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# Geo-Strategic Security Environment, Threats and Challenges

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# Geo-Strategic Security Environment, Threats and Challenges

## Introduction

The 20th century has been the most violent and destructive period that humankind has experienced. Within one generation, it was subjected to two World Wars and a 'Cold War'. The latter was characterised by what came to be known as "low intensity conflict", where, in many cases, the two superpowers engaged by proxy. Even with the end of the 'Cold War' this form of conflict continues in various parts of the globe, occasioned now by deprivation, ethnic diversities, terrorism, coupled with drug trafficking, and now most dangerously, by religious extremism manifested in the Islamic State in Syria (ISIS) and the Al Qaeda.

The sudden collapse of the erstwhile Soviet Union in the early 1990s, triumphantly proclaimed as a victory of Western capitalism, had in reality shattered a political equilibrium that sustained the international community in the aftermath of World War II. Conflict in the Cold War period was invariably centred on posturing in various fields: economic, scientific, technological and nuclear. There never was any real reason for the two blocs to go to war. Hence, the euphoria in the Western world following the end of the Cold War would seem to have been misplaced. As a result, many of the conclusions that were arrived at in terms of the establishment of a new world order, were smashed to smithereens by the violent conflicts that raged immediately thereafter in parts of the former Soviet Union, the Balkans, large parts of Africa, West Asia and Afghanistan. The familiar bipolar equation having gone, and replaced by what many perceived as an oppressive unipolar one, with the sole superpower setting its own agenda, the international community has, for some time now, been looking for a more equitable balance of power arrangement.

Under the shadow of the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation had taken on the contours of the Germany that surfaced from the Versailles Treaty following World War I. There was seething anger and economic discontent; a feeling of deprivation, of loss of prestige, and injured ethnic pride. Added to all that was the obsession the political and military establishments in Russia had about the eastward expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). Given Russia's tremendous material resources, and the pride and resilience of its people, however, it was inevitable that the nation would re-emerge strong and powerful once again. The resurgence has taken place during President Putin's period in power, propelled as it was, for some time, by the increased oil revenues and the autocratic dispensation his regime came to represent. The speculation now can only be on whether reduced oil revenues together with the economic meltdown, will impact the Russian resurgence to a level that generates sparks that may ignite conflict on a large scale.

Concurrent with the resurgence of the Russian Federation, has been the thrust towards a polycentric world order comprising the large and medium powers. This needs to be seen as a historical arrangement. The difference being that, whereas in the last few centuries, such an arrangement encompassed the European powers, the 21st century is seeing a significant shift away from Europe towards Asia. The Asian continent is beginning to take its place in the global arena, with China, Russia, Japan, India and Indonesia, joining the USA and Europe. This grouping will no doubt be joined by countries like Brazil and Mexico from the Americas, and South Africa, Ethiopia, and Nigeria from Africa. Managing this shift in the centre of gravity from Europe to Asia will be the challenge, not only for the rising powers of Asia, but also for the USA and the European Union, which have a major stake in the region. Asia accounts for seven of the ten most populous countries in the world, and some of the largest standing Armies; five declared nuclear weapon states, an undeclared one in Israel, and Iran emerging as a nuclear capable state; the presence of nuclear fleets of non-Asian countries in Asian waters; and a large number of missile producing and exporting countries. Asia also accounts for the world's greatest energy resources, on which depends the prosperity, not only of the Asian countries, but also the rest of the world.

Within this configuration, the USA will no doubt, continue to be the dominant economic and military force for much of the century, unless it crumbles under the contradictions of over-reaching itself in trying to run the world by itself. The European Union will also continue to be a significant player, both economically and militarily; in military terms, as the complementary component of NATO to the USA. The role that Russia plays will largely depend on the extent to which it is able to sustain its resurgence. A pointer in this context is the Russian response to the happenings in the Ukraine; and, most recently, in Syria in support of the regime. The Russians have made it clear that they can take so much and no more—to the great discomfiture of the NATO powers.

Japan's economic role will continue to be significant; whether it will militarise must remain a speculative issue, very much dependent on what the Chinese do in the East Asian region, including the South China Sea, and North Korea's nuclear ambitions; the new political dispensation in Japan appears to be moving towards release from the tight embrace of the USA. The People's Republic of China (PRC) will, without doubt, play a very significant role on the global stage. It is already a power of considerable stature, developing at a fast pace economically, and modernising its military, including its naval capability, at a frenetic pace. Given its increasing requirements of energy for economic growth, China is already extending its interests in the oil rich regions of Central Asia and Africa. It is not inconceivable that it will spare no effort to secure for itself the oil rich basin of the South China Sea. Equally, its Western flank borders on the known oil reserves of Central Asia, which it will strive to exploit to advantage.

