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Afghanistan Post 2014: The Pashtun Factor

Wagah Attack: Reviving Terrorism

India's Act East Policy

US Rebalance to Asia: An Assessment

and many more

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Editor's Note

With repeated ceasefire violations by Pakistan, increased incursions along the India-China border and the urgent need to enhance India's military capabilities in consonance with its growing stature as a global power, the nation has been looking forward to the appointment of a competent and fully devoted Defence Minister to take up the challenges.

In his latest cabinet expansion cum reshuffle, Prime Minister Narendra Modi appropriately responded to this sentiment and assigned this onerous task to Manohar Parrikar, a highly qualified technocrat with impeccable integrity and administrative experience as the Chief Minister of Goa. Parrikar is not only acclaimed for his honesty but also his ability to take bold and fast decisions on critical issues.

In his first interaction with the media back in his home state, Parrikar, equally reputed for his plain speaking, aptly observed that most of the defence deals executed during the previous regime had got "stuck" due to lobbying, vested interest and kickbacks involved. He also underlined the need to remove procedural bottlenecks to ensure that the procurement process is not affected.

With a full-fledged Defence Minister at the helm of affairs, one sincerely hopes that issues such as procurement and indigenization, critical to further enhancing the capability of our armed forces as they face manifold challenges, would be taken up on a priority basis.

In this issue, Ambassador Prabhat Shukla looks at the Pashtun Factor in the Afghanistan Post-2014 scenario while eminent civil servant M N Buch critically analyses the Swachh Bharat campaign and suggests concrete measures to make it more effective.

Dr Dilip K Chakrabarti cautions us on the ever growing foreign archaeological collaborations. There are equally interesting and informative articles on a host of critical issues confronting the nation. We hope you enjoy this edition.

K G Suresh

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Afghanistan Post-2014: the Pashtun Factor

- *Prabhat P. Shukla**

There is an effort among some western commentaries – taken up and amplified by the Pakistanis - to try and project the situation in Afghanistan as a proxy war between India and Pakistan. The drumbeat of this thesis grows as the draw-down of western forces from Afghanistan draws near. Such a view sounds strange to Indian ears, for we were labouring under the belief this last decade that it was a straight, though covert, fight between the US and Pakistan.

And that is how, moreover, people like Negroponte and Mullen projected it too – and you would expect them to know. However, it is important to understand the reality of what is happening in Afghanistan, and for that, the narrative must begin some decades back.

To anticipate the conclusions of this essay: one, the fight is not between India and Pakistan. Ever since 1947, India has kept out of Afghan-Pakistan affairs, and

Afghanistan has kept out of Indo-Pakistan affairs.

Two, the fight is between Afghanistan and Pakistan, and has its own logic, going back to the dispute over the Pashtun issue, with Baluchistan also steadily in focus. It has acquired an additional facet in recent years, since Afghanistan has no interest in becoming any other country's "strategic depth" – indeed, deeply resents the idea, and rejects the Pakistani military push behind the concept.

Three, Afghanistan has become a battleground indeed, between Pakistan [aided occasionally by outside powers] on the one hand, and the USSR, the US, and Afghan nationalism by turns.

And four, and most important, there is a coded message behind this analysis. The message is that Pakistan is going to continue to meddle in Afghan affairs, and seek once more to inject the Taliban, in their newest iteration, into Afghanistan, and no one should

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oppose this. India is simply shorthand for the fact that all the neighbours of Afghanistan – Iran, the Central Asians, and countries like India and Russia – are concerned at the ceaseless sponsorship of terror and extreme groups by Pakistan. If they oppose Pakistan, that becomes a proxy war.

The Afghans themselves want none of this Pakistani interference, but that is also conveniently skipped over. The truth is, if Pakistan does not promote the extremist Islamic groups, there will be no push-back from the Afghans or anybody else; it is entirely

emblematic that in all this lofty talk about avoiding a proxy war, the Pakistanis refrain from mentioning anything about their solemn, repeated – and repeatedly broken – promises of non-interference.

The history of the face-off is well-known: Afghanistan never accepted the Durand Line which divided Pashtun from Pashtun, and this was made clear to the

British authorities from the 1920's onwards. By 1944, when it was clear that the British were to withdraw from India, the Kabul authorities asked the British Government in London to allow the Pashtuns in British India to choose to accede to Afghanistan or opt for independence as well; instead, they were only given the choice to accede to India or Pakistan. The number of registered voters was a fraction of

The number of registered voters was a fraction of the total population, and even among them, the support for accession to Pakistan was barely above 50 percent. The hill tribes, who are in the centre of the fighting today, were not allowed to vote because they were not considered part of the administered territories.

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were not considered part of the administered territories.

Pakistan showed its militant colours within a few months of its independence – it sent “raiders” in September 1947 to the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir [violating the stand-still agreement it had signed earlier with the state] from the Pashtun areas. Already, as early as 1947,

Pakistan was seeking to portray this operation as an Islamic campaign, a *jihad*. Afghanistan was opposed to the use of the Pashtun tribes for this purpose, and the Afghan *ulema* responded with a *fatwa* denying that there was any need for a *jihad* against the Indians and denying any religious sanction for the campaign. This was done in the context of preventing Pakistan from exercising influence over the mountain tribes in the North-West Frontier Province, which was not Pakistani territory in their eyes.

The subsequent two decades saw frequent tensions over the Pashtun question between the two countries, and even saw a limited skirmish in 1963. As a result of this last, King Zahir Shah dismissed his Prime Minister and cousin, Mohammed Daoud Khan. In turn, Daoud overthrew the King a decade later in 1973, and thus began a new era in South Asian history – not only because it ended the Durrani monarchy, but also because it saw the first formal launch of *jihad* in the subcontinent.

This happened in the summer of 1973 itself, and it was declared by Jalaluddin Haqqani – of the now-famous Haqqani network - against the government of Daoud, which

had taken a high-profile position on the Pashtun question. The call to *jihad* was given practical shape by a Pakistani, Naseerullah Babar, himself a Pashtun, who was then serving as the Inspector-General of the Frontier Corps. It was he who advised Zulfikar Ali Bhutto that the solution to the Pashtun problem lay in overwhelming Afghan irredentism by using the Islamic card. He sprang some of the important Islamic leaders from Kabul, whose names read like a who's who of the anti-Soviet war of the 1980's: Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Burhanuddin Rabbani, Ahmed Shah Massoud, Noor Mohammed Mohammedi, and others. At this stage, the Islamists were not all Pashtuns – the heavy reliance particularly on Ghilzai Pashtuns was to come later, under Gen Zia-ul-Haq. But the idea of using Islam as a weapon to blunt the Pashtun nationalist issue both internally and vis-à-vis Afghanistan was born at this time. In part, this was based on Pakistan's use of the Islamic card to motivate the tribes in the north-west; in part, it was based on the experience of 1971 in the former East Pakistan, when the Islamists had remained loyal to Pakistan, while the Bengali nationalists

were motivated by their regional identity.

This group launched an uprising against Daoud centred in Panjsher in 1975, though it covered other parts of the country too. Daoud was shaken by the event, and gradually began to re-think his strategy towards Pakistan, including on the Durand Line. In his interaction with the Americans, he indicated a willingness to seek an accommodation with Pakistan. The Shah of Iran, flush with petrodollars and as suspicious of the Soviet Union as Bhutto and the Americans, also helped by offering economic assistance to both Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The only fly in the ointment was Daoud's fear that the USSR would seek to destabilise him if he tried to change course. In a long and serious conversation with Secretary of State Kissinger in Kabul in August 1976, he informed the latter that he and Bhutto were close to a settlement of the Pashtun and Baluch questions. The only guarantee he asked for – and was assured of by Kissinger – was support against

internal subversion by the supporters of the Soviet Union, especially the Soviet-trained officers in the Armed Forces. A quick exchange of visits took place between Bhutto and Daoud in 1976, and there was indeed every prospect of a settlement.

Before a deal could be settled, Bhutto called for elections in 1977 and, in the turmoil that followed the rigged elections, the Pakistan Army stepped in once again, in July 1977, and Gen Zia became the military ruler. Although he seemed to be inclined to pick up the threads where they had been left off by Bhutto, he did not have the time to do anything substantive: Daoud himself was overthrown in April 1978, and the US guarantees proved unavailing.

The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan [PDPA], which came to power, was indeed propelled into power by Soviet-trained officers from the Armed Forces, and once again raised the Pashtun issue as a high priority. And once again, Pakistan responded by unleashing the Islamic forces – this time with a heavy reliance on the Pashtuns, and the Ghilzai

The Shah of Iran, flush with petrodollars and as suspicious of the Soviet Union as Bhutto and the Americans, also helped by offering economic assistance to both Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Pashtuns in particular. The USSR responded to the worsening situation in Afghanistan by sending in its own troops into the country in December 1979, and a new Afghan war began, pitting the Soviet forces against pretty much all the regional and global powers.

Through the 1980's, the Pakistanis controlled and guided the anti-Soviet campaign. It was one of the conditions that they imposed on the Americans that the ISI would control the funds, arms and training of the insurgents. This is worth analysing in substantive terms, because it showed that the Pakistanis were clear that the ultimate winners would have to be beholden to them and to no one else, not even the Americans. Further, because they had suffered bad relations with the Durrani Pashtuns – Zahir Shah and Daoud were both Durrani, as were the earlier Kings since Abdur Rehman signed the first agreement on the Durand Line – they were determined to do their utmost to block the emergence of any Durrani to power in Kabul.

An interesting incident illustrates this Pakistani attitude of mind: in March 1979, before the Soviet invasion, a group led by Gul Mohammed, a Barakzai [a Durrani] had made significant

progress against the PDPA forces in Herat. The Soviets and the Afghan Army hit back with ferocity against the fall of Herat, and the rebels turned to Pakistan for help, but were rebuffed. Pakistan was building up the Ghilzai to oppose the Soviets, and almost the entire top leadership of the Seven Party Alliance belonged to this branch of the Pashtuns.

Shortly before he died in August 1988 in a plane crash, Gen Zia stated that Pakistan had earned the right to have a friendly government in Kabul. "We won't permit it to be like it was before, with Indian and Soviet influence there and claims to our territory." This was said as the Geneva accords were being worked out, and reflected one of the most important motivations behind the Pakistani strategies towards Afghanistan. No longer would Pakistan permit, to the extent possible, any claims on its Pashtun lands by the rulers in Kabul.

This approach survived Zia; in fact, it reflects the current national consensus, public demurrals notwithstanding. Naturally, therefore, as early as 1989, Pakistan made its bid to capture power and pushed Hikmatyar into a pitched battle in

Jalalabad. The widely-held expectation, and not just in Pakistan, was that the Najibullah government would crumble, but it fought off the Hizb forces of Hikmatyar. In retrospect, this was not surprising, because Hikmatyar's record during the 1980's was quite patchy, whereas the PDPA forces were well-trained and -equipped. The Soviet Union had also continued to provide financial aid amounting to \$3 billion annually to Najibullah even after 1989, and it was only after the collapse of the USSR and the rise of Yeltsin as Russian President that the financial aid was stopped. Within three months of this, Najibullah was gone.

