

EXCLUSIVE: WE HAD TAKEN ON CHINA
By R. Prasannan, Chief of Bureau, THE WEEK

SALUTE THE

JANUARY 2021

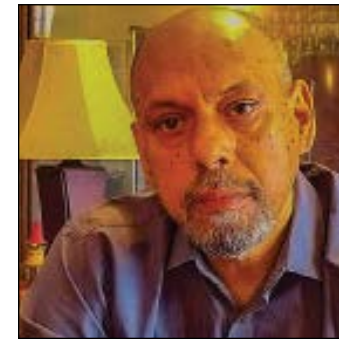
SOLDIER



**CHINA CAN
WE TAKE ON?**



editorial



Learning from the Galwan Valley incident

There are some lessons of history that we forget at our own peril. One of them is the famous saying attributed to the US politician William Clay: “There are no permanent enemies, and no permanent friends, only permanent interests.” In other words, to establish foreign relations or politics on the basis of emotional or personal factors is the height of foolishness. Yet, this is exactly what India’s recent China policy appeared to do. After years of rivalry, a few years ago China suddenly was accorded the status of India’s friend. China’s president Xi Jinping was seen being hugged by our Prime Minister and was invited to India as a special guest to flag waving Indians. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping met 18 times between 2014 and 2019. India also supported China at various international forums and voted for its favour.

In April 2020, India and China celebrated 70 years of diplomatic ties - India being the first non-socialist country to have recognised China in 1950. President Xi Jinping issued a statement claiming the two countries have established a strategic and cooperative partnership for peace and prosperity, and are endeavouring to build an even closer partnership of development. India’s President Kovind declared the two sides have made considerable progress, especially in the last few years, in enhancing their bilateral engagement in a number of areas, including political, economic and people-to-people ties. The Chinese leadership had supposedly been turned around and now viewed India favourably.

Then came the bad news about the sudden Chinese military incursions in eastern Ladakh. From the first week of May 2020, Chinese and Indian troops clashed at many locations along the Line of Actual Control (the de facto border between India and China in Ladakh), including near the Pangong Lake. On the night of 15 June, a group of India soldiers led by their commanding officers approached a group of Chinese troops who were building permanent structures on the Indian side of the LAC and asked them to desist. In response, the Chinese troops attacked the Indians with rods and sharp instruments, killing twenty of them including their commanding officer. The enraged Indian troops retaliated and subsequently killed over 35 Chinese troops and injured many more. This was all out war. And the only force that prevented a humiliating defeat for India were a handful of unarmed Indian Army soldiers.

Overnight China became an enemy. All this while it was supposedly a dear friend. What is worse, this erroneous perception was responsible for complete lack of political action on shoring up our military preparedness against China. The friendly view of China at the highest levels of our government had completely clouded our judgement. We failed to anticipate China’s rising belligerence. While we were shaking hands, China was baring its fists at every neighbour, including Japan and the countries of southeast Asia.

China had decided to unilaterally change the status quo wherever it could in Asia with the view of sending the message that no one ought to challenge its pre-eminence. Even Japan was cowed down by China’s claims and aggressive military posture near the disputed Senkaku islands in the eastern South China sea. Repeated incursions by China’s coast guard vessels and military aircraft have thrown off Japan’s defence forces. The idea is to browbeat every Asian nation to accept Chinese hegemony and never challenge its expansionism in the future.

It was the same message for India. No amount of hugging and state visits could alter the course of China’s geo-strategic outlook. The Chinese leadership have always been clear about their long term aims and interests. It is time, we too recognise our long-term interests and develop the means to secure those interests.

Indranil Banerjee

1 January 2021

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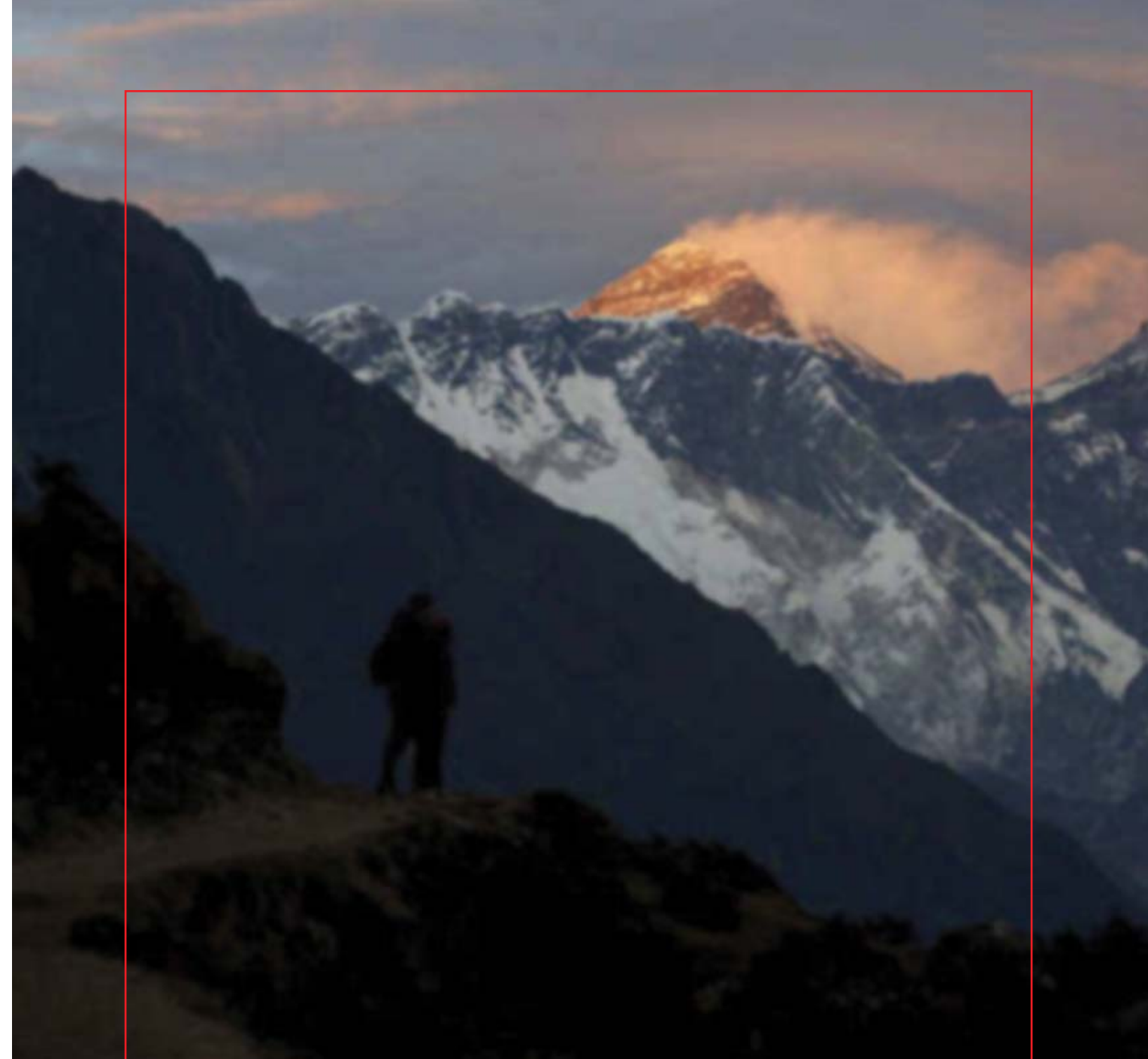
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IN THE past, China has largely agreed that the Galwan valley from LAC towards India belongs to India. But now China is claiming that Galwan valley belongs to her due to its renewed strategic importance. Galwan valley is formed by 80 km long Galwan river, which originates in Aksai China on China side and crosses the LAC and joins Shyok river. The point where it crosses LAC is known as Patrolling Point 14. It is here that China has made military build up to claim Galwan valley. Recently India has built a road from Durbuk-Shyok-Daulat Beg Oldie (DSDBO Road) which runs from Eastern Ladakh to western Ladakh till the Daulat Beg Oldie, where India has also developed an Air strip. This 323 km road runs parallel to LAC along the Shyok river. India can reach to the LAC at any point through this road with short notice and utilize the air strip at Daulat Beg Oldie for quick military supply. China is worried about the strategic utility of this road and wants to control the movement at the road as and when required.



We had taken on China

In 1962, when we fought the war with the Chinese, it was a fight between peers. We lost territory because we were taken by surprise - we were not prepared.

by R. PRASANAN, Chief of Bureau, THE WEEK

THE DOKLAM stand-off three years ago and the current stand-off in Ladakh have brought back memories - or shall we say nightmares? - of the 1962 debacle in the minds of several people, including even some of our strategic thinkers. This is not an uncommon phenomenon, considering that nation-states are guided by their historical experiences, and the last military experience that we have had with China was not a happy one for us.

The problem, however, of being guided by historical experiences is that we often choose the most recent experience to guide us in our current contexts, and ignore the earlier ones. The memory of the last war dominates our thoughts to such an extent that it overshadows or even erases the memory of earlier wars. This works both positively and negatively. In the case of Pakistan, we often forget the 1947-48 or the 1965 experience when we were surprised

(in 1947) and were confronted by superior military ware (1965), and barely managed to stop the enemy on his tracks. We tend to be guided by the 1971 or the 1999 Kargil experience when we triumphed over the enemy. This has led to assumptions - probably very right too - that in the next confrontation too, we ought to triumph.

However, in the case of China, this phenomenon - of being guided by the most recent experience - leads

to the contrary assumption. Since our last military confrontation with China had ended in a bad drubbing for us, we assume that the next one too, if at all and when it happens, may not be a very happy one for us. This has led to a sort of China Syndrome in the Indian strategic mindset, whereby we assume that China is an adversary to be dreaded.

There is an element of falsity involved in these assumptions. Just because we have had a bitter experience with an adversary in the last confrontation, there is no certitude of another bitter experience in the next round. And just because we had triumphed over an adversary

in the last round, let us not deceive ourselves thinking that the next round too will result in guaranteed triumph. We ought to view these experiences more holistically, and across a longer and larger timespan.

This leads to an imminent question as to whether we have ever had a triumph or victory or success or at least an upper hand in a military confrontation with the state of

China. Indeed, we have had, and the Chinese remember it more than we do. Just as we are yet to recover from the nightmare of 1962, the Chinese in Tibet are yet to recover from the shock and trauma of the 1904 Young husband expedition from India and of the 1914-16 invasion which led to the drawing of the McMahon line. As the Chinese look at it, an army of just 3000 simply walked



There is a perception that India had been neglecting its China border, especially in terms of building military infrastructure there.



across the Himalayas and overran the entire territory upto Lhasa. The fact is that the Chinese strategic thinking on India is still conditioned and influenced by the experience they had at the turn of the last century.

In 1962, when we fought the war with the Chinese, it was a fight between peers. We lost territory because we were taken by surprise - we were not prepared. Otherwise there was some kind of a military parity between the two, and there are many who believe - that includes me - that the outcome of the war would have been different if we had used our superior air power.

Anyway, that is not the case today. China has been growing and modernising on three fronts - economically, technologically and militarily. We are also growing - but our growth is at a fast pace only economically and technologically. China's strategic profile is today that of a world power, which has the capability to extend its strategic will over large parts of at least the eastern hemisphere, whereas we are still only a much challenged regional power. So the strategic parity that used to be there between India and China no longer exists.