The United Nations is dominated by the USA and its Western allies, that are together more than prepared to use the world body as a front for political, military and economic pressures and sanctions. Whereas in the years immediately following the end of the Cold War, the West was generally able to pursue its agenda without much opposition because Russia was immersed in its own problems and China was still working on its economic growth, the situation has considerably changed since the late 1990s. Both Russia and China have since stood up to the West at the United Nations. As evidenced by their opposition to the NATO intervention in Kosovo in 1999. And by their opposition to the US- led action against Saddam Hussein

in 2003, in which they were joined by another permanent member of the Security Council, France, as also by countries like Germany among others, and subsequently in the case of Libya; and, most recently, in the case of Syria, where Russia has taken a very significant stance. As it happened, the USA together with the UK and some other countries did undertake unilateral intervention operations against Saddam Hussein and score initial successes, but have left the country and the sub-region in pretty much of a mess.

These developments at the international level over the last decade and a half exposed deep divisions within the membership of the United Nations over what were fundamental policies on peace and security. They included debates on how best to prevent the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs), and combat the spread of international terrorism, the criteria for the use of force and the role of the Security Council, the effectiveness of unilateral versus multilateral responses to security, the notion of preventive war, and the place of the United Nations in a world with a single superpower.

## Dimensions of Conflict

The end of the Cold War signalled the demise of ideology as the prime source of conflict; by proxy or otherwise. Capitalism ostensibly triumphed over socialism, though both were different manifestations of the industrial era. Since then, the focus in the West particularly, has shifted to identifying a "clash of civilisations" as the source of conflict in the future. Obviously, there is some merit in such a focus, given the basic parameters on which the thesis is based: that the 'fault lines' between civilisations will be the battle lines of the future. This was given some impetus by the events of September 11, 2001, and more recently by the emergence of the ISIS phenomenon. There is no doubt that the strains of the four major civilisations, namely the Western (Christian), Islamic (which runs from Turkey, or may be now Bosnia-Herzegovina, Albania and Kosovo, through West Asia and North Africa, Central and South Asia, to Southeast Asia), Sinic, and Indic, carry within them the seeds of confrontation. However, except for the Sinic and Indic civilisations, the other two, which are the more prone to conflict, are not monolithic enough to sustain the theory of conflict on a civilisational basis.

The inescapable truth of an impending clash between "the Western World and the Rest", as Samuel Huntington puts it, lies both in the past and the present. The "West" as the "Rest" see it, has attained a degree of affluence, and high standards of living for its people, by the exploitation of the mineral and human resources of colonies over the last few centuries, by the material wealth generated in the industrial era, and by the unfettered exploitation of the natural resources of the planet. And having reached these exalted levels, led by the USA, the West, is seen as seeking to impose on "the Rest" (mainly the developing world), its perceptions of moral values, including human rights, environmental restrictions, technology denial regimes, and so on. The scenario for conflict, therefore, needs no civilisational connotation; it is generated by what could be termed "the revolt of the oppressed".

Notwithstanding the imbalance of such an arrangement, it is not by itself likely to spark conflict between states in the 21st century. The real sparks will be generated by some of the 'spillover effects' as it were, of the "West" versus the "Rest" syndrome. Demographic movements to the affluent West, propelled by ethnic, tribal and religious strife initiated through the explosion in populations in the developing countries will be difficult to control, given the international covenant of not turning away suffering refugees. This will severely strain the already slender veneer of tolerance and assimilation in Western societies. Efforts will, therefore, be concentrated on introducing international intervention in local conflicts, which may then either extend the conflict, or give further impetus to fissiparous movements. South America, Africa and parts of Asia, including South Asia, would appear to be the fertile arena for such intervention.

The second major dimension that has already emerged as an aspect of serious concern and something that has enveloped the whole world is the phenomenon of terrorism. Whether state sponsored from outside in support of secessionist movements, or undertaken by fanatical groups, or by paid mercenaries, terrorism has emerged as a major factor in international security calculations. As the events of September 11, 2001, in the USA clearly demonstrated, as have so many other incidents since, including the attacks in Mumbai on November 26, 2008, and most recently in Paris and Jakarta, any part of the world can be affected by this menace, and the international community needs to urgently institute appropriate mechanisms to deal

with it effectively. The scale of commitment that would be required was on display in the resources that were deployed in Afghanistan and Pakistan by international coalitions led by the USA. Whether such commitments will need to be further extended into West Asia, time will tell. Together with drug trafficking, the combination will pose a major security challenge for a couple of decades at least, if not more.