Even then, the replacement was not the kind of government that Pakistan would be satisfied with, for the two pillars of the new regime were Massoud and Dostum. Both had stayed away from Pakistan during the war against the Soviets, so neither was beholden to Pakistan in any way. Moreover, neither was a Pashtun,

and this too was unacceptable to the Pakistani leaders, especially to the security establishment.

The story of the rise of the Taliban from 1994 onwards is well-known, and the only point worth emphasizing is the role of the self-same Naseerullah Babar, now the Interior Minister under Benazir Bhutto. It was he who put together the Taliban force in 1994,

The aim at this stage was to have a swathe of territory under their control which would allow Pakistan, in cooperation with the Central Asian hydrocarbon-rich countries, to set up trading links with the rest of the world. A US hydrocarbon company, Unocal, also contributed to this effort. The strategic objective was to block Iran and Russia from any role in this trade.

with the intention of capturing the western parts of Afghanistan. The aim at this stage was to have a swathe of territory under their control which would allow Pakistan, in cooperation with the Central Asian hydrocarbon-rich countries, to set up trading links with

the rest of the world. A US hydrocarbon company, Unocal, also contributed to this effort. The strategic objective was to block Iran and Russia from any role in this trade. This was despite the fact that, as far as Russia was concerned, all the existing pipelines ran through Russia or Russian-controlled territory. This was also despite the fact that,

apart from Russia, Iran was the most economical route for evacuating the oil and gas from Central Asia.

What we see thus is that the stakes in Afghanistan have changed since the days of the Soviet occupation. For the US, it was initially the need to beat back the Soviet Union, and to undermine the unity of that country, and they succeeded in their strategy. For this purpose, they were willing to use the obscurantist forces that Pakistan had nurtured, even though they were aware that at least some of them were anti-West and specifically anti-US as well. But they felt then that they could control the fallout, especially with a friendly Pakistan to keep things under control. The Chinese feel the same way today, and are comfortable seeing the US humiliated in Afghanistan.

However, by the 1990's, with the destruction of the USSR complete, the stakes had changed, and the US strategy was to impose a double blockade for trade and strategic purposes – against Russia and Iran. This was conceived and driven by the US, and embraced willingly by Pakistan in the South and Central Asian regions. It is worth

emphasising that India had virtually no role in any of this. Its hands were full dealing with internal security issues, the need for ensuring economic growth, and later, addressing the diplomatic fallout of its nuclear tests.

India got involved only after the rise of the Taliban and the fall of Kabul, and in this it was not alone; this was an issue that touched nearly every country both in the region, and in the wider world. It is worth emphasising one important aspect of the militant movements in what has now come to be called the AfPak region: this is the growth of extremism, from generation to generation. The Taliban of the 1990's made the *mujahideen* of the Rabbani-Mujaddidi type look reasonable. The TTP and the other militant groups of today have similarly outflanked the Afghan Taliban and are making the Quetta Shura look comparatively weak and peaceable. And now we have the ISIL. This point is worth exploring in some detail.

The current militant movement is more ideologically motivated than any of the earlier groups. The growth of this new ideology has been well-documented, and it is recognised as the fastest-growing among all the competing terrorist

threats in the world. Their belief, which is widespread in several Muslim countries, especially Pakistan, derives from the *Hadith* regarding end-times. According to this, the war in Afghanistan is the prophesied Battle for Khorasan, and of course, they believe that their armies will be victorious. This Battle will embrace not just today's Afghanistan, but also Iran and Central Asia. This will be followed by the Ghazwa-i-Hind – the campaign for India – which will cover today's India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Myanmar, as well as parts of the surrounding countries. This will be followed by the battle to liberate the Holy Places, Mecca, Medina, and al-Quds [Jerusalem]. And that will lead to the restoration of the true world-wide Caliphate.

Such is the new ambition among the terrorist groups, and many of their spokesmen – inevitably men, of course – are willing to speak publicly about the contemporary relevance of these prophecies. What it means for them, and their patrons in Pakistan, who are playing this dangerous game with themselves and the entire region,

is that there is an enormous amount of warfare to come. This suits Pakistan very well. These fighting forces are mainly Pashtuns, who would otherwise be looking to settling the Pashtun question. However, as long as they are doing what they see as Allah's work in subduing lands that rightfully belong to Him, they will not look to issues such as their own national and territorial rights. And in this, they will continue to enjoy the support of the Pakistan Army and the ISI.

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The growth of violence and extremism within the country is a price worth paying for keeping these forces oriented outward.

The Pashtuns, along with the Kurds, are the two largest, most populous tribes in the world that have no homeland of their own. It is estimated that there some 45 million Pashtuns in the world, and they have all the attributes of a nation. They have the language, tradition and culture of nationhood, and recent memory of having ruled large parts of the region. This is what Daoud and the PDPA rulers were playing on; simultaneously, the Pakistanis

were turning them towards Islam and *jihad*, with the calculation that this would raise their sights above narrower Pashtun territorial demands. In this, Pakistan has been successful, perhaps too successful. The Islamist forces they have let slip have become increasingly disenchanted with the Pakistani state, and regard it as un-Islamic, hence itself a target for *jihad*.

This is why it would be ahistorical to expect the Islamist forces to come to a negotiated settlement with the Afghan Government. The Taliban have, for example, in fact, declared that the new Afghan Government is unacceptable to them, and they will not accept anything less than a truly Islamic Government, which will follow *Sharia* in its true form.

For its part, Pakistan, especially in its current debilitated shape, cannot afford to let the Islamists lower their ambition, for then the Pashtun Question will be back in an even more aggravated form, and this time led by well-trained, and motivated fighters who will pose a serious challenge to the Pakistani state and its security forces. It will, therefore, have no interest in a negotiated settlement. What is more, these *jihadi* forces are the only asset

Pakistan has in the politics of the region; if they were to give this up, they would have no value left. They do not have the financial or diplomatic wherewithal, or the soft power, to play any positive role in the neighbourhood.

This also explains why the Pakistanis are opposed to any arms for the ANSF beyond those that a constabulary would have. The Islamists must be able to make the military breakthroughs they need to expand north into and west into all parts of Afghanistan, and from there, into Xinjiang, Iran and Central Asia. Only a strong and well-trained ANSF can thwart these strategies. For exactly obverse reasons, the rest of the world needs to ensure that the ANSF is capable of defending the country.

If there were any doubts about this analysis, recent events in Iraq should quell them.

Iraq provides an illustration of the kind of problem that may arise if the ANSF turn out to be under-equipped for the coming tests of strength. The way the Iraqi Army melted away in the face of the ISIL should be an object lesson for the rest of the world. The western and Arab countries were forced back into the fight, and the same

will happen in Afghanistan if adequate preparation is not made for the coming trials.

What this narrative has shown is that Pakistan has been nurturing and promoting Islamic extremist forces since the early 1970's, and not because it was fighting any proxy war with India. The reason was, and remains, the unsettled Pashtun question, for which Pakistan sought an Islamic answer. In the bargain, it has had to resort to growing extremism, and it has to continue to fan it the interests of its own survival. Therefore, any statement that it is willing to moderate its outlook, or to curb the extremists it has nurtured needs to be discounted completely.

Further, the threat posed by these forces is to all the neighbours of Afghanistan, including Russia and China. It is thus no India-Pakistan face-off. To the extent that Indian interests are affected, it will, of course, defend them. But as Iraq

again has shown, the interests of the wider world community are also going to be hit, and the other affected countries need to be prepared for this.

Pakistan knows all this well enough, as do the puzzling, though dwindling, number of its supporters in the west. The real message behind this kind of writing is preemptive: Pakistan is going to make another bid for its proxies to gain complete dominance over Afghanistan once again, and countries like India should not stand in the way. That is the true meaning of the talk of a proxy war. It overlooks the reality that the war against Pakistani attempts to dominate Afghanistan will be fought by the Afghans themselves. And in this, they will be supported not only by India, but all of the near and distant neighbours.

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Swachh Bharat Is Not Mardi Gras

- *Dr M N Buch**

In his speech from the rampart of the Red Fort on 15th August 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a fervent appeal to the nation to make the gift of a Swachh Bharat to Mahatma Gandhi on the occasion of his 150th birthday in 2019. This was followed up by a campaign launched on 2nd October, 2014 to start the process of cleaning India and as a symbolic gesture the Prime Minister and various dignitaries throughout the country themselves wielded a broom to clean the streets. Thereafter, the Prime Minister invited nine distinguished persons from different fields, including cinema, politics, sports, etc., to join the campaign so that their collective influence could bring millions of Indians into the cleanliness fold. All the nine persons have responded positively, with Sashi Tharoor of the Congress Party having to pay a political price in that he was immediately removed as spokesperson of the Congress Party because he had dared to support Modi. What would have happened if Modi had invited Rahul Gandhi to join the

campaign? He would most probably have declined, which could be interpreted as a signal that the Congress Party does not believe in a clean India. The fact, however, is the Manmohan Singh government had itself started a campaign for what it described as Nirmal India, which obviously means that it has as great a stake in the country being clean, hygienic and sanitised as does BJP. The difference is one of approach, with Narendra Modi being more focused and energetic about achieving his goal.

Emulating the Prime Minister, many people have joined the campaign in that they, too, have spared time to sweep a part of some street or the other. This is very welcome, but the spirit of these people is one of a carnival or Mardi Gras, almost a joyous occasion and a great opportunity for being photographed by the media, thus gaining a little welcome publicity. However, the seriousness of the call for Swachh Bharat and the sustained effort needed to achieve this does not seem to have sunk into most

**Dr M N Buch, Dean, Centre for Governance and Political Studies, VIF*

minds.

It is obvious that a country will be as clean as its citizens decide and their decision will be very largely determined by the physical environment and infrastructure created by the authorities. Switzerland, a mountainous country without a high density of population, is considered amongst the cleanest countries in the world and rightly so. Scenically Switzerland is like a picture postcard and climatically it is extremely temperate, which means that the relatively low temperatures assist in preservation of vegetation, etc. In terms of civic facilities and infrastructure, Switzerland has them of a very high order. In turn, this encourages citizens to become partners in keeping the country clean and any lapse from the normal would be taken care of by the civic authorities and the law enforcement agencies. There is a general orderliness about the country and there is not only citizen awareness of the need to keep the country clean, but there is also strict law enforcement.

A city whose size is finite has time and space to improve the infrastructure, whereas a city whose growth is open ended has to run fast on the spot just to prevent the civic services from collapsing.

There is also peer pressure against littering and this also helps.

