



CENTRE FOR LAND WARFARE STUDIES, NEW DELHI

ROUND TABLE: INDO-US COOPERATION & MILITARY ENGAGEMENT

CONFERENCE HALL, CLAWS

09 SEPTEMBER 2014

REPORT

Introduction

Maj Gen Dhruv Katoch, SM, VSM, Director CLAWS welcomed the delegates from US Army Pacific for the Round Table Discussion organised at CLAWS Conference Hall on 09 September 2014. Agenda for the discussion were:-

- Future of the Indo-US Military Engagement
- Operationalising of Regional Cooperation and Multilateralism.

The US delegation was led by Maj Gen Rick Burr, Deputy Commander General, US Army Pacific (USARPAC). He is the first Australian Army General to hold this appointment. The General Officer was accompanied by Col Larry Redmon, DA, US Embassy, Maj Kevin Koemer, Staff Officer, US Army and China Expert and Capt Joshua Remington, Staff Officer, US Army. The discussants from CLAWS were Maj Gen Rajesh Singh (Retd), former ADG IC, Indian Army, Capt (IN) Alok Bansal (Retd), former Senior Fellow, CLAWS and Dr Monika Chansoria, Senior Fellow CLAWS.

Salient Discussion Points

Role of PACCOM:

The United States Pacific Command's area of jurisdiction covers over fifty percent of the world's surface area, nearly sixty percent of the world's population and almost thirty-six countries. The army is required to be ready for contingencies that range from threats emerging from environmental issues and natural disasters which are many and frequent to carrying out non combatant evacuation and managing tensions on the Korean front which is a big focus of the Pacific command considering the threat that North Korea is posing currently. It is charged with fulfilling mutual defense treaties signed by the United States with Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, Republic of Korea and Japan.

US focus on Asia Pacific

US army in the Pacific is at the centre of US's national interest to rebalance the Asia Pacific region. In order to focus better on the region the US army has moved one four star command from Europe to Hawaii. PACCOM budget has not been affected by the budgetary cut which shows US government priority and focus.

There is currently a lot of focus on enhancing existing alliances inside Asia Pacific with countries that US has enjoyed a healthy relationship with in the past, like Australia, Japan, Korea, Philippines and Thailand. Simultaneously, there is focus on growing partnerships with India through intensive engagement, learning from each other and finding opportunities of common interest.

Future of the Indo- Us Military Engagement

Indo US military cooperation is a subset of Indo-US cooperation at large. It's growing in a robust manner. The relationship between India and US goes through ups and downs but given the common belief in democracy and pluralism there is an inherent stability in the relationship. The people to people contacts and economic relations between the two countries form the corner stone of this relationship.

Many also argue that the relationship between the two countries is not growing as fast as it should and that is mainly because for an average Indian the Indo-US relationship is perceived to be a subset of India-Pakistan-US relationship and India-China-US relationship. It is only within this prism that an average Indian views the relationship with US and given the complaints against Pakistan and China, many in the country believe that US is not doing enough to address them

Militarily, the scope to enhance Army to Army engagement exists in anti-militancy and counter-insurgency sphere. Both armies have rich operational experience in these types of operations and can mutually benefit from each other's experience.

US endeavours to build stronger relationship with India. Staff talks are conducted annually which majorly define the pattern of work and opportunities available for each country. They may range from individual military training to developing particular skill areas to collective training opportunities. The opportunity to train Indian personnel for defence acquisition and life cycle management is available and is up to the Indian government to facilitate such an exchange. The visit to India by Nicole Y Lamb-Hale, Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Manufacturing and Services, is surely encouraging and widens the scope of transferring defence technology to India.

Measures taken by US to strengthen coalition alliance and the concept of embedded staff from Australia/Canada/ UK Armed Forces in the US Army command structure

Three years ago the Australian and US army had agreed to strengthen alliances and as a part of the same US army had offered a Deputy Commander General position to an Australian which has been a fairly successful arrangement. It demonstrates the strength of partnership between the two countries. Such alliances also bring a lot of diversity on board and give one another the chance to explore other perspectives and view situations from different point of views. Similar arrangements exist between

Canadian and UK armed forces with US Armed Forces. This has happened due to high level of mutual trust existing amongst the service personnel.

Measure taken by PACCOM to outreach countries in the region through training

US continues to look for opportunities to engage with countries in the Pacific based on mutual needs. There are over 100 different activities in Asia Pacific region which the US engages in each year. These include small scale exchanges through collective training for which US sends forces to particular countries to train and come back. To work out a better method to carry out such training in a resource constrained environment there are plans to utilise a single force to move across region with equipment to conduct a series of training across different countries.

Engagement strategy with China

US also engages with China in a deep way. There is a very strong connection with China commercially, economically and through people to people contacts, This serves as the foundation of US-China relationship. Militarily, US and China are working together in Humanitarian Disaster Response exercises .The last disaster management exchange concluded in Hawaii and the next one is scheduled in China. While this has provided common ground, US is looking for more opportunities to include China and engage with it and work together. In a scenario where other countries are also focusing upon working with China, US is looking at multilateral agreements to boost such exchanges.

Key Recommendations:

- ✚ The quadrennial initiative started seven years back between Japan, Australia, India and US should move ahead without apprehensions and scepticism from other countries especially China.
- ✚ Rampant radicalisation of the Afghanistan- Pakistan region and al-Qaeda assertion of spreading its influence in South Asian region will certainly impact the regional security. Though the region lies outside the charter of US PACCOM responsibility, it will nevertheless impact US security initiative in the area.
- ✚ PACCOM need to engage with India Military both at the seas as well as in exchanging expertise on anti-piracy/ counter insurgency operations.
- ✚ Transfer of technology and training of personnel for defence acquisition needs to be looked upon with renewed zeal.