Till very recently, the tussle for control, exploitation, and protection, of the existing resources of oil and other known hydrocarbon reserves, was perceived to be another major factor in spawning tensions that could have the potential for conflict. The West Asian region had demonstrated for some time, its vital importance to the international community, to the extent of drawing in sizeable military forces, particularly from the USA and other Western powers, to wage war on a massive scale for the security of its oil resources. The Central Asian region has also demonstrated its equally vital importance to the major players at the global and regional levels. The USA, Russia, China, Turkey, and Iran, are all exerting their utmost to have a dominant role in the exploitation and control of the large oil reserves of the region. Ironically, the two major regions, the traditional West Asian oil belt, and the emerging Central Asian oilfields, are home to significant Muslim populations. Tensions and conflict, notwithstanding the scale, could therefore, take on civilisational dimensions of an Islamic versus the Christian West syndrome. In the other major area that has large oil reserves, the South China Sea, attempts by China to assert control and exploit the oil resources, would, no doubt, induce tensions and the expand scope for conflict, with its East Asian neighbours, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, and Vietnam. Since these countries have close political and security links and affiliations with the Western world, it is not inconceivable that the USA, and at least some of its Western allies, like Australia, would try to limit the extent to which China dominates the region. Such a move could well assume a Sinic versus the Christian world, civilisational conflict dimension. However, the drop in oil prices may well have reduced the significance of this dimension of conflict.

Besides these dimensions, conflict occasioned by local issues and proxy war prosecuted by some states may be expected to continue in various parts of the world; in the Balkans, parts of the former Soviet Union, West Asia,

Central Asia, South and Southeast Asia, North and Sub-Saharan Africa, and parts of South America. However, it may be reasonable to expect that, in most cases, the imperative of economic and social well-being of peoples and nation states will compel the political leadership of the countries concerned, to look for compromises and adjustments. Even so, it would be prudent to recognise the particularly volatile regions, sub-regions and countries in this context: the Balkans, where we have probably not seen the end of conflict yet; West Asia and North Africa, between Israel and the Arab states, as also the scope for conflict with Iran should it pursue its nuclear ambitions; South Asia to include Afghanistan and Pakistan, the latter with the added danger of its nuclear assets falling into the hands of Islamic extremists; North Korea; and Taiwan.

## Concept of Security and Nature of Warfare

In recent times, but more particularly after the end of the Cold War, the concept of what constitutes security has undergone a significant change. Besides the purely military aspect of territorial integrity, the canvas now encompasses preservation of political systems, economic and social well-being of the people, preservation of essential energy sources, harnessing of water resources, protection of the environment, and so on. Military theories are being revisited and possibly modified. Military conflicts between the most advanced states and major powers are now considered increasingly unlikely because available military technology has made warfare in the classic sense too costly, and, in fact, unwinnable; except possibly where the asymmetry is too great. Even in the developing world, conventional war does not appear to be an option to be exercised. Low intensity irregular operations and proxy war have emerged as the preferred options. All the same, there are some analysts who are of the view that the 21st century may well see conflict on a hitherto unimaginable scale.

Throughout history, revolutions in the conduct of warfare have manifested in radically different ways. In some cases, technology has come first and then doctrine was developed to use the technology in new ways. In other cases, doctrine has driven technology. The revolution in military affairs that is the driving force today, while untested in classic warfare, has set the stage for technological innovations. American perspectives that, to a lesser extent will

also guide war strategies of other countries of the developed world, deal with the ability to project forces across the full spectrum of crisis in the 21st century. The focus in a doctrinal sense envisions concepts of 'precision engagement', 'simultaneous operations through successive echelons' and 'information operations'.

Precision engagement on which there is much focus in all major militaries (including our own), implies the ability to assess the adversary at operational and strategic depth, recognise his tactical plans, operational concepts and strategic goals, and select and prioritise attacks on targets with great precision. To that end, technology will be used to give commanders wide-area surveillance and target acquisition, near real-time responsiveness, and highly accurate, long-range weapon systems. This has enabled commanders for the first time in history, to manoeuvre 'fire power' rather than 'forces', over long ranges, and execute direct and simultaneous attacks on key assets of the adversary while keeping own forces relatively safe from counter-attack.