At the other end of the spectrum is the small island city State of Singapore, where there is relatively high density of population. Of course a strong family planning policy has kept the population under check and to that extent Singapore has a stabilised population unlike the cities of India, where growth of population is almost uncontrolled. A city whose size is finite has time and space to improve the infrastructure, whereas a city whose growth is open ended has to run fast on the spot just to prevent the civic services from collapsing. This point is very important because unless we understand that our growth is open ended and must be checked, we cannot ever seriously tackle the problems of having an adequate civic infrastructure. Singapore is hot and humid, being located only just north of the equator. The problem with a hot and humid climate is that it encourages fecundity of vegetation, animal life, insects and other pests, it accelerates degradation of rubbish and the

subsequent putrefaction leads to environmental hazards and creates health problems. Singapore decided very early after independence that it would create an ideal nation State. Therefore, its civic services are of a very high order. Located at almost sea level, it nevertheless has a drainage system which ensures that water and effluents are carried away, treated and then suitably disposed of. There are no stagnant pools of dirty water anywhere in Singapore and, as a consequence, there are no mosquitoes. The entire city is covered by an efficient sewerage system and sewage passes through primary, secondary and tertiary treatment so that the ultimate effluent is clean, almost potable. That takes care of water pollution. The government is ferocious about littering and dumping of garbage. Therefore, all solid waste is segregated into that which is biodegradable, non-degradable items which can be recycled and items which require disposal otherwise. Garbage has to be placed after separation only at designated points and the civic authorities regularly collect garbage and dispose of it in a manner which meets sanitary and hygienic norms. Because there is no putrefying garbage anywhere there are no flies and with pure

drinking water and vector control, water borne diseases and vector borne diseases are almost unknown in Singapore. There are heavy fines for any deviation from hygienic norms and law enforcement is very strict. That is why Singapore is almost one of the cleanest places on earth.

Singapore is equally aware of the need to prevent air pollution. Because automobiles are amongst the biggest contributors of carbon monoxide to the atmosphere, the city government decided to restrict the number of motor vehicles in the country. No factory manufacturing any automobile, even two-wheelers, may be located in Singapore. Cars and other motor vehicles are fully imported and there is very heavy import duty so that such vehicles are expensive. There is also a heavy annual vehicle tax to further discourage the private ownership of cars. There are many parking restrictions and a new motor vehicle may be purchased only after the number plate of an already owned vehicle is surrendered to the transport authorities. Cars older than a specified period have to be disposed of outside Singapore so that new vehicles with high emission standards replace those

which are polluters. There is an extremely efficient public transport system and people are not only encouraged to use it but in fact prefer to do so because it is so much more convenient than driving one's own car

India is completely different. There is a paradox of people who are personally very clean and fastidious about body hygiene, clothes and the spotless cleanliness of the inside of the house, particularly the kitchen, combined with an appalling sense of civic indifference and social irresponsibility.

The house must be clean but it is all right to throw garbage on the streets. The kitchen has to be clean but kitchen waste is allowed to putrefy. The bucket from which one bathes has to be shining, but water from the kitchen, bath room and toilet is allowed to spread into the street and collect in puddles of dirty water. Of this paradox, which is the reality of the clean India and the equal reality of the filthy India? Why do we have open defecation, heaps of garbage and

pools of stagnant water? Is this because we do not care or is it because we have no option?

Rural India, fortunately, has land space and, therefore, the village as such is not densely populated. Of course we have the relatively larger villages packed together in the village *abadi*, leaving arable land available for cultivation. That makes good economic sense. However, even in a tightly

configured village, generally speaking, garbage goes into heaps or trenches to be converted into manure.

Fortunately even today, because village living is still fairly simple, non biodegradable material forms only

a small part of the garbage. However, rural India and a great deal of urban India is still not equipped with a toilet in every house and, therefore, there is still substantial open defecation. Narendra Modi's call for the construction of toilets in every house and in every school is definitely a major departure from the policy of only scratching at the problem. Incidentally, extension of sanitation of this nature to every

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household is a possibility and, therefore, this is one target we can achieve. If there are toilets with a proper treatment system, albeit of the Sulabh two pit model, we can crack down on open defecation and inculcate the habit of using a toilet in our people. Once a facility is available one sees no reason why all Indians cannot be made sanitation conscious.

A slum consists of self built housing, generally speaking of mud and junk material. The houses themselves are so nondescript as to almost not register visually. However, a slum is a foul habitation because it has no drainage, sewage, piped water supply, the conservancy teams of the municipality almost never go to a slum to collect the garbage, there are pools of stagnant water which give birth to clouds of mosquitoes and putrefying garbage on which both pigs and rag pickers root alike and which are the birth place of flies, pathogens and noxious insects. This is true of every slum in India, but a good example is that of the slum behind Panchsheel Nagar in Bhopal along Main Road Number 3, which is almost next door to the Maulana Azad National Institute of Technology. Panchsheel Nagar was a site developed for the poor

in the early seventies of the last century and today it is a reasonably well serviced area with proper housing. It is pity that a slum has developed adjacent to a locality developed as a model for all slums in India. Here everything filthy about the slum is visible from the road. How can these slums dwellers become partners in the campaign for Swachh India when they are denied every civic facility to which our citizens are entitled? If we want the slum dwellers to contribute to a clean India then our civic authorities, our State and Central Governments have to ensure that with the help of the people there is some reordering of the slum so that there is reasonable access, there is clean piped water supply to every house so that water borne diseases are eradicated, there is an adequate sewerage system and a drainage system which contributes to sanitation and garbage is not allowed to accumulate but is regularly collected from designated sites and then suitably disposed of. Citizens who find that at least the minimum civic services are available to them would be amenable to responding to a call for civic hygiene at community level and at that stage those who

do not conform can be subjected to heavy penalties.

One gave the example of Singapore, which is almost at sea level and the terrain is completely flat. Despite that, Singapore has an efficient drainage system because it was properly designed and constructed. Contrast this with Bhopal which is a hilly city with fairly steep gradients, whose hills contain lakes into which all the water of the catchment drains. There can be no excuse for any

water logging in Bhopal and despite this one finds that many areas of Bhopal do, in fact, get inundated. The reason for this is an inadequate drainage system, with many of the

There can be no excuse for any water logging in Bhopal and despite this one finds that many areas of Bhopal do, in fact, get inundated. The reason for this is an inadequate drainage system, with many of the drains being built upon illegally.

drains being built upon illegally. This has disturbed the normal drainage system dictated by topography. Arera Colony is one of the up market residential areas and in sector E-3 of Arera Colony with a fairly large drain which serves three major sectors of this area. The drain is not properly graded and it is partially choked by garbage thrown into it. It overflows in the rains and inundates the houses built along its brink and at all times it stinks.

If our civic authorities cannot even maintain such a drain how can they expect our citizens to respond to a call for keeping the city clean? One compliments the Bhopal Municipal Corporation for a major effort to ensure that water bodies in the city are kept relatively pollution free. For immersion of idols, *tazias*, etc., specially designated and designed water bodies are set aside in order to prevent the pollution of the lakes. Here the citizens, under the guise

of religious fervour, become beasts, with no concern for the environmental havoc caused by their religious practices. In all religions, the need to protect nature is an important

precept. People who pollute through immersion are actually working against the interests of religion. This is one area where the State must intervene, even with harshness if necessary.

The campaign for cleanliness can work only if we begin by ensuring that every citizen has access to civic services designed to create a hygienic and sanitary environment. Why do our politicians not spend time in

slums, impressing on the civic authorities the need to give the highest priority to providing minimum basic services? Why does the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh symbolically sweep one of the main roads of Bhopal instead of spending a few hours cleaning the garbage in one of the slums? If government is serious, then let it realise that Swachh Bharat is a

goal, to achieve which we need sustained hard work, in which the plans are carefully drawn up, priorities assigned, funds made available and the implementation of plans carefully supervised. It is certainly not Mardi Gras.

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Foreign Archaeological Collaborations and India's Security Concerns

- *Dr Dilip K Chakrabarti**

The current rage in Indian archaeology is foreign collaboration. One of the reasons why this has become popular is that it imposes no intellectual and logistical burden on the Indian collaborator. The problems of the necessary fund and the research strategy are sorted out mostly by the foreign collaborators who also work subsequently on the excavated and explored archaeological materials. When the final report is published, that no doubt bears the name of the Indian collaborator but the fellow professionals know that the whole thing is basically written up by the team of the foreign collaborator. From the Indian point of view, this is a good arrangement in which the Indian team has nothing to do except organizing the government permission and other logistics of the work at the site. For some members of the Indian team, this also opens the doors of foreign visits and participation in foreign conferences. According to available information, the University

Grants Commission (UGC) also lays stress on foreign collaborations, attaching more value to publications in foreign journals than in the Indian ones. If true, this is a good case of the Indian academia admitting that it is inferior to the academia abroad. The Ph.D dissertations which occasionally result from such collaborations are prepared mostly by students of the foreign team. The Indian universities which have been very enthusiastic about such collaborations in recent years are Deccan College, Pune, MS University of Baroda, Banaras Hindu University and Dharwar University.

On the surface, there is nothing objectionable about this scenario. International collaborations are supposedly good things by themselves, and when the collaborators on both sides are on the same academic level, certain good things are bound to accrue from intellectual exchanges. However, the situation is seldom as simple and straightforward as

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this.

We must note in the beginning that archaeological studies are not scientifically as rigorous as the enquiries in the natural sciences. Here knowledge can seldom be conclusive and the position an individual researcher may take in relation to the field of enquiry as a whole depends on his own bias and predilections. For instance, there was a time in the 1950s and 1960s when it was taken for granted that the use of iron in India came from West Asia, whereas on the basis of the same set of data it was possible to argue somewhat later that there was adequate reason to believe that India was a major and an independent centre of iron metallurgy.

Secondly, there is also a thing called 'the politics of the past'. In 1986 there was an archaeological conference in Southampton and when it was decided not to keep it open to the archaeologists from the apartheid regime of South Africa, there was a storm of protest in the name of the freedom of science. Eventually the anti-apartheid group won the debate and the first World Archaeological

Conference held in 1986 at Southampton was held without representation from the apartheid regime of South Africa. This controversy made the archaeological world feel strongly about what may be called the politics of the past.