But that is not a reason for worry, though we ought to be concerned. This disparity in strategic profile is not actually a reflection of the tactical military situation obtained on the border between India and China. There is a perception that India had been neglecting its China border, especially in terms of building military infrastructure there. I would disagree. We had been thinking of building up, and actually building up, the border infrastructure, ever since General



Military convoy on newly constructed Shyok River

Krishna Rao launched Operation Falcon with the concurrence of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. And it was the intensity and extent of that build-up that culminated in the Sumdorong Chu incident during Rajiv Gandhi regime. But since we stood firm then, the Chinese backed off from a confrontation, and even invited Rajiv Gandhi to that famous meeting with Deng Hsiaoping.

There wasn't much of activity on the northern borders throughout the rest of the 90s and early 2000s, when we were fully engaged on the western border. There was the Kargil war, the military mobilisation following the attack on Indian parliament, the post 9/11 developments, and so on. We were fully engaged in the western theatre.

China used this opportunity of the respite to build their own infrastructure. Work on the rail line to Tibet was initiated; highways and

byways were built and upgraded. They converted their 149 division into a rapid action division and moved a brigade or two into Tibet. Today, we believe that the PLA can move one full mechanised infantry division into Tibet in 48 hours in an emergency. There are also reports that it can move about 10 divisions in one month.

But we have also been building up. We have moved deep-strike Sukhoi-30 squadrons to Bareilly, Tezpur and Chhabua, stationed BrahMos regiments closer to border, upgraded the roads and built advance landing grounds, raised two new divisions. We were even raising a mountain strike corps which, however, is said to have been put on the backburner.

In short, in case the Chinese attempt any kind of adventurism on the Arunachal-Sikkim sector, we would have enough forces waiting

for them. Now the situation in the eastern sector of the northern border, I am told, is quite comfortable. An attacker on the mountains need eight times more strength than the defender. If that is so, PLA would need 20 divisions to launch a credible attack on the Indian positions. How would they do it? It will need at least two campaign seasons to bring about that many troops into Tibet. And they all need to be acclimatised over



An Apache Attack IAF Helicopter During Night Operation in Ladak

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An attacker on the mountains need eight times more strength than the defender. If that is so, PLA would need 20 divisions to launch a credible attack on the Indian positions.

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at least three months. Even to travel by that much-dreaded train.

A word about this railway line. I saw it during my recent trip to Tibet, and I concede, it is a marvellous engineering feat. But I think, its strategic value is zero. Most of it runs through open, treeless, plateau country, and a good part of the mountain stretch is built on permafrost. Forget the Sukhois and the BrahMos, a strike using our aged MiG-27 can take it out. And one can only imagine how long they will take to rebuild one bridge bombed out by us. Let us not forget, we have three

wings of Sukhois close to the borders, plus deep-strike Jaguars in Gorakhpur and Kalaikunda. They can bomb out it the line till kingdom come.

But we have vulnerabilities - on the western sector of the northern borders. That is where the Chinese are trying to pinprick us now. Here too we are making the necessary logistic investments of roads, bridges and what not that can take even battle tanks.

In short, we are building towards tactical parity again in every sector, and that is what seems to have provoked China. ■

‘Salute The Soldier’ is the vision of a decorated former Army officer, who has been trying to raise awareness about the armed forces and their contribution to society. Ever since Army Day 15 January 2011, this officer has been releasing a publication to celebrate the armed forces. The aim is to raise awareness of the soldier’s role in warfare as well as in peace time.

THE UNMATCHED bravery of Indian soldiers at Galwan Valley in eastern Ladakh on the night of 15 June 2020 was the stuff of legends. The clash, which was fought without any firearms because of an India-China 1996 agreement barring guns & explosives from the area, was a sobering lesson for China. Skirmishing at an altitude of over 14,000 feet in sub-zero temperatures, Indian soldiers proved their mettle and surprised the enemy intruders. The world stood up and took note of the incident and the astonishing commitment of the Indian soldier.

The fear psychosis of China that had been embedded in the minds of common Indians for over three decades, was erased by our

gallant soldiers. Demonstrating exemplary values - unmindful of any divisions of caste, creed or religion -they unhesitatingly entered the fray to safeguard the country’s sovereignty. This was the result of years of training, honing of skills and strengthening of values. Among the many virtues inculcated in the minds

of our talented Indian soldier, drawn mostly from the country’s rural areas, and selfless young officers is a sense of camaraderie and commitment to the country. These feelings forge the tenacious fighting edge of the Indian Army.

The Indian soldier knows that if they don’t work collectively, they

cannot win or live to see another day. From this is born an intense motivation that guides our young military leaders, who are taught to lead from the front. The Indian Army has the highest officer-man casualty ratio in the world. Military service is clearly not a job but a calling in life; it comes with its own inexplicable

and extended code of conduct; and it subconsciously imposes a moral responsibility. A soldier believes in a higher cause, a belief that makes a man sacrifice even his life if required. He readily puts himself in harm’s way, and is ready to risk his life for a cause, not for profit.

The history of the Indian Army,

from pre independence times to the post-Independence years, is replete with instances of the Indian soldier’s conspicuous bravery and acts of valour. They have fought in East Africa, in North Africa and southeast Asia where they took on two of the finest armies of the world – the Germans and the Japanese - and proved their worth. Indian soldiers won nearly 6300 awards in World War II; the tally included 31 Victoria Crosses, which was the highest military gallantry honour, seven George Crosses, which was next in order, 252 Distinguished Service Orders, 347 Indian Orders of Merit and 1311 Military Crosses.

In December 1971, the Indian Army had overrun erstwhile East Pakistan [Bangladesh] and taken 93,000 prisoners-of-war (POWs). It was one of the swiftest military campaigns in military history which resulted in the creation of new sovereign republic after a lightning 13-day campaign. This was the famous 1971 Indo-Pak War. The Indian Army’s finest hour was when the “Instrument of Surrender” of Pakistan’s Eastern Command was signed by Lieutenant General Jagjit Singh Aurora, GOC-in-C of the Indian Eastern Command, and Lieutenant General A.A.K. Niazi, Commander of the Pakistan Eastern Command, at Ramna Race Course in Dacca at 16:31 Hrs-IST on 16 December 1971. For the Indian subcontinent, the Indo-Pak War was a historic milestone. This event forever changed the geopolitics of South Asia. India’s eastern flank was purged of a malicious power, making it possible for a future “Look East” policy that sought to connect the region’s fortunes to the rapidly growing

Salute The Soldier

India-Pakistan 1971 war



Historic surrender Indo-Pak War 1971



When you go home
Tell them of us & say
For your tomorrow
We gave our today.



progressive nations of southeast Asia.

The Kargil conflict of 1999 was one of the hardest fought battles of modern times. Conducted under incredibly difficult conditions, the Indian Army once again proved that years of involvement in low intensity conflicts and counter insurgency operations had not blunted the fighting edge of the forces. It was a righteous battle won with selfless leadership of young officers of the Indian army with close strategic inter service cooperation, professional higher direction of war and cogent political, strategic directions.

We are living in the era of misinformation, disinformation & downright lies that dominate Twitter, Facebook and the dark lanes



of the Internet. Never has the need for honest, clear and committed work on this subject of national importance been greater than today. Times have moved on and much has changed but soldiers remain men of character, devoted to fulfill the pledge made to our constitution and nation. Thousands of them have shed their blood for the nation during our tumultuous history and continue to do so at our borders and troubled areas. Yet, they are not always remembered or accorded the respect they deserve.

Every citizen is a soldier in his own professional sphere, be it a medical doctor, a public servant, chartered accountant, advocate, media reporter, cable operator or whatever. The point is that each citizen must learn to conduct himself or herself as a soldier. They must adhere to the same standards of honesty and integrity. They must unhesitatingly strive to uphold the higher national cause. They must share the commitment of 'Nation First' and emulate the values, ethos, the soldier demonstrates.

'Salute The Soldier' is a small step in the larger, noble effort to disseminate correct, unprejudiced facts about the Indian Army's past, present and future. The aim is to make the public at large as well as policy makers acknowledge the great debt owed by the nation to the men in arms. ■

Tapash Chatterjee

Tapash Chatterjee is the founder of 'Salute The Soldier'. A decorated officer of the Indian Army, he was commissioned into the Gorkha Rifles. His professional career in the military was marked by the mastery of strategic innovation aligned with grassroots tasks for effective and efficient implementations of objectives. He has always striven to uphold the pristine values of the Indian Army while at the same time providing succour to the common citizen. He is a strong advocate of social entrepreneurship and adding positive value to society through empowerment and development. He combined his vision with his man management skills to conceptualise and implement the mission '**Ability Beyond Disability**' in conjunction with the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Government of India. This mission was aimed at restoring the dignity of persons with disabilities, who happen to be the most neglected and marginalized sections of our community, often residing in remote, under-served and border areas of the country. The mission found its mention in the **Niti Aayog** reports for outstanding achievements. He is a regular contributor to the "**Behind The Headlines**" column of the Journal of 'Disabilities & Impairment' established 1987.



Army Day 2021

'We Honour The Indian Soldier By Recalling His Achievement On Army Day.'

the Indian Army, was also the quintessential soldier's general and his ability to bond with them both during peace and war remains a quality worthy of emulation. General Manekshaw, became the first of only two Indian Army Generals to be conferred the rank of Field Marshal (in January 1973), the other being the late Field marshal K M Cariappa.

evident in every theatre of its operations.

During the 1971 India-Pakistan War, not only did the Indian Army demonstrate its war fighting capabilities but also its essentially humane side. At the end of the 13-day conflict, the Indian Army was left with 93,000 Pakistani Prisoners-of-War (POWs) and a

It doesn't take a hero to order men into battle. It takes a hero to be one of those men who go into battle.



Indian Troops At Galwan

THE YEAR 2020 taught us we are as vulnerable as we are powerful. As we step into the new year 2021, we must resolve never to forget the exemplary values and unmatched bravery demonstrated by Indian soldiers at "Galwan Valley" in eastern Ladakh. The ongoing standoff

demonstrates that soldiers remain men of honour who are committed to fulfil the pledge made to our Constitution and nation even at the cost of their lives. It is the higher cause that makes a man sacrifice his life. The soldier readily puts himself in harm's way and is ready to risk his

life for a cause, not for profit. Salute the Soldier, to commemorate the sacrifices of our men at arms as we step into thenewyear2021. The year of loss and learning provided lessons to strengthen the institution of the Army with its commitment to place the 'Nation First'.

On 15 January 1948, General K.M. Cariappa became the first Indian commander-in-Chief of the Army. This day is now celebrated every year as ARMY DAY. General Sam Harmusji Framji Jamshedji Manekshaw, the architect of what is considered the finest hour of

The Indian Army through its three fundamental principles of professionalism, secularism and apolitical mindset is not only worthy of emulations within the country but also elsewhere in the subcontinent. The Indian Army's professionalism and inspiring leadership has been

new vulnerable nation. The POW's were treated with utmost respect and the bravery demonstrated by them in military action against Indian positions were acknowledged. There were no atrocities or revenge killings. The Indian Army accepted the unconditional surrender honourably,

prevented the POWs from being slaughtered by the enraged locals, and safely transported them to POW camps in India. This epitomises the spirit of true professionalism in the Indian Army where there is no room for hatred against enemies or ideological enmity.

In the finest traditions of the Indian Army, outstanding bravery by the adversary has always been respected and acknowledged. One such incident occurred during the 1971 War in the Shakargarh sector where one of the bloodiest battles of that war was fought. Leading the Indian battalion into the attack was Lt Col Ved Prakash Airy (who later became Lt. Gen.) of the 3 Grenadiers. His battalion captured enemy positions after hard and bloody

The POW's were treated with utmost respect and the bravery demonstrated by them in military action against Indian positions were acknowledged.

fighting and held onto them despite massive counter-attacks by the enemy. In one of these counter-attacks the commanding officer of the enemy's 35 Frontier Force Regiment (35

FFR), Lt Col Mohd. Akram Raja, was killed while leading his men. Lt Col Airy acknowledged the conspicuous bravery of his Pakistani counterpart and while returning his body added a hand written note titled "A Tribute to a Soldier" where he detailed Lt Col Raja's bravery. This led to Pakistan conferring the Hilal-I-Jur'at award (equivalent to our Mahavir Chakra) on Lt Col Raja.