Simultaneous operations through successive echelons seek to exploit the increasing complexity and non-linear nature of the future battlespace by striking directly at the key assets and capabilities of the adversary, in order to disrupt cohesion and bring the conflict to an end quickly. Manoeuvres in the future can be expected to be more simultaneous than sequential, and over considerably larger spaces than ever before. The stress will be on faster, lighter and more lethal forces that require relatively small logistics footprints. In the latter context, technologies like fuel cells and directed energy weapons become more appealing.

Information operations at the national level will be a new form of strategic warfare aimed at the adversary's socio-economic systems. Even in the relatively benign environment of the day, one is aware of the intrusion by the Chinese into the data-network of other countries, including the USA. At the military operational and tactical levels, information operations will focus on Command, Control, Communications, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C3ISR) systems. Overall, because of the low levels of public tolerance for combat casualties to own forces, particularly in the Western world, there will be increased reliance on unmanned vehicles and weapon systems.

However, in working towards such capabilities in the post Cold War setting, many countries of the developed world have inevitably been forced

to undertake reductions and modifications to their military forces. The stress is on more effectiveness with fewer numbers and reduced costs. In so far as the USA is concerned, the influence of the defence industry is more than likely to enable the military to avail of technological innovations and improvements. The European situation is different, in that it was based on the hope that downsizing of forces would be neutralised by greater integration in regional structures like the European Union (EU) and military alliances like NATO, and in the joint development of defence equipment and systems. The ground reality is that the Europeans are so far behind the USA in technological capability that in the NATO structure, they hardly count for much. Europe's plea to the USA for assistance in closing the existing gap is met with unambiguous suggestions that the Europeans need to invest more in security. In Russia, China and the developing world, one can foresee attempts to modify doctrines, concepts and structures to keep pace with developments, and modernisation of militaries in varying degrees.

## Roles for the Military Other Than War

### *General*

Looking into the foreseeable future, there appears to be little doubt that military forces all over the world are likely to be increasingly applied in roles other than classic conventional warfare. Foremost among these tasks is that of dealing with terrorism and insurgency in one form or another, whether it is against ethnic or religious groups seeking secession, terrorists promoting such activity, or drug traffickers. This is a form of conflict that will require significant readjustment of basic attitudes towards soldiering in the classic sense, modifications in equipment requirements, and training. Some militaries across the world are into this form of warfare already. The Indian military has been at it for over six decades; but more recently, to a much greater extent. In this form of conflict, the military is subjected to considerably greater pressures than in regular warfare for which it is trained, because more often than not, the soldier is required to deal with the terrorist or insurgent with, at least, one hand (if not both) tied behind his back. In the sense that unlike classic combat operations where he can engage the enemy without reservations or inhibitions, in counter terrorism and

counter insurgency operations, the soldier is inhibited by the imperative that he should not cause casualties to innocent civilians or inflict other collateral damage that would cause resentment in the local population and outrage in the international community. It is invariably part of the military's mandate to win over the 'hearts and minds' of the local populace who may be genuinely alienated, or under threat from the terrorists – not a task the military would like, but is being increasingly being called upon to undertake, after other options have been attempted to no avail. *It was interesting to note that based on their experiences particularly in Iraq, the US armed forces, had apparently under the directions of Gen Patreus, issued a manual that set out a doctrine far different from the till then hitherto unshakeable belief of massive use of combat power to deal with the adversary even in operations "other than war".*

### *Dealing With Terrorism*

Terrorism attacks the values that lie at the heart of the Charter of the United Nations: namely, respect for human rights; the rule of law; rules of war that protect civilians; tolerance among peoples and nations; and the peaceful resolution of conflict. It is generally understood that terrorism flourishes in environments of despair, humiliation, poverty, political oppression, extremism and human rights abuse; and that it profits from weak state capacity to maintain law and order.

In so far as India is concerned, it is important to emphasise that notwithstanding all the initiatives under discussion and implementation at present at the international plane and the recommendations made, our fight against terrorism on the subcontinent will for some time yet have to be undertaken by us ourselves. Without doubt, we may be able to count on the active support of countries like Russia that are similarly affected, and the sympathy of some of the other countries favourably disposed towards us. However, it is difficult to foresee any sections of the international community assisting us materially in the process. Not that we should be looking for any direct assistance in this regard. Hence, we need to continue dealing with the menace as best as we can by mobilising and organising our capacities accordingly.