Thirdly, this sense of the politics of the past does not flourish in a vacuum. If we have to bring back our mind to the Indian past, we realize that the knowledge of the Indian past has been historically

Quite recently, the Chairman of the Kerala Council of Historical Research, who is involved in the excavations of a Roman contact site called Muziris (identified with the site of Pattinam in Kerala), managed to draw collaboration from Oxford University.

controlled by Western scholars. The situation remains more or less unchanged even now. Quite recently, the Chairman of the Kerala Council of

Historical Research, who is involved in the excavations of a Roman contact site called Muziris (identified with the site of Pattinam in Kerala), managed to draw collaboration from Oxford University. Interestingly, he took a lot of pride in the fact that no less a site than Oxford considered the site important enough for attention and him personally worthy of collaboration. To be fair to him, a senior and much-respected Indian archaeologist

once claimed that for India the sun of civilization always rose in the West! This may be a bizarre academic opinion but examples of such opinions are common in Indian archaeology and underline the inordinate reverence of Indian archaeologists on what the relevant Western scholars claim regarding the Indian past. The Indians who get upset by Dina Nath Batra's opinion in certain matters of ancient Indian science and technology may remember that the positive achievements of ancient Indian science and technology have scarcely received the attention it deserves mainly because of the restraining elements of Western scholars and their Indian devotees.

This brings us to the question of national security which is concerned with a host of issues, not the least of which is the nation's concept of its past. A nation which has a strong sense of identity and is respectful of its past does not depend on sundry foreign collaborations for objective research on, and interpretation of, its past. It is not in the interest of any foreign group to be rigorously objective about India's ancient past..

If one is distressed by this statement, it is possible to cite a

host of recent disputes about various features of ancient Indian history. Some of these disputes have assumed sharply unpleasant character in recent years. We may draw attention to the ongoing controversies about the Indus civilization. Although on the basis of the current evidence, it is virtually impossible to deny that the growth of this civilization was due to any influence from outside. But what is being aired currently is that this growth was a part of the growth which was taking place at the same time in west and central Asia. This theory tries to quietly undermine the originality of the Indus civilization. In fact, over the years some Western archaeologists have been particularly active in trying to bring about precisely this. It is worth emphasizing that there is a strong pressure from interested groups to hand over some major Indus sites to foreign money and foreign participants. The recent excavations at Rakhigarhi by the Deccan College, Pune, with money from an American NGO called Global Heritage Fund is a suitable case in point. The approving agency is the Archaeological Survey of India which is under the Ministry of Culture of the Government of India.

In recent years, many Indian archaeologists have come round to the opinion that the Indus civilization is most likely to be a part of the Vedic stream and is thus the fountainhead of Indian culture and religion. To a large section of foreign archaeologists this is anathema and the study of the Indus civilization is riddled with political controversies of all kinds. To allow this field of study, which is a crucial segment of our ancient past, to manipulations of all kinds by foreign groups and their Indian collaborators is not something which bears the question of India's ideological security and civilizational confidence in mind.

Another dangerous development is taking place in attempts to relate prehistoric Indian cultures to various Indian languages.. What will happen is that these language groups will be given fictional

linguistic affinities, making the field wide open for regional chauvinistic premises. The Deccan College archaeological group is in the forefront of this endeavour but in the background one detects the money and influence of a Japanese and an American group.

What I have tried to argue is that the pursuit of the past is not an innocuous academic activity and before foreign academic groups are allowed uncontrolled and unverified entry to this in India, we must be aware of the dimensions which impinge on our long-term national security. It will not simply do to forget that major premises regarding the nation's past cannot be allowed to be controlled by foreign groups. Government interventions are very important in this regard.

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India's 'Act East' Policy: A Perspective

- **Brig (Retd) Vinod Anand & Dr. Rahul Mishra***

India's Look East Policy (LEP) came of age when New Delhi celebrated two decades of engagement by holding the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit in November 2012. The first phase of LEP lasted for one decade till 2002 when the then Minister for External Affairs Mr Yashwant Sinha announced the commencement of the second phase. While in the first phase, the emphasis was on political, diplomatic and people to people relationships, improved connectivity and enhanced trade, the second phase revolved around strengthening of economic relations, defence and security cooperation besides strengthening relationships in other areas. During the second phase, though the dominant impulse remained the economic engagement, increasingly the LEP also acquired strategic orientation. The LEP focused not only on the ASEAN members but also expanded to include South Korea, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and other countries in the East. Over the two decades, not only has India

progressed from a dialogue partner to the present status of a strategic partner in respect of ASEAN but has also established strategic partnerships on bilateral basis with many ASEAN countries and Japan, Australia and South Korea. It can also be said that after 2012, the Indian government continued to work towards what it called the third phase that was termed as an 'Enhanced LEP'.

In fact, when Modi government took over the reins of power in May this year, it conscientiously continued with the previous government's policy and the new Minister for External Affairs, Smt Sushma Swaraj termed the new phase as 'Act East Policy' which in a sense meant that more substance was to be imparted through early implementation of many elements of the LEP. While the plan to engage ASEAN has been charted out in the 'Plan of Action to implement the ASEAN-India Partnership for Peace, Progress and Shared Prosperity (2010-2015)' announced during the Commemorative Summit of 2012,

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the Modi administration has been in an overdrive to reach out to all the nations in the wider Pacific region.

Prime Minister Modi's successful visit to Japan, the India visit of Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott and the visit of China's President Xi Jinping are seen as high points in the Modi government's policy towards the wider East Asian region. Japan is also considering joint projects with India in some of the ASEAN countries besides expressing its interest to invest in India's North East. The level of defence and security cooperation including joint military exercises and co-production and co-development in defence industry is on the cards. India-Japan civil nuclear agreement could not be concluded because of some apprehensions on part of Japan but that aside, the scope of strategic and economic cooperation is expected to follow an upward trajectory.

During the India visit of Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott, India and Australia signed

the much-awaited India Australia Civilian nuclear cooperation agreement that would enable supply of Uranium to India. The successful conclusion of Abbott's visit is a watershed event in India-Australia relations. Apart from the civilian nuclear deal, Indian companies are also working towards joint energy ventures in Australia. In November, Modi would be attending ASEAN-India and East Asia Summit in Myanmar where he would further outline his plans to revitalise relationships with ASEAN and East Asian countries in both economic and security fields. From Nay Pyi Taw, Modi would travel to Australia for the G-20 Summit where he would have further opportunity to have a bilateral with PM Abbot to build on the evolving strategic relationship with Australia. In order to expand India's footprint in Pacific, he would be visiting Fiji after attending the G 20 meet.

Clearly, within a short period of six months or so, the Narendra Modi government has taken steps to give a boost to the Look East Policy, or what has been termed as

In November, Modi would be attending ASEAN-India and East Asia Summit in Myanmar where he would further outline his plans to revitalise relationships with ASEAN and East Asian countries in both economic and security fields.

the 'Act East Policy'. In that regard, the statement made by the External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj is worth noting. During her visit to Vietnam on 26 August, 2014, she addressed the Indian Heads of Missions and said that India has to not just 'Look East' but 'Act East'. Her visit to Vietnam was the third visit to a Southeast Asian country since she became the Minister for External Affairs in the Modi Cabinet.

President Pranab Mukherjee has also visited Vietnam and signed a number of agreements that include allotment of seven oil blocks for exploration, enhanced defence and security cooperation, increased economic and people to people exchanges besides regional and multilateral cooperation. While Vietnam supported India's LEP and its increasingly important role in regional and global forums, they also expressed the resolve to 'foster the implementation of signed agreements' and observed that cooperation in national defence was an important pillar in their strategic partnership. President Mukherjee also supported the freedom of navigation through high sea, peaceful resolution of disputes based on international law including the 1982 UNCLOS

and adherence to the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the East Sea towards the adoption of the Code of Conduct of Parties.

It has been stated many times by the Indian strategists that Myanmar is the lynchpin of India's LEP and is a gateway or a strategic land bridge to the ASEAN. Myanmar is the current Chair of the ASEAN, hosting several meetings of ASEAN during the year. In that regard, Sushma Swaraj was on a four-day visit to Myanmar to participate in the Fourth East Asia Summit (EAS) Foreign Ministers' meeting, 21st ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) retreat session and India-ASEAN foreign Ministers Summit. During her visit, she had extensive discussions with Myanmar's President U Thein Sein, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar and Pyithu Hluttaw (House of Representatives), Thura U. Shwe on how to further strengthen ties between India and Myanmar.

India has been pushing for greater regional integration of Indian economy with that of the ASEAN by expanding the scope of trade and investment. The main focus of 4th EAS Foreign Ministers' meeting was on strengthening cooperation in the areas of energy,

education, disaster management and enhancing connectivity. Sushma Swaraj reiterated India's position that India "would soon draft a five-year action plan starting 2016 for enhancing connectivity and cooperation in diverse areas". The agenda of the 21st Asean Regional Forum retreat session largely revolved around the security issues. Ways of combating terrorism and other non-traditional security threat relating to the South China Sea figured prominently in the meeting.

Regarding the South China Sea dispute, India continued to follow its traditional stance of pushing for a peaceful resolution of the maritime dispute between China and the ASEAN member states and that "no such issue should be resolved through conflict and war" but through peaceful dialogue". Swaraj remarked, "*Recent disputes in the South China Sea underscore the need to resolve sovereignty issues peacefully by the countries concerned in accordance with international law*". Notably, major claimants in the dispute such as Vietnam and

the Philippines consider India a benign balancer in the region. Therefore, India is widely envisaged as a key power and one of the major stakeholders in the emerging East Asian security dynamics.

The Modi government has been emphasising on giving urgent attention to the speedy completion of trilateral highway that will connect India-Myanmar-Thailand to facilitate people-to-people contact between India and

Myanmar and improve trade and investment opportunities. Prospects for a direct flight from Delhi-Bodhgaya-Yangon are likely to be materialise

given the earnestness of Modi administration. Moreover, friendly relations with Myanmar are crucial for peace and development of India's north-eastern states. Given that it was the first ever visit to Myanmar by any Indian Minister of the new government, Myanmar was given assurance that the new government is willing to strengthen relations with it and thereby, ready to boost trade and investment.

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India is aware of the changing dynamics of the East Asian regions. The security architecture of the region is rapidly changing. Rising China and Japan, and the consistently increasing competition between them has taken new dimensions. India has realised the problems as well as the prospects of the changing regional dynamics. In that context, India's greater role and participation in the security architecture of the region as also the ways and means to enhance India's presence in the Southeast Asian region are of immense importance, not just to India but to the countries of the East Asian region also. These are important components of the Act East policy as without robust trade, economic investment and physical connectivity, India will not be able to achieve its goals.

Energy security is an important component of the Act East Policy of the Modi government, which has been manifested in the recent MoUs that India has signed with partner countries. New Delhi and Hanoi have moved forward in energy cooperation despite some objections by China. Vietnam has already renewed India's lease of two oil blocks in the South China Sea for another year. Vietnam is

keen to procure the Brahmos missiles, which are jointly produced by India and Russia. Vietnam is also exploring the possibility regarding procurement of naval weaponry. India has agreed to supply four off shore naval patrol vessels to Vietnam and Modi has announced that India will *"quickly operationalise the \$100 million Line of Credit that will enable Vietnam to acquire new naval vessels from India."*

Likewise, India is also working towards greater military cooperation with Japan and Australia. India and Australia will hold their first-ever bilateral military exercise in January 2015.