Individual acts of valour generally receive public acclaim but the sacrifice of the Unknown Soldier, who lays down his life ungrudgingly in some remote battlefield, often remains unacknowledged. By bringing out this commemorative pamphlet we hope to raise some awareness of the Unknown Soldier to commemorate the lives and sacrifices of our men at arms. The soldier walks calmly in the line of fire, knowing fully well that he may lose his life. He faces terrorist and unseen enemies from across the borders. He carries unlimited liability for the safety of citizens and the progress of the nation. In short, he deserves to be saluted and respected. ■



Field Marshal Manekshaw, confirming SENA MEDAL [Gallantry] to No; 5837748, Lance Naik Indra Bahadur Sahi of First Battalion The Nineth Gorkha Rifles [1/9GR] for his conspicuous bravery in the face of enemy at the battle of Dera Baba Nanak [DBN-Battle] of Indo-Pak War 1971.

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A Tribute to a Soldier

Lt Colonel Ved. Prakash. Airy, Commanding Officer 3 GRENDIERS [later become Lt Gen V.P. Airy MVC], admired & acknowledge the raw courage shown by his adversary, Lt Colonel Mohd Akram Raja, Commanding Officer 35 FFR, died while leading the counter attack on position captured by 3 GRENADIERS. A one page hand written note by Lt Colonel Airy titled 'A TRIBUTE TO A SOLDIER' was handed over to Pak Army along with the Officers Body. Based on this note Pakistan Government honoured Lt Colonel Raja with an gallantry award Hilal-i-Jur' at; equivalent to MVC.

TRIBUTE TO A SOLDIER

Lt Col MOHD AKRAM RAJA, Officer Commanding 35 FFR, who led the counter attack on Indian position of village JARPAL at 0400 hrs on 17 Dec 71, had died a real soldiers death. Our hats off to him.

He was personally leading the attack by being in the front line of assault, when he was hit by an MMG burst from our position right on the face killing him on the spot.

We had recovered his body on 17 Dec 71 after having been told by one of the prisoners of war captured by us. The prisoner also helped us in identifying the dead body. We found both his arms frozen after death in the position in which he was holding his sten gun, which indicates his determination to get ahead.

In this action Lt Col MOHD AKRAM RAJA displayed courage, determination and personal bravery of the highest order in keeping with the traditions of the soldiers.

This heroic deed of Lt Col RAJA, a brave soldier, should not go unnoticed.

Praying for the departed soul.

*Field
18 Dec 71*

*VP Airy
(VP Airy)*

The Battle of Rezang La Veteran's War Account



This battle of Rezang La is listed in the series of eight stories of collective bravery published by UNESCO. Rezang La (La means a mountain pass in the Tibetan language) is a tactically important feature on the Kailash Range; it is about 3,000 yards long and 2,000 yards wide at an average

altitude of 16,000 feet with intervening heights that allow deep observation into Chinese Territory but at the same time restrict close artillery support to Indian positions. This falls under the Chushul Sector of Ladakh, as designated by the Indian Army.

During the 1962 India-China War, Rezang La was held by 'C' Company under Major Shaitan Singh of the 13 Kumaon Regiment. On the 18th of November 1962, this Company fought the battle of Rezang La in subzero temperatures with scant resources and in extremely difficult circumstances. At that time, Brigadier Raghunath V Jatar [IC-6445H], the then 'B' Company Commander of 13 Kumaon Regiment was holding Magar Hill, a prominent feature on one flank of the Spanggur gap and dominating the Chushul airstrip. Lt Colonel H.S. Dhingra was the Commanding Officer of 13 Kumaon Regiment located on the high ground at the foothills of Magar Hill. The Battalion was placed under HQ 114 Infantry Brigade commanded by Brigadier T.N. Raina [who later became Chief of Indian Army staff].

The Chinese Army attacked Rezang La in the early hours of 18th Nov 1962. The first attack was 'silent' with the intention to surprise 'C' company of 13 Kumaon Regiment. However, the Chinese failed in their designs and the attack was stalled by the brave soldiers of 13 Kumaon Regiment. At the crack of dawn, the Chinese once again attacked Rezang La; this time too, the attack was thwarted by accurate small arms fire from our positions. The Chinese then modified their attack plan and started shelling Rezang La heavily while encircling the post. Finding 'C' company surrounded, Major Shaitan Singh re-organised the position and re-sited the automatic weapons to take on the enemy attack.

Major Shaitan Singh as 'C' company commander leading from the front demonstrated conspicuous bravery in the face of the enemy and repeatedly repulsed Chinese attacks. He was seriously wounded by a sniping Chinese MMG but continued to fight along with his men. The Chinese army then directed heavy machine gun fire on his position and he was incapacitated. Unmindful of his personal safety and sensing danger to his life, he ordered his subordinate to place him behind the cover of a boulder at the place of action and continued to fight. He died at that spot, still gripping his weapon. The 'C' company lost 114 soldiers in the battle of Rezang La while 5 soldiers were seriously injured and captured by the Chinese Army as Prisoners-of-War (POWs). Only one soldier returned to Battalion HQ. Maj Shaitan Singh posthumously won the Param Vir Chakra [PVC] for his actions in defending Rezang La. A war memorial built in Rewari, claims that 1,300 Chinese soldiers were killed in the battle of Rezang La, which it is the only bravery story of the Indian Army listed under the title collective stories of bravery published by UNESCO.

Brigadier Raghunath V Jatar was born on 05th Oct 1932 in Dhulia in Maharashtra in a family having very strong military ties. His uncle Lt Col Sir Nilkanth Jatar had served with distinction in the British Indian Army in World War I and in the North West Frontier province (NWFP). He was the first Indian to get DSO and Bar for bravery. On 7th June 1953 Brigadier Jatar was commissioned as 2nd Lt in the 13 Kumaon Regiment. He commanded the 13 Kumaon Regiment during the 1971 Indo-Pak war in Rajasthan [Longewalla Sector] which had witnessed the retreating Pakistani Army after its humiliating defeat. The 13 Kumaon Regiment under Lt Colonel R.V.Jatar successfully launched battalion level attack in broad day light and ousted the Pakistanis from Border Pillar No-638 in the Indo-Pak Border. The attack resulted in 51 Pakistani soldiers killed while the remaining fled towards own territory. This veteran officer, while narrating the 1962 incidents, express his deep gratitude to the Indian Army for the opportunity to serve the nation in all operations of war since his commissioning in 1953 to till the day he retired in 1984 including the liberation of Goa [1960], Mizoram insurgency [1968] and actively involved in the Indo-Pak 1971 war. Thus, I have the satisfaction of serving my country in various military operations. ■

On the Occasion of Army Day 2021

Salute the nation's Paramilitary Forces and Health Professionals



LET US come together to acknowledge the myriad sacrifices made during years of unremitting services by the personnel of the nation's paramilitary forces including Border Security Force (BSF), Indo Tibetan Border Force (ITBP), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), Railway Protection Force (RPF), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Assam Rifles and the state police forces.

In 2020 during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, these forces as well as the country's healthcare personnel, including doctors, nurses and others, went the extra mile to keep millions of Indians safe. They toiled under the most trying circumstances, often at great personal risk, to fulfil their commitment to the nation's ill and vulnerable. Hundreds gave up their lives while providing succour to the ill and dying. We salute and honour them for their dedicated services during this extended crisis.

All of them have shown exemplary commitment to their duty, laying down their lives when needed without reward or recognition. May their sacrifices never go in vain. May their memory serve to strengthen the nation and may our future generations keep the flames of honour, sacrifices and love of the motherland burning at all times forever.

JAI HIND
TEAM SALUTE THE SOLDIER



China: A Swot Analysis

Recently, there has been disturbing escalation in China's aggressive behaviour towards India and others. China's relations with the United States is at a new low.

by AMBASSADOR K P FABIAN, Professor, Indian Society of International Law

IN BUSINESS we all do a SWOT (Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats) analysis of our competitors to help us plan our strategy to win the competition. While it is not our intention to have an adversarial relationship with China—and we have demonstrated it beyond doubt that we want to have good neighbourly relations with China and that at the same time we expect and demand that China complies with the agreements it has signed with us—it is crystal clear that we cannot have a good neighbourly

relation with a country that chooses not to have such relations with us. Recently, there has been disturbing escalation in China's aggressive behaviour towards India and others. China's relations with the United States is at a new low. There is an across the board consensus in the United States that China's rise has to be stopped as it is no longer a peaceful rise. It is an aggressive rise, based on violations of International Law as in the South China Sea. Incidentally, just because it is called South China Sea, it does not follow

that it belongs to China. India does not claim the Indian Ocean. By the way it was the Portuguese navigators who set out from India to China starting from the 16th century who coined the noun "South China Sea". Vietnam calls it "East Sea". The brazen acts of aggression by China has united the rest of the world against it.

The European Union, the largest market in the world, has recognised the danger of permitting China to buy up companies in distress. China has been found stealing technology.

Coming to China's aggressive behaviour at the border, we need to understand why China is doing what it is doing. China realises that India is the only power that stands and can stand in the way of China's ascent as the hegemon in Asia, a necessary step to realise China's ultimate ambition to co-equal and then overtake the United States.

At this stage it is important to raise the question: Will China ever equal United States in composite power? The answer is clear. The composite power includes military

power, economic power, technology power, natural resources, quality of leadership and soft power.

In terms of military power, we do not expect any land war between China and United States. It will be air and sea. In both areas China is way behind its adversary. There is, as we know, a MAD (mutually assured destruction) between United States and Russia as between them they hold 90% of nuclear weapons. China will not be able to catch up with either in terms of nuclear weapons.

Coming to economy, the GDP of United States is \$21.44 trillion whereas China's is \$14.14 trillion. We need to take note of the population. China has a population of 1404.33 million as against 332.6 million in United States. In short, with one fourth of China's population, United States produces 50% more than China.

Some scholars have wrongly argued that the autocracy that China practices enables it to have a higher GDP and a stronger military. We all know what Mao Zedong's absolute power did to China. It created a massive famine with a grim toll running into millions. Xi Jinping has amassed absolute power in his hands, but it can prove injurious to China.

Coming back to the SWOT

analysis. China's strength is its economic growth in the last twenty years after it joined the World Trade Organization for which it had to wait over fifteen years as the U.S. Senate objected initially as it found China lacking in qualifications to be a member of W.T.O. Its weakness is its autocracy that suppresses freedom of thought and expression without which no society can progress.

The opportunities are weak and muddleheaded U.S. leadership under Trump, Covid-19 related economic weakness of the West and the rest of the world. This has been rectified with Biden's election.

Threats include the near universal disapproval of China's aggressive behaviour towards India, Australia and others.

The Indian Army has a glorious tradition. The other day the BBC carried a programme: Has India's contribution to WW2 been ignored? (16th June 2015) by Yasmin Khan. Yasmin is right.

While I was serving as Ambassador to Italy I was invited in 1998 to speak at the inauguration of Mahatma Gandhi Piazza in a small town. After my speech an elderly lady came and hugged me. She started crying. I was slightly embarrassed, but did not show it. Greeted her in Italian



and asked her whether she had visited India and seen Mahatma Gandhi. She said no. She continued, “When the war (WW2) was ending, in 1944, Indian soldiers had come to my town. I was a little girl. A tall soldier with a turban gave me chocolates. I shall never forget him. I wanted to hug you and tell you this.”