A major threat India faces today internally is terrorism executed by Pakistan based terrorist organisations like the Lashkar-e-Tayyeba (LeT),

Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM), Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HUM), etc with varying degrees of collusion and assistance by the sections of the Pakistani establishment and some local groups. Whatever the international community may wish to assume about the involvement of sections of the Pakistani establishment, particularly the Pakistan Army and the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), we should have no doubts on this score. And in that context, there should be no inhibitions about the measures we need to put in place. We have been the target of such terrorism for many years now, long before countries like the USA and the UK woke up to the seriousness of the threat after the attacks in the US mainland on September 11, 2001.

As things stand, it would appear that terrorism against our country is planned, trained for, and executed, by Pakistan-based organisations like LeT, JeM, Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HuJI), HUM, etc, some of which are, no doubt, affiliated to the International Islamic Front headed by the Al Qaeeda, and may be, in the time to come, by the ISIS. Another set of views that the Pakistan Taliban poses a major threat to India may be true only to the extent of spill-over effects should the organisation be able to spread its influence and presence in Punjab and Sind; which appears unlikely at present. India's focus must remain on groups like the LeT and JeM, which, it may be pertinent to note, do not operate against the Pakistan Army, unlike the Taliban that is actively engaged in fighting the Pakistan Army in the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).

In pursuing its agenda, the Pakistani establishment, including the ISI, is obviously using all its influence within Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and possibly even Sri Lanka, as also in Saudi Arabia and some of the Gulf countries like the UAE, to facilitate the movement of terrorists and their weapons and equipment, and as a conduit for the infusion of counterfeit currency into India. In evaluating our responses for dealing with such terrorist activity, it is important we rid ourselves of the following fallacious assumptions:

- That the Pakistani establishment has very little control over non-state actors operating from its territory. It most certainly has.
- That the so-called "*soft attitude and double standards of the West on Pakistan*" will change. They will NOT and we must factor that into our responses.

- That *linkages with Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) and Afghanistan (and now Baluchistan)* will disappear; they will not.
- That the USA, Saudi Arabia, China, and so on, will cut off economic and military aid to Pakistan unless it produces results in the operations against the Taliban. That will not happen.

It is unfortunate that despite being the target of terrorism for so many decades now, our response mechanisms remain woefully inadequate. One had hoped that the Mumbai attacks would have spurred the government machinery into "fast forward" mode; but that hope has been somewhat belied. As evident in the most recent incident at the Pathankot air base. Given the increased dimensions of the threat, it is imperative that effective counter-terrorism mechanisms are immediately put in place. The time for commissions, task forces, and so on is long past. Rhetoric and symbolism must be replaced by implementation action without further delay. These mechanisms should be placed under the 'watch' of a Minister for Internal Security with a Counter-Terrorism Agency under him. The focus of our efforts in this context in order of priority, are discussed in the succeeding paragraphs.

The prime focus should be on "prevention" in as much as we must invest all our efforts on preventing terrorist attacks from being launched against us. We should remove any thoughts about the inevitability about terrorist attacks. To this end, some of the aspects that will need review and modification are:

- The coordination of acquisition, collation and dissemination of intelligence by central and state agencies. In this effort, it is vital that we coordinate with international players, taking advantage of the fact that in the Mumbai attacks, nationals of the USA, UK, Israel and others were also targeted.
- Significantly upgrade our intelligence coordination and information sharing with regional players like Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh, as also countries like Oman (particularly in the maritime arena) and UAE. Some may be readily forthcoming in their cooperation and others less so. But the investment must be made with a long-term perspective.
- Resuscitation of the police apparatus in the country, particularly the 'beat constable' concept which is at the root of any monitoring system

for the acquisition of 'human intelligence'. Needless to say, this must be supplemented and complemented by technological means for surveillance and monitoring at every level; in which effort the corporate sector could play a vital role.

- Our existing laws on invasion of privacy need to be reviewed so as to ensure effective monitoring and surveillance. Civil society organisations and the corporate sector will have a role in supporting the process as also in ensuring there is no harassment or exploitation of the people at large.

To effectively complement our 'prevention' strategy, it is imperative that we formulate a credible and clearly articulated 'preemption' strategy. Any comparisons with what Israel does in this context are invidious because we are not in the same league; the USA will never stand by us as they do for Israel. Development of **covert capability** is essential but not a subject that can be discussed; one would hope that this is being developed as it takes years to bear fruit. **"surgical strikes"** across the border/Line of Control (LoC) are a feasible and even legitimate option under the terms of the UN Charter when the country is attacked or under imminent threat. The provocation has to be severe; as, for instance, when the Kargil intrusion took place, or when the Parliament was attacked. We should not bluff ourselves into believing that the international community will support us in case we respond with strikes across the border/LoC to a Mumbai or Pathankot type attack. **But respond we must**. And if we are to respond with surgical strikes, we should prepare ourselves to deal with international disapproval when it comes; and, more importantly, be prepared for escalation to war with Pakistan. I mention the latter aspect with some trepidation because I am somewhat sceptical about our operational preparedness to prosecute a war; not because of any doubts regarding our military professionalism, but because I have serious reservations about our preparedness in terms of equipment and ammunition, the modernisation, of which has been neglected over the last few decades. This is obviously not a subject for open debate but in arriving at response mechanisms, we should not at least bluff ourselves.