India-ASEAN FTA in Services

After several rounds of negotiations, India and the 10-member countries of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) signed the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in services and investments on 8 September, 2014. The final agreement was signed two years after the conclusion of detailed negotiations on the pact. In 2010, India and the 10-ASEAN member countries signed the Free Trade Agreement in goods. However, at that time, the services agreement could not get signed taking into

account the sensitivities of a few ASEAN member countries. The realisation of the FTA in services is expected to give the much needed impetus to India's trade and investment relations with the member countries of ASEAN. In fact, the former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh led United Progressive Alliance government II was criticised for signing an incomplete FTA (FTA in goods only), which was destined to lose out to ASEAN in terms of benefits. As a result, in the past few years, India's exports remained insignificant, while imports from ASEAN countries increased.

The Indian government as well as the private sector have been ready for the agreement but the ASEAN members couldn't expedite the pact. Countries such as Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand took several months to set things right domestically. It is worth noting that the Philippines is yet to ratify the agreement in its parliament. The other nine countries that have ratified the agreement include: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, the Philippines, Myanmar, Singapore,

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Thailand and Vietnam. The primary reason for the Filipino apprehension is that it fears that the Indian services sector might sweep the Philippine market and dominate the ASEAN services industry. However, as the FTA in services is implemented, India's share in total trade would also rise as India is a leader in the services sector, making India-ASEAN FTA a 'win-win situation' for all.

It is hoped that with India-ASEAN FTA in services and investments, greater flow of trade and investment and freer movement of professionals will be realised, paving the way for India's comprehensive regional economic integration with the 10 ASEAN member countries. The good news for India is the inclusion of a brief annexure on movement of natural persons or workforce. The annexure defines business visitors, contractual service suppliers and intra - corporate transferees, issues that are critically important for India. In addition to that, other major issues such as domestic regulations, recognition, market access, national treatment, transparency, participation of

developing countries, joint committee on services, review, dispute settlement and denial of benefits etc. are also included in the agreement.

With the completion of India-ASEAN FTA, the road to the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) seems clearer. RCEP includes the 10 ASEAN member countries and its six partners including India, China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand. ASEAN aims to make RCEP a reality by 2015, which was first mooted during the 2011 ASEAN Summit in Indonesia, and formally launched during the 2012 ASEAN Summit in Cambodia. With the realisation of RCEP, India is likely to gain preferential market access to 15 countries and gain more from price competitiveness.

To benefit most from the India-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement, India needs to keep going on the economic reform path. In that regard, steps to strengthen its medium, small and micro enterprises (MSME) sector are critically important which can help it not only sustain the free flow of trade, but also to become a more competitive player.

Conclusion

The last three years or so have witnessed a growing apprehension about the rising capabilities of an ascendant China and its propensity to assert its claims in South China and East China Sea. The countries in the region are also afflicted with difficult choices to be made between their economic objectives where China is of help and their strategic objectives of safeguarding their national and sovereign interests where some of the nations in the region feel challenged. On the other hand, India is seen as a power which does not threaten or challenge their national interests and can in some way lessen their apprehensions. Against this backdrop, ASEAN states are seeking a moderating role in the region given that New Delhi is seen as a benign power as opposed to China, the US or even Japan. While India may not have the political or the economic clout of ASEAN's other envisaged partners, it is anticipated that with rising trajectory, India will become a pole of influence in the future. However, China's influence is considerable and is likely to be so for the coming years. India's LEP (and now Act East) has been in place now for over two decades

and precedes the American pivot to Asia and therefore it stands on its own merit. Modi administration is only building up on what was bequeathed by the previous government but with much more vigour. The strategic dynamics in the region are very complex and still evolving and the LEP is only one element of the vast strategic canvas on which major powers have put forward

their own policies like the American rebalance, or Japan's Security Diamond concept or for that matter China's New Maritime Silk Route strategy. It is to be hoped that the new policies contribute towards stability and prosperity in the region rather than instability and insecurity.

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US Rebalance to Asia – An Assessment

- *Dr. Harinder Sekhon**

US President Barack Obama landed in Beijing on Monday for the APEC summit, the first of a series of summit and bilateral meetings with regional and world leaders. This visit comes at a time when a majority of Americans are despondent that the country's competitors around the world are swelling while the country's defence resources and the capacity to respond to global challenges shrink. US defence budgetary cuts to the tune of a trillion dollars for this fiscal further add to this mood. This gloom is not confined to the US alone but extends to the Asia Pacific as well where serious doubts exist about Obama's commitment to his Doctrine of 2012 directing a strategic "pivot" or Re Balance to Asia as an important element of his grand strategy for the region.

While host China seeks to allay the fears of regional countries by organizing the APEC agenda around a "series of initiatives to nurture regional economic growth and connectivity, long-term progress in these areas will not be

possible if China continues to assert unilateral claims to international waters and airspace in the South and East China seas - and to back these claims up with the threat of force" by seeking to create "a sphere of influence that erodes the security and sovereignty of Japan and other neighbours". There is apprehension that in East Asia, China seeks "to overturn the existing, pluralistic regional order and replace it with a Sino sphere imposed at least partly through force of arms",¹ as the US has been more occupied with developments in Ukraine and the Middle East. While those are serious issues that required immediate attention, the US must not lose sight of its long term and more serious challenge posed by a rising China in East Asia.

Strategic power plays in the Asia-Pacific region and the role of the two main players, the US and China, has emerged as one of the major drivers of international relations in the twenty first century. China's rapid economic rise over the past two decades has

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“made it possible for China to increase its military capacity and ramp up its political role in the region and beyond.” While China has been at pains to insist that its rise will be peaceful, and “poses no threat to its neighbours or the existing international, political and economic order”, its rising assertiveness, more visible since 2010, is a matter of concern and compelled the US to re orient its policy towards the Asia-Pacific. In November 2011, Obama attended the East Asia Summit in Bali, Indonesia, the first for a US President, signifying a major shift in US policy to protect its strategic interests in Asia. Also in November 2011, US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton published an article in *Foreign Policy Journal* titled, ‘America’s Pacific Century,’ clearly laying out the importance America attaches to Asia-Pacific. She wrote:

Harnessing Asia's growth and dynamism is central to American economic and strategic interests and a key priority for President Obama. Open markets in Asia provide the United

In November 2011, Obama attended the East Asia Summit in Bali, Indonesia, the first for a US President, signifying a major shift in US policy to protect its strategic interests in Asia.

States with unprecedented opportunities for investment, trade, and access to cutting-edge technology. Our economic recovery at home will depend on exports and the ability of American firms to tap into the vast and growing consumer base of Asia. Strategically, maintaining peace and security across the Asia-Pacific is increasingly crucial to global progress, whether through defending freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, countering the proliferation efforts of North Korea, or ensuring transparency in the military activities of the region's key players.

This reaffirmation of its attention towards the Asia-Pacific led to a strategic pronouncement of US policy in the form of the “pivot” or “rebalance” to Asia. While this policy was not new and was mainly a continuation and expansion of policies already undertaken by previous US administrations, Obama’s Doctrine had two distinct features. First, it was more comprehensive

and included “all the necessary components of a strategy, namely, military, political, economic and ideological.” The second feature of Obama’s pivot strategy was that it extended the scope of Asia Pacific to include South Asia, particularly India, and linked the Pacific and Indian Oceans as one continuum in US grand strategy for Asia.²

The main objectives of the “Asia Pivot” were:

- (a) Re-assertion of US interest in maintaining stability in the region through the prevention of regional conflict and flaring up of inter-state antagonisms.
- (b) Maintain security of the global commons, especially the sea-lanes through which more than 50% of global trade and 70% of ship-borne oil transits.
- (c) Create an enabling environment for further expansion of trade between the United States and East Asia and among regional states through bilateral free-trade agreements and the facilitation of a Trans Pacific Partnership.
- (d) Though not explicitly stated, to keep a watch on Chinese activities and managing its role in the region by

influencing the “terms of its admission and full integration within those regional and international regimes where the US is still the dominant actor.”

- (e) To play the role of a benign and indispensable hegemon and thereby “acquire the leverage necessary to influence regional actors and their choices.”³

The US hoped to achieve its aims through a three - pronged policy of stepped up military deployment in Guam and Australia, trade and diplomacy. But the pivot’s emphasis on making the US military presence in the region more flexible, and putting measures in place for its rapid deployment caused concern amongst the Chinese. While the US insists that its strategic rebalance only seeks to “enhance regional stability for the benefit of all, rather than to contain or threaten China,” the Chinese see this move by the USA as an attempt to maintain its “hegemonic dominance, thwarting China’s rise and keeping it vulnerable”. This has further exacerbated regional tensions in East Asia where China has been more aggressive in recent months

while the US has been busy elsewhere. These tensions focus on the Korean peninsula, the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea, and have an important maritime dimension, leading to a high probability of war in the region. Besides Japan, Vietnam and the Philippines too feel vulnerable and have joined the effort to draw American attention back to Asia-Pacific.

Most countries view the US pivot strategy as more rhetoric than substance. Some nations feel there has been a significant change in US priority to Asia from the rebalance, though not necessarily much in the way of increased military presence, and that the signal sent in the region had been vital in reassuring some and, hopefully, deterring others. Others feel that there had been much less to it than meets the eye and that whatever steam it had originally has now dissipated (e.g. Obama's West Point speech had omitted it altogether). But there could also be an important gap between reality and perception — whatever the actual substance, it has been

In a recent statement, he said, "The Asia Pacific is one of the most promising places on the planet, and America's future and security and prosperity are closely and increasingly linked to that region."

seen in some quarters, notably in Beijing, as an exercise in US hard power, and even provocative, and produced a counter-reaction accordingly.

At a time when friends and allies of the US are expressing doubts about its commitment to its rebalance strategy, US Secretary of State, John Kerry sought to allay such fears and apprehensions. In a recent statement, he said, "The Asia Pacific is one of the most

promising places on the planet, and America's future and security and prosperity are closely and increasingly linked to that region."

Elaborating further, Kerry said, "President Obama's rebalance towards the Asia Pacific and the enormous value that we place on longstanding alliances with Japan, South Korea, Australia, Thailand, and the Philippines and our burgeoning relationships with ASEAN and countries in Southeast Asia" ⁴ would be a priority.

Kerry outlined four main aspects of the rebalance strategy: First, the opportunity to create

sustainable economic growth, which includes finalizing the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which should not be viewed through the narrow confines of a trade agreement but also as a strategic opportunity for the United States and other Pacific nations to come together and prosper together. Second, powering a clean energy revolution that will help address climate change while simultaneously jumpstarting economies around the world. Third, reducing tensions and promoting regional cooperation by strengthening the institutions and reinforcing the norms that contribute to a rules-based, stable region. Fourth, create an environment that will empower people throughout the Asia Pacific to live with dignity, security, and opportunity.⁵

There is no doubt that US economic and political interests in the Asia-Pacific region are huge, and there is a demand for an increased US presence in, and strategic priority given to the region from many Asian countries. But the long-term question is whether the US has the will and the resources to keep up its effort against the background of the continuing rise of China and its own domestic compulsions. China

has the potential to easily focus on dominating the region, without worrying too much about the rest of the world beyond its direct trade, investments and resource needs. The US would always have other priorities elsewhere and this is what worries many of China's neighbours and why they are so hard to satisfy and reassure.