What a human interest story! In Italy, I have come across similar stories of the kindness and goodness of soldiers.

Let us look at what is happening at the border. I say the border and not LAC, a Chinese phrase we should stop using. The argument that the border is not delineated on a map acceptable to both and therefore we should adopt the LAC is wrong. Because LAC also is not drawn on a map. China treats the LAC as a movable line to suit its aggressive ambition. In Galvan our brave soldiers stood firm and China had to withdraw. We salute the bravery and patriotism of our brave heroes and shall never forget them. They shall inspire us for all time.

The soldier is the only professional who makes the ultimate sacrifice for the country. We the public are eternally beholden to them. Without them we are not safe.

The Indian Army has a glorious history. Take Pakistan. It invaded Jammu and Kashmir shortly after independence and the Pakistan Army was about to capture Srinagar when Indian Army stepped in and made them retreat. In 1965 Pakistan started the war and was badly beaten. In 1971 also Pakistan started the war and it resulted in the dismemberment of Pakistan and the birth of Bangladesh. In short, but for the 1962 war with China, independent

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Coming to 1962, much has changed since then. India has modernised and equipped its military.

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India has not lost any war.

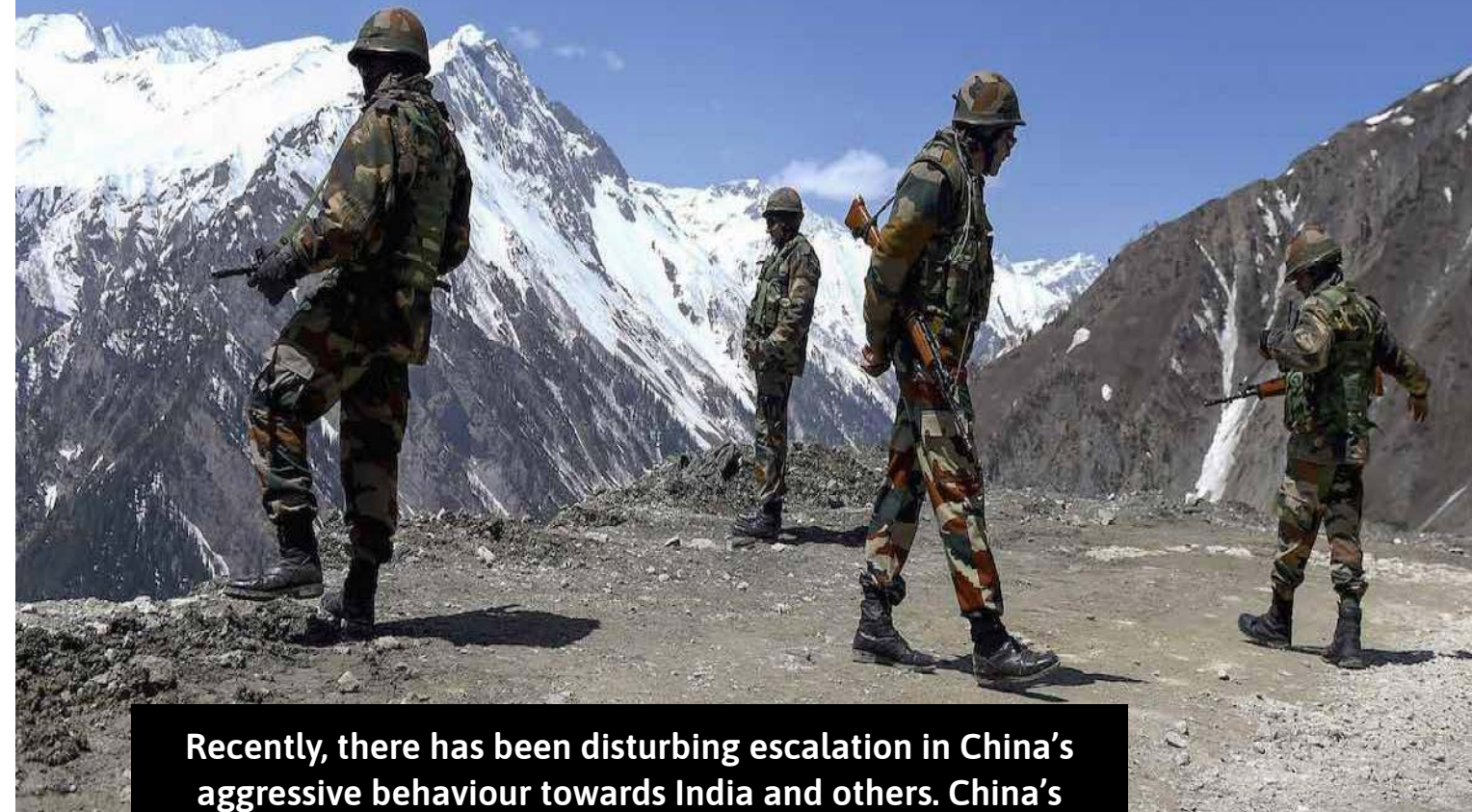
Coming to 1962, much has changed since then. India has modernised and equipped its military. There is no question about our ability to take on China if need be. While we know that China knows our ability to stand up to them and therefore China is unlikely to start a war, prudence requires that we should be ready and prepared for all eventualities.

There is confrontation in Ladakh. Our hearts go to our brave soldiers facing the cold weather and the difficult terrain. The whole nation

supports the soldier. Sooner rather than later, China will realise the march of folly it has undertaken and sit down with India across the table and sort out matters in a civilised way. But we cannot afford to bring down our level of vigilance.

Dear soldier, please remember that for the entire nation from Kashmir to Kanyakumari you are our hero and we stand behind you. We are convinced that your valour and diligence will send the aggressor back to where he came from. ■

Managing An Expansionist Power



Recently, there has been disturbing escalation in China's aggressive behaviour towards India and others. China's relations with the United States is at a new low.

by N. V. SUBRAMANIAN, *Writer, Analyst and Journalist.*

NEW DELHI: There is a quotation which is attributed to the French premier, Georges Clemenceau, who rallied the Allies in the last year of the First World War to victory against Kaiser's Germany. "War," he said, "is too serious a matter to entrust to military men." Variations of that quotation often make their way into publication now and then.

Clemenceau was putting into words a truism that was always well-

known but not articulated with his simplicity. Without Clemenceau's leadership in the last make-or-break phase of the conflict, it was possible that the German war machine, although bedraggled, would prevail. This is not the place to go into the details of the last fighting which saw some of the bloodiest trench warfare of the conflict.

But Clemenceau's intervention tilted the balance in favour of the

Allies only marginally. The Germans surrendered. But the French supreme allied commander, Ferdinand Foch, had no stomach to carry the battle into Berlin. That lack of stomach provided the psychological advantage to Hitler when he overran France and conquered Western Europe save the British Isles twenty-two years later only to be doomed by his own lack of strategic purpose.

This small portion of potted

history acquires relevance when considering India-China relations. They have been rough this year like never in recent decades and the time ahead does not appear promising. In the Galwan Valley clashes of June, about twenty Indian soldiers and their commanding officer were killed. Presumably some Chinese also died in the fighting but that is no consolation.

affairs is also considerable. Besides, nuclear powers don't go to war; not even limited war. This is not the Ussuri River of 1969 for prolonged clashes to occur under the nuclear overhang. And India faces nuclear weapons on two coordinated fronts which somehow escapes hawkish calculations. While the country obviously can't lose more territory, disengagement is equally imperative.

This cannot be done by the army or by diplomats. Disengagement talks have to happen at the level of top political leaders of both countries and, even then, it will take months before anything is discernible on the ground.

Countries have to realise what they lose by going to war. Such realisation will prevent rivalries from spinning out of control. India turned the corner with the 1991 economic reforms. India rose to become a lower middle-income country because of reforms. It would have regressed to worse without. A lot of hard work is necessary to make it to a middle-income country, and even more perseverance is required so that it escapes the "middle-income trap". Few countries do.

In this situation, any rivalry with China has to be economic. It cannot be territorial and military even while preserving the possessions and the advantages, if any. Rivalries of a non-economic nature are simply unaffordable. The ends of revanchism cannot be happy. Fortunately, India's predicament is not unique. World history abounds with examples of neighbours who overcame bitterness to forge a new future. Britain, France and Germany were at the centre of some of Western Europe's enduring troubles. They were joined towards the close of the nineteenth century in the league of Great Powers by the United States, Tsarist Russia and Imperial Japan. Their rivalry was so great that they fought two world wars (total wars) and the Cold War (in a thermonuclear environment). Differences persist among them but war is unthinkable now.

I have often come across the question: Can India take on

China? Even if I should think so, I would hesitate to say so. Not being a democracy, China does not understand how a democracy works. It imagines every expressed opinion as official policy or thinking. It has no notion of the concept of freedom of expression. Relations are already fraught. I have no interest in making them worse. Strategists know something else. Countries base their counter strategies on capacities of rival countries. Intents are secondary. It can also happen that intents are expressed not commensurate with capacity, making the other side take countermeasures which prove ultimately shocking and demoralising.

I would skirt that trap altogether by making the proposition that India and China are too important for one another and for the peace and prosperity of southern Asia and that war is simply not an option. China knows its priorities absolutely. Being a Great Power, China has a certain prestige it is keen to preserve. But in the immediate post-1949 phase and for several decades thereafter, it remained humble or at least played the humility card. On his first visit to Moscow upon gaining power, Mao Zedong was slighted by Joseph Stalin who did not permit the Korean War to cease in his lifetime. Mao bore the insults till China was in a position to strike out. A variant of that was Deng Xiaoping's rise-by-stealth policy which had the United States eating out of his hands. Xi Jinping reckons the time for stealth and humility are over. But even he needs allies. Thus, the deepening relations with Vladimir Putin's Russia.

There is no escape for India from the historical cycles. There are no shortcuts to rise, if rise it is that

India seeks. It must absolutely be clear about its priorities and shed prestige where it comes in the way without abasing itself. The priority for India is to lift the masses out of poverty and escape the middle-income trap. Prestige today comes not from having nuclear weapons (which are unusable anyhow) or large standing armies (wars are outmoded) but from possessing a powerful economy and a vast technical and industrial base. What really spooks Western powers and especially the United States about China? It is not so much its hypersonic weapons, its expanding inventory of warfighting platforms, etc, but things like the MIC 2025 (Made in China 2025) programme. It frightens them. The United States is the world leader of innovation; its leadership position actually derives from there. It is China's aim to displace America in that realm. Its ambitions and choices are extraordinary. If there is anything India can learn from its neighbour, it is to think big, shed shibboleths, and make democratic party-political competition not an end in itself but an ally and servitor of nation-building.

This is easier said than done. But a beginning has to be made. Politics has to seize the high ground in India-China relations leading to a negotiated disengagement and eventually to a border settlement. The annus horribilis of 2020 must remain one of a kind. While China has a stake in good relations with India and must ensure that it does not drift into the US orbit, India has an even bigger one in making the most of the world's number two economic power in the north and not getting trapped in geopolitical rivalries with

few all-weather friends. Hostile relations leading to a no-war-no-peace situation in the entire eastern and northern sectors of the frontier joined with historical hostilities in the west will put a huge military strain on India and on the economy which needs every available resource to propel growth. There is no guarantee that political-level talks will lead to quick disengagement but a military solution will only leave deep and unhealable wounds behind. More than anything else, India needs peace to find its feet and grow. Too much has gone wrong. For the satisfaction of its long-term interests, India has to reach an honourable accommodation with China and remove the spectre of a two-front war.