### *Migration*

Migration or demographic movement is a new phenomenon. Movements of people across regions and even continents have taken place all through the history of mankind. Some movements have taken place because of natural calamities; others due to oppression of minorities and ethnic strife; and still others due to economic deprivation, pressure on arable land, or search for a better quality of life. In so far as India is concerned, illegal migration from Bangladesh has assumed gigantic proportions. Figures of such illegal Bangladeshi migrants vary from twenty to thirty million. While many of these migrants are in the northeastern states of India, particularly Assam, there are significant numbers in other parts of India, including the National Capital Region (NCR). The point that merits mention is that only a small proportion of this community are Hindus fleeing threats and discrimination from the majority Muslim population of Bangladesh. The larger numbers are Muslims looking to resettle or seeking a better quality of life. For quite some time after India achieved independence, illegal migration from what was then East Pakistan was subsumed by political expediency that exploited vote banks.

The security dimension of such migration for India is serious. The presence of such large numbers of 'foreigners' imposes severe strains on a society already trying to cope with inadequate infrastructure, shelter, basic necessities, and restricted avenues for employment; this could lead to conflict. The 'foreigners' stake in the well-being of the state and its people will always be questionable. Equally, the flow of such migrants could well be exploited by terrorist groups to induct their cadres for execution of planned missions to provoke communal violence, create chaos and, thus, retard economic growth.

### *Left Wing Extremism (LWE)*

LWE is today as serious an internal threat as Pakistani sponsored terrorism, with the difference that it is largely indigenous, with only marginal connections with similar movements in neighbouring countries. That, however, does not detract from the possibility that our regional adversaries may well be exploiting it by provision of weapons and equipment, as also sanctuary. Unfortunately, the threat has assumed the form it has because of

neglect, indifference, poor governance, lethargy and sheer incompetence of the political leadership and civilian bureaucracy. It is ironic that in claiming to recognise the seriousness of the threat, the 'powers that be' are glossing over their own failings and inadequacies, and suggesting that the remedy lies purely in robust offensive operations against the armed cadres and those who support them.

In determining the measures required for countering the threat, the movement must be placed in perspective. The point regarding poor governance and associated deficiencies has already been made. What probably needs to be evaluated in greater detail is the fact that whereas there is no doubt that some individuals are pursuing the activities for ideological reasons and have a dedicated cadre, large numbers of the so-called 'revolutionaries' are in the game purely for exploitation for personal benefit that derives from the possession of the gun. They have the advantage of working up anger and antagonism against the state to their advantage.

Much is often made of the disadvantages of our federal structure within which 'policing' is a state subject. There is no valid reason to suggest that it should NOT remain so. There is already a constitutional provision that on threats to national security and cohesion, like Pakistan sponsored terrorism and LWE, executive authority devolves on the central government and the security apparatus at its disposal; which includes all the resources of the state governments also; this provision should be effectively availed of.

As in the case of dealing with Pakistan sponsored terrorism, we must fully exploit available technological capability to our advantage in terms of monitoring and surveillance of areas under LWE dominance, tracking of the movements of their armed cadres, use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), monitoring of their communications, etc. There can be little doubt that LWE cadres would have access to 'state-of-the-art' equipment under the auspices of forces inimical to India.

The main aspect that needs to be stressed is that the process of restoring state control over the areas impacted by LWE will be slow and painstaking; block by block; moving from one block to the next only after re-establishing effective and credible governance structures. There can be no "quick fix" solutions, given the fact that the situation has been allowed to go out of control for so long.

In recent times, there have been calls for a "military approach". Whereas the political leadership and the bureaucrats may not have any compunctions about launching military operations against our own citizens who have been deprived of the rights and privileges accorded to them under the Constitution, it may not be unreasonable to hope that the military leadership will be able to resist the pressures of fighting our own people. Use of the military should be restricted to provision of training and equipment, together with advice where necessary.