In this context, while China and the US are unlikely to be real friends and close allies for the foreseeable future, they could nevertheless work together closely on many issues, for example North Korea, climate and the environment, securing the global commons, etc. The US could view Chinese proposals for an inclusive economic agenda with a positive attitude as the alternative of constant competition and potential confrontation would be detrimental for everyone. According to the New York Times, "last month 51 top American business leaders, led by the U.S.-China Business Council, urged Mr. Obama to make the conclusion of a bilateral investment treaty by 2016 a priority in his meetings with Mr. Xi."⁶ They propose that such a treaty would be beneficial for both countries. The US also needs to play a more positive role in improving the multilateral

system, since ultimately a rules-based co-operative approach is in US interests as is a revitalized G-20.

Despite speculation in some quarters about US decline, it should not be viewed in absolute terms. The US possesses inherent strengths and great influence, which give it the ability to do worthwhile work globally. US soft power remains enormous though investing more in tools like diplomacy and overseas information capability, would be well worthwhile. The world still looks to the US to assume a leadership role but this should be exercised more as a team player and through partnerships and consultative leadership where possible, not from a “sole super-power” perspective. For this strategic perspective and strategic patience are needed more than ever. The US needs to think long-term and build the right fundamentals through clearer guiding concepts, principles, strategic priorities and goals.

The US should be bolder in its readiness to reform institutions, its own and the international ones.

US consultative leadership is needed not only in the obvious political and economic areas, but on the major cross-cutting issues where progress remains so difficult, but equally important: climate change, cyber security, non-proliferation, macro imbalance. The rebalance to Asia remains vital, and should be pursued as a long-term goal. Helping respond to Chinese assertiveness in the region is necessary, but so is a co-operative US/China relationship. These are all challenging issues, as the US,

The US possesses inherent strengths and great influence, which give it the ability to do worthwhile work globally.

has not been able to build a strong and dependable network of regional institutions and alliances in Asia as it has in Europe in

the post World War – II period.

While the US should not hesitate to promote its values and principles, it has to ensure its own behaviour does not depart too much from those values and rules. To remain influential and relevant in the region, the US will have to naturally remain engaged with East Asian and South East Asian powers. But it will have to resist the temptation to claim for itself economic privileges, exemptions and political authority to act in an

arbitrary manner just because it is the chief security provider. Ideas of US exceptionalism and lecturing others would need to be avoided while continuing with the effort to preserve a wide liberal, democratic base in the world.

The US referred to India as the "linchpin" of its rebalance strategy; and by virtue of its own strategic and economic interests in the region, India cannot remain unmindful of developments taking place in East Asia. While India is pragmatic and more inclined to safeguarding its national interest by following an interest-based policy rather than getting drawn into a strategic competition with China or become a security provider on behalf of the US, India will have to devise a long-term and effective strategy in order to emerge as a relevant player in East Asia. In recent months, India has strengthened its Look East Policy through bilateral and multilateral engagements with the smaller regional powers and ASEAN countries, thereby insulating itself from the risks of strategic competition or complicity between China and the United States, but a sustained involvement with this region is required.

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Visit of Vietnamese Prime Minister to India and the Evolving Intensification of Strategic Partnership

- *Maj Gen (Retd) P K Chakravorty**

Introduction

The Prime Minister of Vietnam Mr Nguyen Tan Dung visited India on 27 and 28 October 2014. This was the third visit of the Prime Minister to India during which the instrument of strategic partnership was signed. The Prime Minister was accompanied by a large business delegation which had separate meetings with apex chambers of commerce and industry including CII, FICCI and ASSOCHAM. The Prime Minister also paid a visit to the Buddhist shrine at Bodh Gaya where Buddha attained his enlightenment. The visit was extremely fruitful in increasing the cohesiveness between the two countries.

Essential Aspects of the Joint Statement

During the visit, the Vietnamese Prime Minister held official talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and also paid courtesy calls

on the President and Vice President. At Bodh Gaya, he had a meeting with the Chief Minister of Bihar Shri Jitan Ram Manjhi. A conclave of business leaders was held during the visit.

It is interesting to note that strategic issues were given their rightful place in the deliberations. Both Prime Ministers welcomed the development in recent years which have led to a continuous strengthening of the strategic partnership between the two countries. They agreed that a strong India -Vietnam partnership would lead to peace, prosperity and stability for both countries and in the wider region. Prime Minister Modi reaffirmed that Vietnam was an important pillar of India's Look East Policy. Prime Minister Dung welcomed a greater role for India in the regional and international arena. Both Prime Ministers noted that the partnership was based on traditional friendship, mutual understanding, strong trust,

* *Maj Gen (Retd) P K Chakravorty, India's former Defence Attache to Vietnam*

support and convergence of views on national and international issues.

The Prime Ministers expressed satisfaction at the progress made in defence cooperation including exchange of visits, annual security dialogue, service to service cooperation, ship visits, training capacity building and cooperation at the regional fora including on Humanitarian Mine Action under ADMM-Plus. They called for the early implementation of \$ 100 million Line of Credit offered by India to Vietnam. The Vietnamese are likely to utilise this amount for the purchase of four Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPVs) from India. It is indeed remarkable that India has made this strategic gesture to Vietnam.

It was agreed that economic cooperation between both countries should be pursued as a strategic objective. They welcomed the strong growth in bilateral trade in recent years particularly after the India- ASEAN trade in Goods Agreement. They also noted that the conclusion of India-ASEAN trade in Services and

Investment agreement which would further boost economic cooperation between India and ASEAN in general as also Vietnam in particular. They also called for closer Regional Economic Partnership Agreement. Business leaders of both countries identified priority areas for cooperation. These included hydrocarbons, power generation, infrastructure, tourism, textiles, footwear, medical and pharmaceuticals, Information & Communications Technology (ICT), electronics, agriculture, agro-products, chemicals, machine tools and other supporting industries. They agreed to enhance bilateral trade to \$ 15 billion by 2020.

The Prime Ministers reaffirmed the importance of investment for the growth of their economies. Prime Minister Dung welcomed Indian companies to invest in Vietnam and Prime Minister Modi invited the Vietnamese companies to join the accelerated economic growth programme 'Make in India' for establishing their industries in

The Vietnamese are likely to utilise this amount for the purchase of four Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPVs) from India. It is indeed remarkable that India has made this strategic gesture to Vietnam.

India. It was agreed that the Customs Cooperation Agreement and Maritime Shipping Agreement between the two countries be optimised to facilitate greater economic engagement.

Both the Prime Ministers welcomed the signing of Agreement between ONGC Videsh and Petro Vietnam for exploration of new oil and gas projects in Vietnam. Prime Minister Dung welcomed Indian Oil and Gas companies to explore new opportunities in midstream and downstream activities in the oil and gas sector in Vietnam.

It was a great step that the Vietnam Bank had agreed to the proposal to open a Bank of India branch in Vietnam. Further to improve connectivity, Jet Airways is going to commence direct flights to Ho Chi Minh City from India with effect from November 2014.

Both Prime Ministers welcomed the ongoing cooperation in capacity building institutes in Vietnam on IT, English language training, entrepreneurship development, high performance computing, peaceful use of nuclear energy, exploration in field of space and launch of satellites. Further, they agreed to cooperate in the field of regional and

international fora. They noted Vietnam's assumption of the role of ASEAN Coordinator for 2015-2018 which would facilitate closer cooperation between India and ASEAN. Further they agreed on freedom of navigation in the South China Sea and to resolve disputes in accordance with universally recognised principles of International Law, including the UNCLOS-1982. They called for cooperation in ensuring security of sea lanes, maritime safety & security, combating piracy and conducting search and rescue operations. The following agreements were signed in the presence of both the Prime Ministers:-

- Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the establishment of Nalanda University.
- MoU on Conservation and Restoration of the World Heritage site of My Son, Quang Nam Province, Vietnam.
- MoU on establishing the Centre for English Language and Information Technology Training of the Telecommunication University.
- Cultural Exchange Programme 2015-2017.

- MoU on Exchange of Audio Visual programmes.
- Heads of Agreement (HoA) between ONGC Videsh Limited and Petro Vietnam.
- MoU between ONGC and Petro Vietnam.

The discussions were warm and friendly. An invitation was extended to Prime Minister Modi to visit at his convenience. The dates will be finalised later.

Way Ahead

The visit of Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung has further enhanced the friendship between India and Vietnam. It is indeed commendable on the part of India to offer a Line of Credit of \$ 100 million for purchase of defence equipment. Further India has undertaken exploration of two additional oil blocks in the South China Sea. Both these oil blocks fall out of the area of Chinese claims.

China immediately reacted by cautioning India against accepting the visiting Prime Minister's call for India to play an active role in South China Sea. The Chinese

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hong Lei told reporters at a briefing That, "With regard to the Vietnamese Prime Minister's call for India to support the peaceful resolution of South China Sea, I want to point out that the dispute should be resolved through dialogue and consultations by countries directly involved on the basis of respecting historical facts and international law." With regard to the oil deals, China took a more measured stand saying it would not oppose the projects if the fields were beyond its claims.

With regard to the oil deals, China took a more measured stand saying it would not oppose the projects if the fields were beyond its claims.

Overall, this is a significant development as three years ago China was totally opposed to India

undertaking exploration in the South China Sea.

Notwithstanding China's possible recognition of oil assets, India should be prepared to respond to an adverse situation. Regular ship visits by the Indian Navy would be necessary for us to posture effectively in this regard. Apart from this, India should gradually look into other areas for export of sophisticated weaponry including missiles to Vietnam.

The economic, culture and capacity building aspects are being

addressed effectively. Both countries must strain every sinew to ensure bilateral trade is increased to \$ 15 billion by 2020.

Conclusion

Vietnam is an extremely important pillar of our Look East policy. The visit of the Vietnamese Prime Minister has further

strengthened relations between the two countries. Strengthening of strategic partnership between the two nations would contribute to peace and stability in the region.

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India-China Boundary: Border Line, Claim Line and the Line of Actual Control

- *Lt Gen (Retd) Gautam Banerjee**

“Those skilled at making enemy move, do so by creating a situation to which he must conform; they entice him with something he is certain to take, and with lures of ostensible profit, they await him in strength” – Sun Tzu.