There is a sense of disbelief on the Indian side that relations with China have plummeted so dramatically and disastrously but there were all the signs of a storm breaking out since the Doklam crisis. While indulging in a blame-game helps no one, a degree of introspection is necessary. The Galwan Valley tragedy could have been averted had diplomats kept their eyes and ears open and not bought into the propaganda. Threatening Pakistan on a daily basis is not the same as throwing revanchist challenges at China – and from the floor of Parliament no less. Expansionist powers are always difficult to deal with. Ask Russia's neighbours and especially Ukraine in the present day or acquaint yourself with the strains imposed on the states contiguous to Nazi Germany by Hitler. Managing expansionist powers is an art and science and it's time India immerses in a long and arduous study of it. ■



Galwan Valley

While both sides are locked eyeball-to-eyeball on the undemarcated frontier, chances of active hostilities have diminished with the cold of winter being the greater adversary for soldiers outdoors. The earlier jingoism to rout the Chinese from the occupied one thousand square kilometres of territories claimed by India have remained just

that: jingoism. The Clemenceau principle has come to bear on political authority rather aggressively and unwantedly. For all the talk, war is not an option.

Nor should it be. I have no desire to get into war-gaming. Not just are the known unknowns vast; the unknown unknowns are prodigious. The revolution in military

Countering China: A Salute To The Indian Armed Forces

India should have no hesitation in revoking its stance about Tibet's status and should go even one step further and link it with China's recognition of J&K.

by Lt Gen C A KRISHNAN

DECADES OF negotiations and Joint Working Group meetings have not made any worthwhile progress towards settling the long standing border dispute along the 3488 Km India China border. China has shown no desire, over the past sixty years, to resolve the dispute, and in fact, their multiple claim lines including some outrageous ones and their inconsistent stance have actually resulted in an increase in the number of contentious points along the border. China uses the disputed border as a convenient pressure point against India. Border Stand-off in Chumar in 2014, Burtse in 2015 and Doklam in 2017 were typical examples of this.

China rolled out the Wuhan virus in December 2019. Even now, after a year, the whole world continues to reel under its impact with China being the only exception. Detection of new mutant strains is only making things worse.

At the dawn of twenty first century, China was already well on track vying for the numero uno position in the world order. As 2020 panned out, the situation looked tailor made for China to come to the world's rescue in fighting the virus and its painful economic disruption. But instead of availing the opportunity to earn global good will and enhance its soft power, China shed all pretense of the

benign Chinese rise' and exploited the crisis by adopting a tough stance on trade with countries like US and Australia, attempting aggressively to gobble up companies in the strained global markets and blatantly using a "debt trap strategy" against third world countries. This hurry to establish an economic monopoly seems to have been dictated by the ruling Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) professed goal of transforming China into a 'fully developed and advanced nation by 2049' and the fear of "Growing old before growing rich".

In its relentless pursuit to become a High Income Country (HIC), China feels constrained by its inadequate access to the oceans

and perceives a desperate need to break the stranglehold in the Malacca strait. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) provides China a gateway into the Arabian Sea and Middle East, and a viable alternative to get around the Malacca strait strangle-hold.

Although Indian Army's surgical strike across the Line of Control with

Pakistan in 2016 and the Balakot air strike by Indian Air Force in early 2019 had demonstrated a renewed Indian resolve to shift gears in Jammu & Kashmir, these incidents were not really inconsistent with the periodic spikes witnessed in the India-Pakistan border dynamics, and China, therefore, had no reason to be unduly disturbed by these. But,

unexpectedly, the changing trend continued and in August 2019, the Indian Parliament, through a two thirds majority, passed a resolution for abrogation of Article 370 and reorganization of J&K state. This took China and Pakistan by surprise. These developments, combined with India's renewed Border infrastructure push, especially the Darbuk – Shyok



Mobilization Indian Army

– Daulat Beg Oldi (DBO) road with an additional link under construction from Nubra valley via Saser La, suddenly altered the existing equation in Ladakh. Indian armed forces now



On 15 June 2020, PLA troops violated all protocols and norms and attacked unsuspecting Indian Army personnel with rods and sticks killing 20 Indian soldiers in Galwan valley.



had access to Highway 219 across the LAC as well as to Aksai Chin and the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. Equally significant is the fact that Gilgit-Baltistan, through which CPEC runs, lies just to the West of DBO. It is also significant

that an earlier resolution to unify Kashmir, which had looked insipid and meaningless when it was passed by the Indian parliament in 1994, suddenly shed its insipid looks and seemed within the realms of possibility. In the backdrop of these developments, China perceived a certain degree of vulnerability to its critical lines of communications in Aksai Chin and even the CPEC. It had to act fast and chose the time tested salami slicing strategy to remove the newly manifested vulnerability.

Over the years, a number of border agreements such as the 1993 Border Peace and Tranquility Agreement and the 1996 Agreement on Confidence Building Measures have been signed between India and China to deal with any incidents that may take place along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Although border incidents involving hand to hand scuffles to physically block the other side's patrols from moving beyond agreed limits was not an uncommon occurrence, protocols laid down in the agreements successfully prevented these incidents from flaring up into use of fire arms or attempts to cause any injury during such 'scuffles'. It is, however, important to note that almost always, such incidents were triggered by seemingly deliberate actions by Chinese PLA and every time it was Indian troops that walked the extra mile to prevent any major flare up. This had become an established pattern.

Summer of 2020 saw the Chinese repeatedly indulging in incursions and retaining troop presence beyond mutually agreed limits in Ladakh, especially in

Depsang plains, Galwan Valley and the Finger area along the North Bank of Pangong Tso. PLA cleverly combined these actions with aggressive overtures along their border with Nepal and Bhutan also, in an attempt to convey the impression of activating the entire northern border of India. On 15 June 2020, PLA troops violated all protocols and norms and attacked unsuspecting Indian Army personnel with rods and sticks killing 20 Indian soldiers in Galwan valley. In the Indian response, China reportedly lost over twice the number. All these happened without any exchange of fire! The entire country mourned and honoured the death of India's martyrs. In sharp contrast, in order to claim a moral victory, PLA felt compelled to hide its casualty figures and deny its fallen soldiers the honour and recognition they deserved. Although the Corps commander level talks which followed prevented any further flare up, China refused to pull troops behind mutually agreed limits and restore status quo ante. Instead, it unleashed its propaganda machinery claiming that Indian troops had triggered the turmoil and China had only acted in defence and taught India a proper lesson in the bargain. In the garb of free press, surprisingly, handful of Indian media houses and even some of the self proclaimed Indian strategists also subscribed to this Chinese propaganda. Through this widespread false propaganda, Indian army, Indian government and the country as a whole was being projected in poor light. For the Army, the false propaganda of 'China having taught India a lesson so easily' by some people within the country was far more hurting than the hazards



An army convoy carrying military material on its way to Ladakh amid border tension with China, at Manali-Leh highway

they faced.

It was under these circumstances that the Indian Army sprung a surprise on 29/30 August 2020. For the first time since 1962, Indian troops made a total departure from their established pattern of response to Chinese incursions and carried out a counter move and occupied the Kailash mountain Range, South of Pangong Tso. It was a perfectly legitimate action as the features they occupied are well on the Indian side of the LAC. In its sheer audacity and far reaching implications, this perfectly legitimate action took the Chinese and many critics of the Army even within India, by total surprise. It had made the Chinese incursions along the North bank of Pangong Tso irrelevant and unviable while giving Indian troops domination over the Maldo area, Spangur Gap, Pangong Tso and also created certain degree of vulnerability for the Xinjiang highway. Altogether, in many ways, it turned the tables on the Chinese and for once India retained the initiative in the sector. Although PLA continues to be in an advantageous position in the Depsang plains to the North, control over Kailash Range

makes India's overall position in the sector far more balanced than it has ever been after the 1962 war.

What can China do now? Evicting the seasoned Indian troops from the Kailash Range may not be an option. The rugged, treacherous, high altitude mountainous terrain imposes severe restrictions on employment of equipment and use of high tech gadgets and war fighting equipment. The single biggest asset under such conditions is human resource, the high altitude oriented, acclimatized, seasoned, experienced and motivated soldier. This is the asset that India cashed on to successfully counter the PLA. Rotation system of the Indian Army ensures that at any point in time, at least one third of all soldiers and officers of every combat unit of the army are high altitude trained and possess a high degree of high altitude experience and expertise. High altitude expertise does not come with training alone as it requires prolonged stay and exposure to the extreme weather and terrain conditions. India can rightfully boast of the best mountain troops in the world. This capability, combined with a highly

professional, combat oriented Air force and a Navy, which, either alone or with allies can cause considerable disruption to Chinese Shipping, makes the overall Indian position far stronger than something that China can run roughshod over.

It is also a fact that while its economy may be on very sound footing, the Chinese armed forces may not be so. The last successful battle it fought was in 1962 where the PLA was actually given a walkover except in isolated pockets. Thereafter, whether against the Indian Army in Nathula in 1987 or against the Vietnamese in 1979, PLA's record has been poor. Another major factor which is generally glossed over is the fact that the Chinese armed forces are in the midst of a prolonged transformation mode, transforming from a force structured, equipped, manned and trained to guard its borders to becoming a professional global military super power with focus on the oceans, space, cyber, power projection and acquiring out of area and expeditionary capabilities. A great deal of PLA's human expertise and experience in the mountains has been traded for acquiring a different set of skills while embarking on this journey of becoming a global super power, and at the moment, the PLA looks unsure of its capability to execute a classical offensive operations against any well entrenched adversary in the mountains. It is also a long way short of acquiring the status of a global super power with glaring voids in requisite leadership, experience, credible allies, and proven ability for coordinated action by globally dispersed forces. Further, some critics of PLA even say that for far too long the Chinese have focused

so much on 'winning wars without fighting', that they have forgotten the art of 'winning wars with fighting'. So, it is logical to conclude that the PLA, at present and for a few years down the line, would try to avoid any major armed conflict in the mountains and is not likely to go beyond uncontested actions such as grabbing unheld areas, posturing etc and may be in extreme need, resort to stand off strikes. The Indian armed forces and the Indian Army in particular, have caused the Chinese a dilemma for the time being. Through sheer professionalism and dedication, our soldiers and their commanders have effectively put a stop to the PLA's practice of unfettered rogue intrusions, imposed caution on PLA and secured much needed time for the country to fill our capability voids and be totally prepared. Indian soldiers have once again stood tall against all odds and done the country proud.

We must continue negotiations with China in real earnest without throwing away the strategic advantage that our troops have achieved through a magnificent tactical action, displaying thorough professionalism and herculean effort which called for extreme human endurance, dedication and sacrifice to occupy the treacherous Kailash Ranges and remain deployed there during winters.

We must remember that, with China, talks will only lead to more talks; they always make it appear as if resolution of the problem is within easy reach, while deliberately keeping the resolution elusive. China will also continue to woo our neighbours and foster very close ties with them and also spare no efforts to nurture strong anti India segments in India's



It is also obvious that China finds democratic countries like India a fertile ground to unleash its 'Three Warfares' strategy encompassing psychological, legal and media war fares.



neighboring countries.

China's strategy and approach against its adversaries is always multi dimensional and never restricted to Military or economic dimensions alone. This facet of the Chinese strategy is brought out clearly in the 2019 Annual Report of Department of Defence to the US Congress titled, 'Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China'. The report states "China harnesses academia and educational institutions, think tanks, and state run media to advance China's security interests. China's foreign influence activities are predominantly focused on establishing and maintaining power brokers within a foreign government to promote policies that China believes will facilitate China's rise, despite its stated position of not interfering in the internal affairs of foreign countries". It is also obvious that China finds democratic countries like India a fertile ground to unleash its 'Three Warfares' strategy encompassing psychological, legal and media war fares.