In this context, it would be appropriate to forcefully reiterate a long standing proposal for the lateral induction of trained Armed Forces personnel into the state police, central police forces and para-military forces. Implementation of the proposal will not only bring in "*some Armed Forces ethos and culture into the police forces, but also conserve state money on training. Laterally inducted Armed Forces personnel will benefit by serving longer and, in many cases, within their own state. The Armed Forces will benefit significantly by maintaining a younger age profile*". As one who has propounded this case at various forums over the years, while in Service and after retirement, I would suggest implementation of this proposal without further delay. It has been stalled over the years by vested interests that should not be allowed to call the shots any longer. And by the indecisiveness of our political leaders who find it expedient to avoid taking a decision against the entrenched bureaucratic structure. I have in recent years gone further by recommending that all entry into central and state government employment, including into public sector undertakings, be made contingent on two or three years of compulsory service in the armed forces; **a selective National Service concept**. This recommendation includes induction of personnel into the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Foreign Service (IFS), Indian Police Service (IPS), etc, as well as entry at lower levels including into the state police, Central Police Organisations (CPOs), the para-military and public sector undertakings.

### *Peace Operations*

The end of the Cold War and the relative success of Operation Desert Storm, had induced a sense of euphoria that the international community was geared to deal with dangers to international peace and security in a

more effective manner than before. However, the experiences of Somalia, former Yugoslavia, Liberia, Angola, Rwanda, and those in some of the former republics of the erstwhile Soviet Union, quickly dispelled these expectations, and, in fact, induced a sense of retrenchment in regard to UN peacekeeping operations for some time. In recent years, however, there has been an ever increasing demand for UN peacekeeping, particularly in dealing with the conflicts in Africa. Today, almost 125,000 personnel are deployed on 16 UN missions; with about 125 countries contributing troops; and the budget for 2015-16 is over US$ 8.5 billion. There is every indication that the demand for this form of application of militaries is likely to increase, notwithstanding the growing deployment of civilian police and humanitarian aid personnel in mission areas. UN forces are also being increasingly mandated with provisions of Chapter VII of the UN Charter that call for the use of force to deal with belligerents. Ironically, countries that have the best capability in terms of equipment and training, namely the developed Western world, seem to shy away from participation in UN operations, preferring to participate in operations undertaken under the aegis of military alliances like NATO, or regional organisations like the EU.

***Intervention Operations***

There can be little doubt that in this day and age, with the reach of the electronic media and greater awareness even in the most backward of societies, it is well-nigh impossible for countries to insulate themselves from happenings in the global arena. Whereas state sovereignty will, without doubt, continue to be the bedrock of international relations, the days are gone when under that rigid façade, governments could persecute their populations without drawing a reaction from the international community. In fact, if oppression and suppression of human aspirations go beyond a point, a state itself may well break up from within. The international community does, therefore, have a responsibility towards people and societies. And this has been recognised by the adoption of the "Responsibility to Protect" principle at the 2005 World Summit in New York. Even so, it is inconceivable and unacceptable that a decision to intervene militarily in a sovereign nation's affairs should be the prerogative of a group of countries of the Western world led by the USA, that set themselves up as 'judge', 'jury' and 'executioner', The interventions

in Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH), Kosovo, Iraq and Libya were in the perception of many in the developing world, induced by the pressures generated on the societies of Western Europe by the media focus and by the influx of refugees fleeing the civil war. Occasioned as much by local ethnic tensions, as by the ham-handedness of the USA and the European Community, rather than by "humanitarian" concerns.

What then is the answer to situations that call for the attention of the international community? In the first place, efforts must be directed sub-regionally, regionally, and globally, towards conflict prevention, diplomacy and negotiations. Military intervention must be a last resort. And when essential, undertaken with the endorsement of the United Nations Security Council or by a majority vote at the General Assembly. However, if its decisions are to have legitimacy and credibility, the most vital reform required without delay in this context is of the United Nations Security Council that provides for additional membership in the permanent category from Africa and South America, and to include some countries of the developing and developed world that have evolved on the global stage since the end of World War II. In addition, measures like not permitting a veto in the Security Council on major issues, but allowing a majority decision, may be considered. The bottom line is, we must recognise that there may be occasions in which military intervention for humanitarian purposes is required, but it must not be a unilateral decision taken and acted upon by a group of nations outside the ambit of the United Nations. Needless to say, considering the circumstances and setting in which such operations are undertaken, the operative principles of international humanitarian law must apply in terms of the use of military force. The United Nations does not have an "enemy'. Hence, only minimum essential military force must be applied and unarmed civilian populations must not be placed at risk.