China’s Territorial Activism

It was around Year 2004-05 that People’s Republic of China (PRC) started to become more assertive in its territorial claims. By then, its military modernisation programme, which required the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) to avoid getting embroiled in any kind of conflict, was well on course. Hard-line factions in Beijing therefore found that time was ripe to shed Deng Xiaoping’s mantra to ‘lie low, build up and bide your time’ and ratchet up their territorial claims. Transition of power to Hu Jintao and his team provided the impetus to do so. It is so that incidents of incursions and even encroachments across the Indo-

Tibet Border have been on the rise and the Line of Actual Control (LAC) between India and China has assumed the status of a ‘hot spot’.

It is intended to delve into this matter to see as to what are the implications of such dramatics on the LAC as either side wielding banners and loud-hailers, and the Chinese border guards crossing over to take to rock-graffiti, razing make-shift bunkers (*sangar*), camping-in, confiscating surveillance cameras and finally herding hapless Tibetan villagers of Tashigong (renamed in mandarin as Zhanxigang, in Garr Prefecture) to put up farcical anti-India demonstrations.

Incursions and Encroachments

* Lt Gen (Retd) Gautam Banerjee, Executive Council, VIF

As its logistic support bases - which must determine the scope for every routine, minor or major military action on a terrain so excruciating - are built up in Southern Tibet, PRC's forceful assertions over its territorial claim-lines have gained discomfoting prominence. During the past decade or so, incursions across the LAC in the Western and Central Sectors have increased from 20-30 times to more than 200 annually. More ominous, if less publicised, are those 1600 incursions which have occurred in North-Eastern India during the past five years, where, given its vast spread that cradles vibrant societies and enormous gifts of nature, the matter assumes more sensitivity. Besides the points of regular patrolling astride the LAC, incursions by troops of PLA's Border Guard Regiments have been spilling over to areas which had not been in contention so far. Furthermore, in many instances, incursions have turned into encroachments.

It is obvious that the purpose of this new version of Beijing's

'forward policy' is to push deeper its revisionist version of the LAC to coincide with its territorial claim-lines, and thus leave India with no option but to yield to a border settlement that is grossly in PRC's favour. The latest incidents of stand-off in Ladakh's *Demchok* and *Chumur* areas and the Fish Tails-Choglagam area in the Eastern Sector are but the notches of that escalation.

To find the right perspectives over an issue so sensitive, the background of the LAC have to be looked at, distinctly for the Western, Central and the Eastern Sectors. The Sectors and prominent areas where such potentially dangerous choreography of power-play takes place are as shown in Sketch 1.

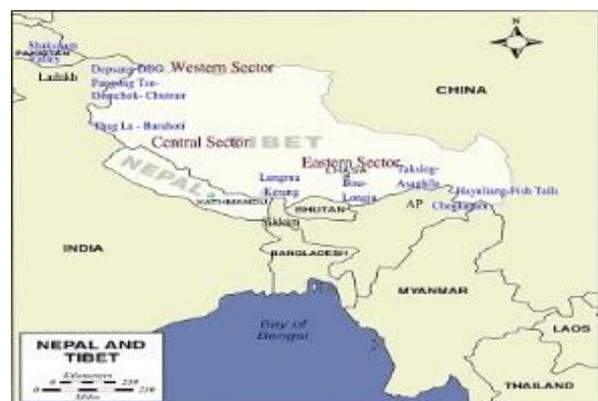


Figure 1 : Indo-Tibet Border and its Sector wise Points of Contention

Emergence of the LAC

In the **Western Sector**, the line separating the Indian Army and the PLA on 08 September 1962, prior to the latter's full scale offensive in October-November, is indicated by blue line in the Sketch 2. By the time PRC declared unilateral ceasefire on 22 November, the PLA had pushed into Indian territory up to their Claim Line at six points, as shown in amber-blue dashes in Sketch 2. These points, as marked on Map 3, are the Chip Chap Valley, Galwan Valley, Kongka La, Sirijap, Chushul and Demchok.

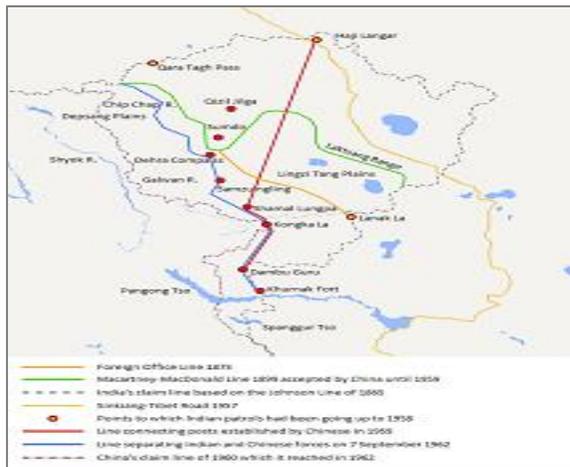
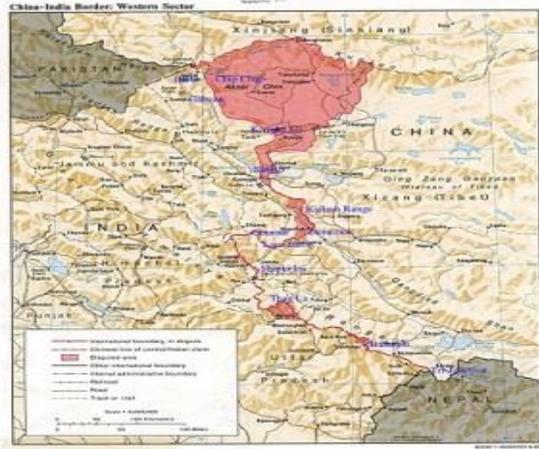


Figure 2 : Claim Lines in the Western Sector

Notably, South of Aksai Chin, PRC's Claim Line spills over the Kailash Range and its Southern slopes right up to the Indus River. Then, near the village of *New Demchok*, it turns South-West towards Chumur, upstream along the Charding Nala - a Southern tributary of Indus River. However, in 1962, PLA did not attempt to reach their Claim Line in this area, except that Demchok was occupied temporarily. Therefore, barring Village Demchok, starting from the Northern tip of Kailash Range, the Border Line, as it bulges to encompass the Lam Basin and then runs towards Chumur before turning South towards Shipki La in Himachal Pradesh, is not in dispute. These areas therefore did not see any action.



Map 3: Points of Ingress in the Western Sector

After the ceasefire, Beijing, while repudiating the proposals relating to military disengagement that was worked out under the ‘Colombo Plan’, offered “not to establish even civilian check posts in previously-held Indian strong points”, stipulating further that, “India would have to return to existing military positions along the entire frontier and refrain from placing civilian check posts in previously-held Chinese areas” (sic). Thus while the matter was left inconclusive, PLA Border Guards located themselves in their better liveable camps much to the East into Aksai Chin, the key bases being located astride the Western Tibet Highway – at

Sogma (Qizil Zilga) and Rudog (Ngari, Garr). From those camps, they patrolled up to the points which they had captured in 1962. Accordingly, Indian border forces held back short of these points while patrolling up to the 08 September 1962 Line.

Over time, patrol limits between the border forces on either side got established and the Indian version of the LAC emerged thus. In the **Aksai Chin** area, the LAC skirts those points on PRC’s Claim Line up to which the PLA had pushed into Indian territory in November 1962 before vacating these. In other areas, the LAC runs between that Claim Line and the 08 September 1962 Line. In rest of the **South-Eastern Ladakh**, barring the abandoned village of Old Demchok, the LAC conforms to the International Boundary (IB). It is important to note here that New Delhi, wary of provoking Beijing after the mauling received in 1962, settled her limit of control short of the locations which had been captured by the PLA troops in 1962. So there is no question of any ‘difference of perception’, not

for India in any case; this term may be but a Chinese ruse to extend their control up to an 'amplified' version of their Claim Line.

It is simple to appreciate that in order to keep the Xinjinag-Tibet Western Highway secure from possible Indian interdiction, PRC's Claim Line in Aksai Chin is aligned in a manner that, one, the Highway remains beyond India's tactical strike range, and two, the Highway is accorded additional protection from dominating ridge-lines running between the border and the Highway, namely, the Karakoram Range in the North and the Kailash Range in the East. PRC's unconventional idea of identifying mountainous borderlines along valleys rather than peaks and watersheds is meant to foster that plan. Apparently, Beijing did not think of claiming similar ridge-lines to buffer her salient lying South of the Chumur Area and the new highway that runs to Shipki La on

Himachal Pradesh-Tibet Border, a slip that she may presently be covering up by assertive probes in the Southern end of Ladakh, on either ends of the Demchok-Charding La-Ukdung La-Lam Basin-Chumur Salient.

In the **Central Sector**, there was no military conflict in 1962, though parts of the IB in Thag La, Rimkhim, Barahoti and India-Nepal-Tibet Tri-Junction are contested. India continued to patrol this Border Line as established by geography and traditional usage, while the PLA occasionally intruded into the Barahoti Plains where the Indians had been congregating annually to hold religious worship and fair. The LAC was defined thus.

In the **Eastern Sector**, PLA withdrew to the North of the well defined McMahon Line. This Line was drawn according to a formal agreement concluded at Shimla in 1914 by the representatives of Tibetan, Chinese and Indian

In the **Central Sector**, there was no military conflict in 1962, though parts of the IB in Thag La, Rimkhim, Barahoti and India-Nepal-Tibet Tri-Junction are contested.

Governments, though it was neither delineated nor ratified by the then Republican Government of China. Besides the legality of the Line, PRC has further decided to context the fixation of its coordinates in Thag La-Khinjemane (Zimithang/Tawang Sector), Longju-Taksing (Asaphi La-Subansiri Sector), Choglagam-Fish Tails (Hayuliang Sector) and Diphu La (Walong Sector) areas. Nevertheless, the LAC in this Sector is defined as the McMahon Line; there is no case for 'differing perceptions' here too.

Alignment of the LAC

It is clear that contrary to the newfound advocacy, there is no ambiguity in the Indian version of the LAC - Beijing is well aware of its alignment. Similarly, it is difficult to digest that Beijing is unaware of the line up to which the PLA had advanced in 1962, and is therefore unable to specify it. Duplicity therefore lies in Beijing's remaining uncommitted on her version of the LAC alignment. Obviously, that commitment is pended till the

LAC is advanced to as much as it can be to coincide with PRC's Claim Lines, and some more – the Demchok-Charding La-Lam Basin-Chumur Salient in Southern Ladakh, to wit. PLA's incursions and encroachments across the LAC and the IB are but recourses to pave the way for that gain.

Gradually, as Sino-Indian relations eased, there have been certain 'Confidence Building Measures' agreed upon in 1993, 1996, 2005 and 2012. Certain amplifications on conduct to patrolling were also signed in Oct 2013 under the Border Defence Cooperation Agreement (BDCA). However, these understandings have been subject to differential interpretations as it suits the PLA; such arbitrary behaviour has done little to instil any degree of confidence in the Indian mind. All this while, PLA's build up of military oriented infrastructure along the Indo-Tibet Border has continued at brisk pace, even as Beijing expects India to desist from following her example.