Authoritarian China has serious fragilities too which it is extremely sensitive to and fiercely hides. For far too long, purely for deriving economic benefits through trade relations, the World closed its eyes to the harsh, ruthless, undemocratic systems within China. This had given China a great deal of comfort and a moratorium from any interference or even criticism from the world community about its savage, autocratic systems, while at the same time en-joying a free hand to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. This must stop. India must join hands with other nations and exploit every fissure in the Chinese system, however small it may be, to make China feel the pain and look inward. China fears pro democratic ideas more than it fears any adversary. The time is ripe and opportunity begs for actions like supporting democratic ideas in Xinjiang, Tibet, Hong Kong and Inner Mongolia. People of Gilgit-Baltistan, on whom the CPEC has been thrust upon, must get support from India and the

world community to fight for their legitimate rights. Also, as the level of prosperity increases in China, its autocratic governance system is bound to prove inadequate to meet the ever increasing aspirations and demands of its huge population and related security challenges. Social media focus and propaganda efforts to exploit such opportunities must become an on-going process. We must explore and create options for ourselves. For a start, as China does not accept the existing borders of Tibet and considers Arunachal as South Tibet, India should have no hesitation in revoking its stance about Ti-bet's status and should go even one step further and link it with China's recognition of J&K.

The ease with which China can be made to feel threatened and the limit to which it can go to stifle even random, feeble individual criticism is exemplified in what it did to the Arsenal Soccer player Ozil, a German Muslim of Turkish origin who voiced concerns about

the Uigurs of Xinjiang. Arsenal promptly dropped him from the club at the behest of China!!The latest target of the all powerful Chinese Communist party is Jack Ma, the celebrity new generation business tycoon of China. China also feels easily threatened by religious faiths and religious institutions. China's fierce determination to appoint a person of its choice as the next Dalai Lama is a reflection of this fear. China also destroys churches and is the only exception where the Pope cannot appoint Bishops; the Communist Party of China appoints its own Bishops. In May 2020 China even went to the extent of removing Crosses from Churches in the country. Dragon has a weak underbelly which must be thoroughly exposed and exploited.

In the eventuality of an India-China war, the question will not be who wins, but whether India can impose a cost on China higher than what it would be prepared to pay for a perceived victory and that is

the capability India needs to focus on. With a long term adversary like China and the perpetual irritant Pakistan, we do not have the luxury of delaying or diluting our defence preparedness. It is also relevant to note that in the India-China scenario, the terrain dictates that conventional means of armed conflict will continue to retain its relevance, with the newer, emerging dimensions of modern war fare becoming 'add-ons' to conventional capability. Therefore, modern conventional military capability suited for the terrain will remain imperative for India. We also need to shift our main defence focus from the Western to the Northern borders. India needs credible tri services conventional capability combined with strong political resolve to deter China. The Indian navy and Air Force will be called upon to play crucial roles in any future India China conflict. The time has also come for forming appropriate military alliances. Rejuvenation of QUAD is a right step in this direction.

The game has only begun. We must learn our lessons fast. The respite our soldiers secured for the country against all odds, may, at best remain valid for a short term. The dragon may even look for desperate face saving actions as early as next summer. There is no option for India but to remain ever vigilant to-counter China. There should also be no doubt about the need to ensure adequate defence preparedness at all times and providing necessary wherewithal to our armed forces on priority. Above all, the nation must recognize the herculean efforts and dedication of the Indian Armed Forces and salute the Indian soldier. ■





The Chinese Knot! A reality check required, now!

The lack of viable security frameworks knitting the region – in structural and discursive terms - and the absence of any multilateral initiatives within the region to address common economic and security issues are glaring.

by RAVIPRASAD NARAYANAN*

INTRODUCTION

China has imprinted itself in the minds of most people for reasons very atypical – source of Covid-19, flippant approach to international norms, assiduous violator of copyrights, aggressive intent in projecting new found status as world’s second largest economy, and, untrammled expansion in defence spending leading to inchoate response

from the United States and its allies. All the above has allowed China to take advantage of India’s rather, lackadaisical approach to security in the region where it is geographically based.

South Asia has for long been a peripheral realm in geopolitics. This realm is now a vast theatre where *rahu* (China) and *ketu* (India) are jostling to alter the strategic-economic and

political landscape of the region. The rivalry between China and India - intermittent earlier, evolving into a constant now - in South Asia is a powerful realization for India, which has traditionally not asserted itself diplomatically, being apprehensive of marginalization in its own geographical realm by an external actor and determinant, China.

There are five arguments around

which this brief paper is based. They are:

Argument 1

To Beijing, it must appear that India presents the frame of being hostage to the very region it is located in with little room to manoeuvre.

Argument 2

China’s visible outflanking of India in South Asia has a strong geographical element to it, analogous to two latitudinal lines, with one being continental and the other, maritime.

Argument 3

Beijing’s imprimatur in South Asia reflects its growing interest in the region as a commercial highway and potential resource base that will benefit China’s “Go West” strategy.

Argument 4

Lack of foreign policy debates in domestic politics of India has not gone unnoticed by China, finding an opening, to encroach and quarantine India.

Argument 5

The bureaucratic institutional chasms in India are circumscribing any vision or plan advancing India’s strategic objectives.

Stasis in strategic terms

This article argues that a strategic conundrum prevails in South Asia, with India ‘remaining’ the central pillar and regional superpower – owing more to geography - while China is making strenuous efforts to off-balance India and emerge as the new strategic and economic fulcrum of the region. Trying to pinpoint the China-India rivalry in South Asia from a critical perspective, this brief article elaborates the shaping and emerging of this rivalry. For scholars working on South Asian security and



Trying to pinpoint the China-India rivalry in South Asia from a critical perspective, this brief article elaborates the shaping and emerging of this rivalry.



China-India relations, international relations and security studies is a realm where, South Asia is perhaps the most complex geographical and geopolitical entity after the Middle East. In contemporary security, no other region, encompasses such a multiplicity of extant issues reflecting almost every conceivable security conundrum, and worryingly, remains as neglected from academic scrutiny and theoretical interrogation.

What are these extant issues? Nuclear non-proliferation, terrorism, civil war(s), nationalism, ethnic separatism, religious fundamentalism, sectarianism, shoddy governance, stunted politics, impact of climate change, absence of health security etc. all make South Asia a fertile petri-dish where new problems emerge even before existing ones entirely reveal themselves.

The lack of viable security frameworks knitting the region – in structural and discursive terms - and the absence of any multilateral initiatives within the region to address common economic and

security issues are glaring. Existing multilateral initiatives or structures like the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) are convenient ‘talking shops’ for certain spectrums of governments in the region. Anodyne annual statements are released annually with only one aspect of agreement – where to hold next year’s summit! In the early years after independence, an attempt was made by Sri Lanka. The Colombo Plan¹ in its early years and later, never strived to stitch a security framework for the region – a lacunae most glaring today.

The interloper - China

China’s entry into South Asia as a potential strategic arbiter poses the inevitable question - whether the

¹The Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic and Social Development in Asia and the Pacific was conceived at the Commonwealth Conference on Foreign Affairs held in Colombo, Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon) in January 1950, and was launched on 1 July 1951 as a cooperative venture for the economic and social advancement of the peoples of South and Southeast Asia. See, The Colombo Plan. See <http://www.colombo-plan.org/index.php/about-cps/history/> Accessed and retrieved on 3 December 2020.

region can accommodate another ‘actor’ or opportunistically engage the new ‘actor’ to settle existing differences within the region and relegate the hitherto centripetal force of the region – India – to a lesser perch? Whatever the outcome of China’s increasing stakes in South Asia, the geo-politics and geo-economics of this volatile region are undergoing tectonic change, the contours of which appear hazy and worryingly, inchoate as of now.

A realist argument to be made is the growing importance of China to the region accompanied by a commensurate decline of India’s relative significance within the region. An introspective approach, makes it imperative, to situate ‘locales’ and explain hypotheses motivating this opinion. A visible China in Sri Lanka, witnesses Beijing’s influence increasing comprehensively in a

limited time frame, that comes at the expense of India, which is becoming marginalised. Why New Delhi did not accept Colombo’s offer of Hambantota is not mysterious at all! Hambantota would also provide China for ninety-nine years, according to contract signed, eyes and ears to monitor mercantile shipping lanes as also the Diego Garcia atoll, part of British Indian Ocean territory. The Diego Garcia atoll hosts United States, British, French and Australian troops and naval facilities since the Cold War years. That, we did not want to recognize reality, reveals a strange sense of strategic stupor. Realizing China’s success, India has tried hard (it seems!) to secure privileges China has secured, for Hambantota by wanting to initiate a dialogue with Sri Lanka regarding Trincomalee port, located on the interestingly named

China Bay! Colombo is wary for two primary reasons of permitting Indian ‘investments’ in Trincomalee. First, the spectacle of Sri Lanka becoming a pawn in China-India strategic games, and, second, to prevent Tamil population in northern Sri Lanka reviving its claims of ‘autonomy’ over a terrain where majority Sinhala’s are a minority with Tamil speakers and Muslims the majority. For New Delhi it reflects a shoddy policy making establishment where foreign policy mandarins and babus of New Delhi ignored China’s plans to dominate the Indian Ocean. China and foreign policy making on this country reveal a 1962 phobia in New Delhi, which is apparent to Beijing but smoke-screened by policy makers here.

The critical stance running through this opinion, hinges upon the links that emerge from a reading of contemporary literature. This

approach attempts to synthesize the empirical and the conceptual. Since the inherent complexities woven into any analysis on the intricacies and incidents in the region have a multi-textured and multi-layered perspective to it, this opinion makes an effort, not to restrict itself to current discourses, but rather seeks to highlight the inconsistencies that make New Delhi’s foreign policy lack gravitas. It seeks also to explain how policy has become hostage to the democratic shifts taking place within the country. China’s expanding influence in South Asia

and the gradual strategic/geopolitical reverse India faces in the region is an existential reality we cannot remain sanguine about. Staying the course of undertaking a critical academic evaluation of the topic, this paper aims to stimulate a debate on China in South Asia by subscribing to critical discourse analysis.²

The criticality in this opinion owes to Critical Theorists. Some of the most prominent figures of the first generation of Critical Theorists were, Max Horkheimer (1895-1973), Theodor Adorno (1903-1969), Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979), Walter Benjamin (1892-1940), Friedrich Pollock (1894-1970), Leo Lowenthal (1900-1993), and Eric Fromm (1900-1980). Since the 1970s, the second generation has been led by Jürgen Habermas who has greatly contributed to fostering the dialogue between the so called “continental” and “analytical” traditions.

I introduce ‘consistent criticality’ as an inescapable part of international relations (IR) and Area Studies, with the “complex, dynamic and constantly changing” environment making IR a critical arena for interpretive analyses.³ Intrinsic to the running theme of criticality in the paper is the adoption of ‘frame’ as a conceptual structure to facilitate the perceptions and analyses of a particular issue.

Since South Asia is to be seen as a ‘frame’, the geographical axis and dependent variable is India. Yet, if the region were to be seen in an expanded context - geographically – the ‘frame’ alters to become a ‘meta frame’ and accommodates a newer reality in the form of China as an extraneous/ control variable taking into account

contemporary developments at the strategic realm. Is it in our ‘interests’ to watch the ‘control variable’ evolve into becoming the ‘determinant’? No.