Given India's established expertise and military capability, there can be little doubt that we may well be called upon by the international community (represented by the UN or by regional organisations or by our neighbours on a bilateral or multilateral basis) to deploy our military, together with others in a multinational force, and possibly take a lead role, for dealing with what are perceived as threats to regional or international peace and security. This is an aspect which we need to start deliberating and focussing on: to study in detail and evolve a concept for command and control, coordination;

operational compatibility, etc together with other like-minded countries in the region and beyond.

### *Case for a Tri-Service Rapid Reaction Task Force*

There is a compelling case for India to develop and maintain a sizeable dedicated rapid reaction force for intervention, stabilisation or peacekeeping operations within the region or beyond; organised, trained, equipped and located accordingly and under strategic direction. Needless to say, such a force would also be available for use as reserves in an operational situation if and when India is at war, as also for disaster relief and humanitarian assistance, both nationally and regionally/internationally. It is not the purpose of this paper to go into the finer details of such a force. One is also aware that this is not a new idea or concept. That it has been studied and discussed before. But in the context of a greater role for India at the regional and global levels, there is most definitely a need for a more focussed study of the concept.

In my view, given the type of regional or global commitments that the force may be required to undertake, such a force needs to be a multi-dimensional tri-Service one operating under a joint operational command, and include components from the Army, Navy and Air Force, elements from the Coast Guard, civil affairs officers, civilian police components, personnel trained in human rights aspects, legal affairs personnel and representatives from the diplomatic corps.

To that end, the rapid reaction task force should broadly comprise the following:

- A tri-Service corps sized headquarters.
- A land forces component to include an airborne brigade, and a light armoured or mechanised division comprising an air transportable armoured brigade equipped with light tanks and infantry combat vehicles, an amphibious brigade and an air transportable infantry brigade.
- Together with this should be Army Aviation elements, assault engineers, communication and logistics elements.
- A naval component that desirably includes an aircraft carrier, appropriate surface and sub-surface craft and aerial maritime capability.
- An Air Force component that includes strike aircraft, helicopters and strategic airlift capability.

- A Special Forces component.
- A civilian component to include diplomatic representatives, civil affairs personnel, civilian police, human rights personnel, etc.

While formalisation of the concept and authorisation of the organisation, personnel and equipment, may take their course, though hopefully at some speed, it may be useful to set up the nucleus of such a task force by drawing on existing assets that can be made available. This can be more than justified from the operational capability point of view given the situation in the neighbourhood, and the possibility that the Armed Forces may be called upon to act unilaterally in pursuance of our national interests, or to assist in a bilateral context on the request of one of our neighbours. That we should be prepared to do so needs no further emphasis. But that can only be facilitated if we create the capacity, analyse the concepts of employment, evolve an appropriate doctrine, carry out joint training, put in place a logistics infrastructure, and so on. The sooner we commence work on this, the better.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the importance of working on appropriate measures in cooperation with regional and global players merits emphasis. It would be useful for joint working groups comprising diplomats and selected military personnel to interact at the international level at multilateral forums like the United Nations and with regional organisations to share perceptions about coordination and training, exchange of data on trouble spots on a regular basis, mechanisms for consultation, etc. Moves should be initiated to secure understanding and cooperation from organisations like the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum (ARF) Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), etc. Needless to say, it would be good if similar moves could be initiated within the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), but that may pose some difficulty at present due to the continuing stand-off with Pakistan. Meetings, seminars, symposiums and conferences could be held to discuss the scope and extent of cooperation with like-minded countries including the USA, Japan, Australia, Singapore, Vietnam, Indonesia, Gulf countries like Qatar and Oman, Russia and the Central Asian Republics.

While the training of our own personnel from the three Services and other components of a Rapid Reaction Force should receive focussed attention to achieve integration, it is also essential that commanders and staff officers are gradually exposed to operating with their counterparts from other countries, either bilaterally or at multilateral forums, in order to foster better cooperation and coordination. Equally, if not more importantly, training of senior military leadership must focus on the nuances of multinational operations, particularly in the context of the possibility of India being asked to assume a leadership role. The need to adjust to a "consultative" style of leadership, and paying increased attention to aspects of coordination and liaison at headquarters will need to be understood, as also the methodology to be adopted for assimilating staff officers and subordinate commanders within the system. In this context, it would be useful to draw on the experiences of other individual countries like the USA and Russia, and groupings like the European Union, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, ASEAN Regional Forum, African Union (AU), Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, etc.

In doing all this, not only would we be preparing ourselves for assuming a greater role in regional and global affairs but also conveying a seriousness of purpose.