SESSION I: Changing Character of Global Conflicts with Specific Reference to Sub-Conventional Domain
10:00 – 10:10h	Opening Remarks by Chair: Professor Gautam Sen, Distinguished Visiting Fellow, CLAWS
10:10 – 10:30h	Changing Character of Global Conflicts: Brahma Chellaney, Professor of Strategic Studies, CPR
10:30 – 10:50h	North-East: Present Scenario and Emerging Challenges: Lieutenant General Gopal R, UYSM, AVSM, SM, QMG (Designate)
10:50 – 11:10h	Changing Dynamics of Sub-Conventional Conflicts in Left Wing Extremism and Jammu and Kashmir: K Vijay Kumar, IPS, Former DG CRPF
11:10 – 11:40h	Interactive Session
11:40 – 12:20h	Tea
12:20 – 13:45h	SESSION II: Envisaged Sub-Conventional Conflicts in the Indian Sub-Continent in the Next Two Decades
12:20 – 12:30h	Opening Remarks by Chair: Lieutenant General PC Katoch, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SC (Retd), Distinguished Fellow, USI
12:30 – 12:50h	Envisaged External Conflicts: Lieutenant General AK Singh, PVSM, AVSM, SM, VSM, (Retd), Distinguished Fellow, CLAWS
12:50 – 13:10h	Envisaged Internal Conflicts: Lieutenant General DS Hooda, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, VSM** (Retd), Visiting Fellow, CLAWS
13:10 – 13:30h	Conflict in Jammu and Kashmir: Dr Radha Kumar, Ex Interlocutor, Jammu and Kashmir
13:30 – 13:45h	Interactive Session

13:45 – 14:45h	Lunch
14:45 – 16:30h	SESSION III: Response Options for Combating Future Sub-Conventional Threats by India
14:45 – 14:55h	Opening Remarks by Chair: Lieutenant General BS Nagal, PVSM, AVSM, SM (Retd), Former Director, CLAWS
14:55 – 15:15h	Options in Psychological Domain: Lieutenant General SA Hasnain, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM, VSM** (Retd), Chancellor of Central University of Kashmir
15:15 – 15:35h	Options at National Level: SM Sahai, IPS, Additional Secretary, NSCS
15:35 – 15:55h	Strategy at Organisational and Structural Level to Defeat Sub Conventional Conflicts: Lieutenant General Raj Shukla, YSM, SM, GOC Chetak Corps
15:55 – 16:15h	Interactive Session
16:15 – 16:30h	Closing Remarks by Director CLAWS
16:30h	Tea and Dispersal



Photo Gallery