In other words, the “framing effects” focus “attention on specific dimensions (explanations) for understanding issues”⁴ and connections between issues begin to influence discourse. It is here that ‘norm entrepreneurs’ are able to ‘frame’ normative ideas that resonate with audiences, with ‘framing’ being an intrinsic part of successful persuasion.⁵ A ‘frame’ captures the particularities of a development at a moment amplifying the characteristics embedded within. The strategic processes of action and structural reflexes to consequent developments enhance the ‘framing’ of the issue providing a layered narrative – an approach that best captures the inter-linkages of security issues in South Asia.

‘Framing’ a geopolitical transition

Lay out the proposition, that were the China-India bilateral to be seen as a frame accommodating varying scenarios, it is palpable that

²Critical Discourse Analysis in the words of Jürgen Habermas describes critical discourse theory as characterized by three types of validity-claims raised by communicative acts: it is only when the conditions of truth, rightness and sincerity are raised by speech-acts that social coordination is obtained. The attraction for Critical theory increases as contemporary international politics anchored in statist forms does not accurately capture the diverse social forces and political challenges confronting human polity.

³Steven R. Mann “The Reaction to Chaos,” Ch.6 in *Complexity, Global Politics, and National Security* edited by David. S. Alberts and Thomas. J. Czerwinski (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University, 1997), p.62.

⁴Alex Mintz and Steven B. Redd, “Framing Effects in International Relations” *Synthese*, Vol.135, Issue 2, May 2003, p.193.

⁵Rodger A. Payne, “Persuasion, Frames and Norm Construction,” *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol.7, No.1, p.39.

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Tamil population in northern Sri Lanka reviving its claims of ‘autonomy’ over a terrain where majority Sinhala’s are a minority with Tamil speakers and Muslims the majority.

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New Delhi - Beijing Strained Ties



in the early part of their relationship, their respective foreign policies had overt characterizations shaded with an ideological lens.

For India, freed from the yoke of colonialism, the world order presented a challenge – existential, structural and discursive – with the presence of a Western bloc led by the United States and a military alliance exemplified by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO),⁶ and an Eastern bloc led by the Soviet Union, comprising satellite states from Eastern Europe in an alliance called the “Warsaw Pact.” Resisting the urge to join either bloc and calculating that its priorities of domestic development necessitated not participating in either, India opted for a policy of “non-alignment” which became a pulpit from which declamations could be made about the polarized world order in the post-

World War II setting.⁷

Undoubtedly, for any well-informed strategic analyst in Beijing, India looms large in South Asia dwarfing the region by its sheer geographical size, centrality in historical, political, economic, sociological and cultural terms. At the policy level, however a dichotomy appears with Beijing reflexively inclined to dismiss and even degrade India as a ‘regional power’—as it does often— and spare no effort in keeping India to the margins of forums like the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the East Asian Community (EAC) in Asia and other multilateral groupings bringing Asian countries together.

Independent of China’s attempts to degrade India a notch by parsing it a regional power is the recognition that India is indeed a presence in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). China’s outreach into the IOR is

not (italics mine) going to be a smooth affair with the Indian navy rapidly taking counter measures to ensure that Beijing does not succeed to marginalize New Delhi in its maritime domain. Apart from its publicized aim of equipping itself with three fleets and attaining second strike capability, the Indian navy has the flexibility to partner and cooperate with other powerful actors’ navies from time to time – an option that China does not have as yet.

The effort taken by India to make the Quadrilateral a dynamic grouping has followed the nearly year old Depsang Plains and

⁶Comprising 28 members from North America and Europe (including Turkey), the NATO as an inter-governmental military alliance came into being with the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty on 4 April 1949.

⁷See Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, “India’s Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Affairs (New York)*, Vol. 34, No.3, April 1956.

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Since South Asia is to be seen as a ‘frame’, the geographical axis and dependent variable is India.

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Galwan transgressions by China in a calculated manner. Ambush on our soldiers was pre-planned, making our retribution on the Chinese something unexpected to Beijing. The Quadrilateral, mentioned before, is largely a maritime riposte to China’s naval expansion and repeated violations of the United Nations Convention for the Law

of the Sea (UNCLOS). With time and concerted strategies, China can be restrained, but not constrained, as its parallel architecture exists on many fronts – financial, with the New Development Bank(NDB) and Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB); strategic economic with the Belt Road Initiative (BRI); and maritime strategic with the Maritime

IAF Jaguar at Ladak



Silk Road Initiative (MSRI). The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is another of China’s multilateral inducements, cocking a snook at western multilateral financial and strategic cooperation initiatives of long standing.

Conclusion

With the strategic considerations described above playing an influential role in China-India relations, India needs to adhere itself to several fundamental shibboleths. First, make foreign policy-strategic planning a larger frame where participants are from all spectrums of the vast population, and not just file pushers and seminar veterans based in the capital. Second, since multilateral institutions like SAARC are defunct, lay weightage to bilateral over the multilateral. Third, permit decision making to be dynamic with internal reciprocity where national interests are paramount over institutional self-delusion, turf battles and personality-based decisions. The more or less defunct Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was a ‘personalities’ project of three leaders in the post second world war phase – Gamal Abdel Nasser (Egypt), Josip Broz Tito (Yugoslavia) and Jawaharlal Nehru (India). History has relegated them to being mere citations. We should not repeat this again, although it is said ‘history repeats itself.’ ■

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Can we take on China?

It was dark and only the icy mountains and the freezing Galwan river were witnesses to the gallantry of the hundreds of intrepid fighters who fought to rout the PLA.

by LT GEN PG KAMATH (VETERAN)

I WAS nine years old when the Sino-Indian Conflict of 1962 was fought. My late father had told me then—perhaps incorrectly—that China and India were fighting for Tibet, a country wedged between them. However, the truth was that China had invaded Tibet as early as in 1950 and India had supinely acquiesced to the flagrant annexation of a free country. Other than making placatory and perfunctory protests, India did nothing when Tibet sought our help. On the contrary, we helped China by forestalling a discussion on the ‘Invasion of Tibet’ sponsored by El Salvador in the UNGA in Dec 1950 with an assurance to the world that India and Britain will resolve the issue

peacefully. China got away with the annexation of a free country without even international reprimand, let alone the use of force by the international community under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

Thereafter, there was an unending series of capitulations to China by Nehruvi an India. India formally accepted Tibet was a part of China in the Agreement on Trade and Intercourse in April 1954, downsized the Indian Mission in Lhasa accredited to Tibet to a Consulate, then accredited it to China, abnegated our trade privileges in Tibet at Yatung, Gyantse and Gartok and dismantled our telecommunication facilities in

Tibet. India also rejected a seat as a Permanent Member of the Security Council by stating that China deserves to be at the top table. India also did not raise a finger in March 1959 when Tibet rose in revolt and China slaughtered 87,000 Tibetans forcing HH Dalai Lama to flee to India. The people’s chagrin against China was so high that the Indian Government had no option but to give political asylum to HH and his followers.

When the UNGA discussed the violation of fundamental human

rights by China in Tibet in December 1961, India still reeling from its self-inflicted submissive spell, abstained from voting against China, thereby technically condoning the genocide. Can you believe it? These are all bare facts and not subject to any other interpretation except corroborating our abject surrender to China. Our track record in dealing with China had been abysmal even before our defeat in the 1962 war. Hereafter, it was complete capitulation to China. The Nehruvian docility towards China is so ingrained in the Ministry

of External Affairs that even after all these decades a minister like S. Jaishankar has not been able to release himself totally from this bind.

Our inability to name China even after its intrusion in Depsang, Galwan, Gogra and Northern Bank of Pangong Tso is a case in point to show our uncalled-for civility and deference to that country. Even when Secretary of State of the US Mike Pompeo offered help and was castigating China for its expansionism in South China Sea, East China Sea and Himalayas, we did not call out

China for its blatant occupation of our territory. Such an approach can only be called the ‘Nehruvian China Phobia’.

So why does our MEA behave with such timidity towards China? The primary reason is that they do not have confidence in the Indian Armed Forces. Our diplomats are not formally trained in strategy and have no idea about the country’s armed forces. They have no idea how to balance out the nation’s ‘ends, means and ways’ by using the instruments of national power to achieve national



At 14,000 ft

goals. What does it involve? How do we achieve them in the short, middle and long terms? In each geopolitical area, how do our national goals manifest into sub-goals and sub-sub-goals? How do we achieve them in phases? What are the resources available and how do we muster and utilise them to achieve our aims? Obviously, most will draw a blank.

Secondly, the adage that ‘war starts when diplomacy fails’, though correct, has been taken too seriously by our diplomats. They would rather surrender and cede territory to show that they have succeeded in averting war. Since independence India has lost 78,114 sq. kms to Pakistan and 37,555 sq. kms to China, thanks to our spooked diplomats. We also lost Tibet as a buffer zone between China and India. Diplomacy without the backing of military and economic power is akin to prostrating before an aggressor to avoid war.

What was lacking with Prime Ministers in the past was the lack of political will. When Nehru became the PM there was only one political leader who was able to correctly sense the intentions of China. Sardar Patel’s clairvoyance and prescience of China’s intentions are unfolding to this day. His last letter on 7 November, 1950 addressed to Nehru giving out his assessment of the situation on the Sino-Indian Frontier and future relations shows his deep understanding of the Chinese mind. The letter is a testimony to his vision. Unfortunately, Nehru was too naïve to understand the enigmatic Chinese. By the time he realised it, it was too late and India faced a crippling military defeat. Nehru died soon after, a broken man with shattered dreams.



When Nehru became the PM there was only one political leader who was able to correctly sense the intentions of China.



Even during the Indo-Pak War of 1965, China was browbeating India by amassing troops on the Sino-Indian Border and giving ultimatums to India. Again in 1967, the PLA tried to prevent our troops from laying a fence on the crest line at Nathula and Chola. Chinese opened heavy fire on our troops who were in the open and killed and wounded scores of them. The Chinese had expected Indians would be cowed down by the heavy losses. However, General Sagat Singh launched a massive retaliation, the likes of which the Chinese would never forget. More than 300 Chinese troops were killed and China learnt a lesson of a lifetime: never to take India for granted.

Can we take on China is a question that is repeatedly asked? We have already taken on China more than half a century ago and it is not a conjecture anymore. Again, in 1986-87 the Chinese intruded into Sumdorong Chu Valley in Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh. India launched ‘Operation Falcon’ and a brigade was moved by helicopter on the Hatungla Ridge

which compromised the Chinese position. In conjunction, ‘Operation Chequerboard’ was also launched to test the defences of India’s Eastern Command. India’s resolve in defending its borders was made more than evident to the Chinese.

Yet another intrusion happened in Dokalam Plateau in 2017. The entire dispute is on the location of the trijunction between India, China and Bhutan. China lays claim to Gyomchen as the Trijunction. It presupposes extending the Southern tip of Chumbi Valley from Batangla to Gyomchen by occupying Dokalam Plateau. India and Bhutan always considered the Trijunction to be at Batangla. China was forcibly trying to have its way and started construction of road from Batangla to Gyomchen through the Dokalam Plateau which is an integral part of Bhutan.

The extension of Chumbi Valley from Batangla to Gyomchen has grave adverse strategic implications for India. China has been trying to decrease the crow flight distance to the strategically vulnerable Siliguri Corridor which is the only vital land link to North East India. Left with

no option India had to intervene and block construction of the road from Batangla. A standoff for 73 days enabled India to stop the road construction in that particular area. It was no doubt a vindication of our willingness to take a stand against China when our national interests are at stake, but it was a pyrrhic victory. China went ahead and captured the rest of Dokalam Plateau from Bhutan. However, we did not live up to the expectations of Bhutan with whom we are bound by the Treaty of 2007. Under the Art 2 of the treaty, the two countries had agreed that they would not allow the use of each other’s territory for activities harmful to the national security and interests of the other. Bhutan on its part did not invoke the provisions of the treaty as it would have spurred a war

between two behemoths and possibly Bhutan could lose out in the end.

It is a fact of history, when a country gets intoxicated by power, it loses its grip on reality. China had forcibly occupied the South China Sea disregarding the claims of the other five peripheral countries. It is also launching sallies in the East China Sea to browbeat Japan for the island of Senkaku. With its air and sea intrusions, China is intimidating Taiwan. They have invoked illegal Security Laws in Hong Kong in contravention to the Anglo-China Agreement of 1984. Drunk by success, China believes that it is time to take on India and occupy the disputed territories by use of force and unilaterally change the LAC to its advantage.

The opportune time was

when the world was reeling from the Pandemic and countries were grappling to get it under control. What could be a better time than in May 2020? By executing a well-planned manoeuvre China occupied the disputed parts of Eastern Ladakh at Depsang, Gogra, Galwan and Fingers 8 to 4 on the Northern banks of Pangong Tso. This was in complete disregard to the five agreements between India and China from 1993 to 2013, where they mutually agreed to maintain peace and tranquillity and enhance CBMs on the LAC.

No doubt the Indian Army was initially taken by surprise. Protest notes were sent and flag meetings were held and China stuck to its age-old tactics of delay, mediate, raise doubts, clarify, raise observations, re-raise doubts and delay to ultimately



enforce the legitimacy to its new intrusions. Thereafter, India would be presented with a fait accompli to accept the new LAC. It is the same subterfuge that China had done in the South China Sea.

Chinese military commanders and political leaders were indeed gloating over their successful occupation of the disputed territory. PLA was smug and did not foresee any violent reactions from Indians. India with forbearance tried to reason out with the Chinese. A series of senior commanders' meetings were held from 6 June 2020 onwards. On the night of 15 June 2020, the Galwan clash took place. The

opposing troops fought a medieval battle with stones, brickbats, spiked clubs, iron pegs and knives like 'kripan' and 'dha' the whole night on the icy heights with many falling into the freezing Galwan River. The US intelligence has now confirmed that the Galwan Clash was well planned by PLA to intimidate India. However, it backfired. It vindicated the fighting prowess of our troops and more importantly, demonstrated how the institution of the 'Commanding Officer' has been well preserved in the Indian Army. The martyrdom of the CO triggered an enraged battalion leading to a ferocious assault on the PLA in their camps. The PLA troops

were taken completely by surprise.

It was dark and only the icy mountains and the freezing Galwan river were witnesses to the gallantry of the hundreds of intrepid fighters who fought to rout the PLA. Indians lost a CO and 19 soldiers. Chinese casualties have been estimated between 35 and 103. This conflict has no doubt raised doubts in the minds of the Chinese military and political leadership about the fighting efficacy of their men. It also put them in a bit of quandary vis-a-vis an exit strategy from this self-created impasse. However, as the days rolled into weeks and weeks into months it was clear that China was strategically

procrastinating to lend permanency to its occupation.

Then the Indian Army came up with the most unexpected manoeuvre on the night of 29/30 August 2020. It beat the PLA in its own game by occupying the Southern Heights of Pangong Tso from Thakung to Rechinla. The entire Kailash Range with over 13 formidable heights were in the hands of the Indian Army. It dominated the Spangur Gap, Moldo Chinese Camp and all areas to its North. India now had a tactically secure base in case it decided to launch an offensive to capture a part of Aksai Chin and could also threaten the Tibet-Xinjiang Western Highway (G-219). It was the bitterest pill for the Chinese to swallow. From here onwards the meetings have been focused on getting India evicted from these heights. Eight rounds of senior commanders' meetings have been held and both are not relenting. The nation is worried as to whether we will succumb to Chinese pressure and vacate the strategic heights that we have occupied. India has put China on the backfoot. Undoubtedly, the harsh winter will take its toll on our troops. However, these are necessary risks and sacrifices that a country has to make to ensure the integrity and sovereignty of our country.

We should never underestimate our adversaries. China's intrusions were planned. Probably, they had not anticipated our reactions having been used to our historically placid responses. There is no doubt China will have to come up with an exit strategy. On our part, we have neglected the Indian Armed Forces for the past seven decades. It is high time the Indian Government realises its past follies and allocate adequate

defence budgets.

India can take on China even today. Indian troops are well trained in high altitude warfare and are highly motivated. All that I ask is that the Government should develop the necessary political will. A comprehensive 'National Security Strategy' has to be formed laying down the year-wise build-up of our capabilities to fight a 'Two-Front War for Ninety Days Duration'. We need to build thermonuclear weapons and induct Agni VI with MIRV capabilities. The Triad that India has built has to be refined. We should build a 'Four Carrier-based Task Forces' to dominate the Northern Indian Ocean and interdict all access from the Pacific Ocean. Our Air Force has to be built to 52 squadrons to meet the two front threats; anything less is a compromise. The Indian Army is lacking in its basic weapons. Some hurried procurement of Sig Sauer SIG716 7.62x51 is being done from the US and Russian AK-203 rifle manufacture is still deadlocked over the price. The list is endless. However, unless we plan, we will not be even aware of our defence

requirements.

Lastly, never forget to take care of the 'man behind the gun'. This aspect is being neglected by the government due to an absolute lack of strategic vision and inability to comprehend the nuances in handling Armed Forces. Please do not take the Armed Forces for granted. In this context, it is relevant to mention the observations of the Delhi High Court: "Members of the armed forces, who take the oath of laying down their lives for the country, deserve special treatment and are not to be harassed unnecessarily and made ping pong of by being sent from one forum of adjudication to another". They need to be nourished, sustained and inspired. There is no time to waste. The nation should know that China is just waiting for an opportunity to launch an offensive to put us in our place. It is smarting with rage to avenge our bold manoeuvre. Its forces are fully arrayed in Tibet. We can certainly take on China. However, if we fail to plan then we plan to fail. ■

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The nation is worried as to whether we will succumb to Chinese pressure and vacate the strategic heights that we have occupied.

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Mobilization at 14,000 ft



“DISABILITIES & IMPAIRMENTS”

ONLY TIME reveals what is valuable and enduring. Thirty-four Years ago, two far sighted academics launched this journal in 1987. The journal's core philosophy also predated today's concept of Atmanirbhar or self-reliance. The very fact that this journal was produced, composed in India with domestic content for an Indian audience was in itself a demonstrator or the self-reliant approach, aimed at highlighting the multifarious aspects of disabilities and impairments in India as well as its emerging challenges. Today, disabilities and impairments have become a key focus of public policy and health management. Yet, thirty-four years ago, it was a topic barely discussed in policy circles. Our journal can proudly say it helped bring about this momentous change in attitudes, policy and implementation. Over the years, the journal has successfully created a professional platform providing functional information and aligning research work with grassroots level implementation of policies geared to redress the conditions of impairments and disabilities. The Journal's other achievements include publishing over 600 internationally and nationally acclaimed research papers. It is also the only Indian Journal which has undertaken outreach project with Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment with a strategic tie-up with the Indian Armed Forces, under Government mission 'Ability Beyond Disability' in the country's under-served and border regions. Mission objective, prompted by larger societal responsibility, is to assist the most downtrodden



sections of our society viz. “Persons with Disabilities”. This strategic and innovative modalities immensely aids the task of connecting rehabilitation professionals with those in need with delivery of services at their door step level and strengthens the process of social reforms and helps to integrate border people with mainstream India thus fulfilling a vital national security objective. This work has been duly acknowledged in various quarters and has received a great outpouring of genuine appreciation. The government of India's Niti Ayog has substantiated the achievements as an example of sterling professional performance.

In underscoring the trending societal challenges the Journal in its section incorporated “Behind The Headlines” and shares accounts of success stories not covered in the news. It is the only Journal that has initiated reporting of the success stories of ordinary differently abled citizens, paraplegic soldiers and converted adversaries to possibilities, setback into opportunities with people participations. Their success stories highlights the responsibility of all citizens towards the state apparatus, community at large to strengthen the process of inclusive Nation Building.

The Journal of Disabilities & Impairment is oldest Indian Journal Estd 1987 bearing ISSN (Print)0970356X&ISSN (online)2582-2047 with Registration Number RN/507028/87. Web Site. www.disabilitiesimpairments.in Email: disabilitiesimpairments@gmail.com drroopavohra@gmail.com

Behind The Headlines

Restoring The Dignity

IN UNDERSCORING current societal challenges, “BEHIND THE HEADLINES” shares accounts of success stories not covered in the news. It provides a deeper understanding of the real-life experiences faced by disabled soldiers of Indian Armed Forces and ordinary citizens with disabilities. It is the only Journal that has initiated reporting of the success stories of citizens with disabilities. They are talented youth from rural backgrounds who became physically challenged while serving the motherland or due to accidents. They have defeated all



People influence the environment & communities within which we exist & ultimately 'People Matter Result Count'.



odds to convert their setback into opportunities while facing uncertainties & conflicting policies of state. Their success highlights the responsibility of all citizens in strengthening the state apparatus to empower one and all. Technological advancement in communication and information connects us worldwide, it discloses innumerable common citizens' deep sense of responsibility, true commitment and selfless "Soldierly Deeds" which has fetched a new dawn and rekindled hope into the lives of people-citizens with positive change on the mindset. Since development is a shared goal & in this era of close connectivity, every person holding some piece of information with experience and aligning the same with the ground level actions can bring transformation making inclusive growth a reality and a cognizant society. The ultimate message is "Inclusive Nation Building."

Empowered citizen strengthen the community conscious that further strengthen the governance. It enhance people participations that yield inclusive development. People influence the environment & communities within which we exist & ultimately 'People Matter Result Count'. Information and Knowledge shape the implementing process in addressing the social obligation and restoring the dignity of differently abled persons. More the information-



intelligence in itself goes a long way to articulate the strategies in number of ways to structure the essence of sustainable inclusive development.

Ms Ishrat Akhtar born in 1997 at small village Bangdara of District Baramulla; Kashmir. A meritorious student with outstanding abilities of sports & outdoor activities. She lost her mother in 2008 when she is 10 year old and on 24th Aug 2016 she met with ill fated accident and become paraplegic, thereafter her activities confined with Wheel Chair. Her Quest To Excel & Empowerment is the driving force to convert **Adversaries to Possibilities**. She acknowledges unconditional support of voluntary Medicare Society-Bemina [Srinagar] along with community participation in most difficult initial stages after she become paraplegic. She is member of Indian Wheel Chair basketball Team for Asia Oceana Wheel Chair basketball championship after her outstanding performance at the two consecutive National Level Wheel Chair basketball championships. She admired & acknowledge the praise worthy efforts of Indian Army & J & K Police forces deployed in Kashmir for providing all requisite support to enabled her to travel from her home town village Bangdara of District Baramulla Kashmir to Chennai to participate for the national level championship which is stepping stone to be the member of Indian Team. She is brand ambassador of District Baramulla for the Government '**Beti Bachao Beti Parao**' National Flagship Mission. ■

REAL HEROS



Indian Wheel Chair Basketball Team For Asian Oceana Championship & Para Olympic Qualifying Held In PATTAYA Thailand (27 Nov 2019 To 07 Dec 2019).





SALUTE THE SOLDIER

"Soldiers are our nations family members, neighbors and friends protecting our liberties and freedom."

Views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author's alone and do not reflect the official views of the Indian Army.