Having taken stock of the escalating contention regarding the LAC, we may now turn to examine the nuances associated with the recent incidents of, first, the transgressions across, and second, the encroachments into the areas controlled by India after the 1962 War.

Encroachments in the Western Sector

We have seen that after the ceasefire in the Western Sector the PLA had been venturing out from their camps to patrol westwards once or twice a month, and as to how had the LAC crystallised over time. Even if the altitudes in this Sector too range around 4500 metres, the terrain characteristics are quite different from that of the Eastern Sector. It is an oxygen starved, treeless extreme high altitude desert table-land where temperatures plummet down between minus five to minus fifty five degrees Centigrade. Hundred kilometre per hour winds carrying

specs of snow to painfully pit at exposed skin, water sources few and far between and altitude sicknesses add to the misery of survival in these areas – nature does not welcome human intruders here. Vehicular trafficability over larger parts of the remote plateau, its gradual slopes and wide open passes across the intervening ridges are the saving grace. The Aksai Chin part of the Western Sector – Sub-Sector North – is however an exception, access to it being blocked by the Southern tail of the formidable Karakoram Ranges and the passes across it being open only to foot or mule movement during the five summer months. Here, few vehicles, air dropped across these ranges on to the Aksai Chin plateau, help the purpose of surveillance, albeit limited, over the LAC.

Till about the Year 2003-04, incursions across the LAC had not risen to disconcerting proportions, neither had any reckonable

encroachment, apart from the Old Demchok Village, been found. The situation changed with the change of the power coterie at Beijing. Incidents of incursions and banner-waving drill rose sharply, and Ladakhi herders were often chased away from many of their traditional grazing grounds near the LAC. In 2010, PLA demanded stoppage of a track construction under the Area Development Plan near Demchok area, well within the LAC. Under the excuse of maintaining tranquillity at the border, New Delhi gave in, much to the chagrin of the locals. At about the same time, road building activity was detected on the Northern bank of Pangong Tso (Lake) across the LAC at Sirijap-Yu La area, which finally emerged as a blacktop road running five kilometres into Indian territory. Indeed, New Delhi did not find any compunction in her border forces having to abandon, under assertive demonstrations of the PLA, patrolling over many of the areas astride the Indian side of the LAC and then playing down the regular affront. Encouraged thus, Beijing next brought the Chumur

area into a newfound dispute, the purpose being to gobble up the entire Indian salient of Demchok-Charding La-Ukdung La-Lam Basin-Chumur in Southern Ladakh. Beijing's stratagem of 'creeping migration' towards her Claim Line, 'amplified' this time, in the face of a pusillanimous Indian State, found expression thus.

In mid-April of 2013, PLA set up a camp 19 kilometres West of the LAC, in 'Raki Nala' area of Depsang Plains in Eastern Ladakh. The incursion was noticed after some ten days, and a vociferous media caused much consternation among the Indian public. Having no ability to evict the incursion by force in the face of PLA's inevitable recourse to 'counter-attack in self-defence', New Delhi acted sensibly to keep Beijing in good humour through diplomatic sweeteners. A magnanimous China then decided to let India off in return for a token offering in the form of dismantling some rudimentary 'bunkers' (*sangar*) in Chumur area. A crisis was averted thus.

However, Beijing's purpose of pushing away the LAC in PRC's favour had been met, thereby bringing her two major advantages: One, in Southern Ladakh, India has had to acknowledge the existence of a new dispute over what is actually an IB; and Two, in Aksai Chin, India has lost control over a swath of her territory in the Raki Nala area.

Many analysts saw these two incidents as Beijing's authoritative decrees that New Delhi could not help but reconcile with, and therefore an indication of future developments ominous in content and dangerous in fallouts. That dark apprehension came true in Sep 2014 when incursions in Chumur area morphed into a five kilometre deep encroachment by PLA Border Guard Regiment troops, accompanied with track construction into Indian territory and razing of Indian border forces' defensive stone walls.

Many analysts saw these two incidents as Beijing's authoritative decrees that New Delhi could not help but reconcile with, and therefore an indication of future developments ominous in content and dangerous in fallouts.

Simultaneously, in Demchok area, PLA troops herded a group of hapless Tibetans from the village of Zhangxigang situated some 25 kilometres East of the LAC, to demonstrate against Ladakh administration's attempts to carry out certain irrigation works across the Charding Nala, which as described earlier, is a Southern tributary of the Indus River and falls well within the LAC. Indian

border forces responded to both these provocations according to the mutually settled 'operating procedure'. The 'stand-off' lasted all through Chinese

President Xi Jinping's visit and some more days, before PLA agreed to vacate the Chumur encroachment in return for removal of certain *sangars*; development work in Demchok, of course, was abandoned, or so it seems.

Encroachments in the Eastern Sector

The Eastern Sector of India's Northern Border should actually be referred to as an IB, but Beijing's parroting seems to have trapped New Delhi into occasionally referring to it as 'LAC'. The Border runs astride a terrain that is extremely difficult to traverse. It is approachable only along the five distinct and mutually isolated river valleys and their equal number of smaller tributaries which run North to down South from watersheds situated on the McMahon Line. The last 80-100 kilometres to the Border is particularly hazardous to traverse; peak altitudes above 5300 meters separated by narrow, steep valleys 1000 metres or so deep, vast distances to be traversed over foot tracks that literally cling to steep and slippery mountainous slopes, foggy and damp weather and sub-zero temperatures adding up to the challenge the soldiers, already burdened with loads of 30-34 kilograms, have to tackle. Border surveillance posts are far between and completely isolated from each other. Unstable weather and heavy wind-streams impose severe

restrictions on flying due to which air maintenance of the posts and air surveillance over the Border is more hazardous than not. The only saving grace is the existence of vegetation up to altitudes of 4000 metres or so and abundance of fresh water; these blessings makes it bearable to breathe and survive.

The plateau-land across the McMahon Line is much less hazardous. Besides, PLA has developed elaborate logistic infrastructure close to the Border Line. Under these conditions, it is difficult to monitor all acts of incursion by the PLA Border Guard units. Encroachments are however, detectable when periodic border patrols stumble upon these. In 1967, an encroachment had been attempted at Nathu La (East Sikkim) before being thwarted by the Indian Army troops. One encroachment at Taksing area (Subansiri Sector) had been noticed in 1976, a part of which at Longju-Bisa remains occupied by the PLA. Then, in 1986, an encroachment North of the Wangdung Post (Zimithang

Sector) was intercepted midway. This led to the Army reinforcing and blocking PLA's further ingress in what came to be referred as the 'Sumdorong Chu incident'. Though halted, PLA refused to vacate the area already encroached upon, claiming it to be to the South of the McMahon Line. Similar encroachments and attempts to establish camps further into Indian territory have been detected during the past six years or so, and countered - partially by India's protestations but mostly by hostility of an unliveable terrain.

Beijing's game plan is obvious; it is to push the LAC forward to merge it with the recently amplified version of her Claim Line, and then settle the matter by her 'generous' acceptance of the LAC as the IB.

Recent reports indicate that PLA has commenced its attempts to ingress across the McMahon Line at Thag La (Zimithang Sector), Fish Tails (Hayuliang Sector) and Diphu La area (Walong Sector); the first turning into encroachment and the latter two vacated on their own after two weeks of camping. May be, there have been more such ingresses, undetected.

Notably, PLA's vacation of an encroachment is never full, even after vacation it operates at least till half the way, thus compensating itself for its troubles.

Managing the Situation

Beijing's game plan is obvious; it is to push the LAC forward to merge it with the recently amplified version of her Claim Line, and then settle the matter by her 'generous' acceptance of the LAC as the IB. To that end, short of hard military action, Beijing would continue with assertive patrolling and encroachments to push into Indian controlled territory as much as she can, before taking a call on military imposition. India's response to the PLA's new found border activism has been mixed - stoic at the ground level and reasoned at the political space, but defensive overall. There is no other option

actually. By its sustained disorientation from military security, the Indian State has placed itself in a situation where forceful stonewalling of PLA's ingress is out of question - not till at least a decade is devoted to revival of its atrophied military power. Resultantly, diplomacy, with due deference, to raise indulgence in Beijing's demeanour remains the only course left for New Delhi to deal with PRC's agenda. Meanwhile, with every encroachment, even the vacated ones, a swath of territory turns out-of-bounds for the wary Indian border forces, *inter alia* conforming to PRC's inching towards its amplified Claim Line. The rudder is completely under Beijing's control.

The saving grace comes from Beijing herself. Thus instituted at her behest over the years have been five sets of measures towards confidence building and avoidance of armed confrontation on the LAC. Even if compliance of these remain more or less at the PLA's discretion, there is some ground given to India to stand, if

precariously. India would have to wield these measures wisely, at times reinforced by resolute military posturing short of provoking sensitivities on either side, to *stall* PRC's 'creeping migration' into Indian territory. But in the final analysis, build up of military prowess is imperative for India to be taken seriously enough, and so to *halt* PRC's territorial usurpation.

Recently we have witnessed institution of certain additional measures to manage the border dispute. Similarly, there has been a welcome toning down in Beijing's hegemonic harangue at her neighbours. This development points, not to a change of heart in Beijing, but a realisation that her military activism in the neighbourhood might have been pre-mature, and that has triggered coalescence of alliances among her tormented neighbours. But whatever be the decision making body in PRC, policies over its territorial claims are not likely to change ever. To that extent, any hope of let up from Chinese

assertiveness may not be entertained.

Standing up to China's highhandedness without provoking her aggressive instincts

is the only course to keep her in control; China's neighbours have to learn to live with this discomfiture.

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Imperatives of Defence Modernisation and Indigenisation

- *Vice Admiral (Retd) Raman Puri**

Self Reliance in defence production has been a national goal set since the 1950's. Post 1971, it was quantified as reversing the ratio of indigenous production to imports which was in the ratio of 30:70 to 70:30. However, on the ground, the situation has not changed. On the contrary, after more than 40 years, the level of imports has only increased. There are many causes for the present situation and in the order of their significance, these are :-

A very incorrect approach to Acquisition Planning which is not tuned to meeting future challenges. Modernisation by definition should be a process of creating military wherewithal to prevail at the locust of engagements (which may be virtual in future) foreseen on a rolling basis over the next decade (at the least) and possibly two decades in many cases in a country like India with a complex geopolitical situation at hand and with very limited access to

advanced technologies. To achieve this, we need a Force Development Strategy based on Defence Planning Guidelines. Such guidelines would be based on the National Security Strategy which defines the Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces in a future timeframe. The current system, as codified in the Long Term Perspective Plan bases the modernisation needs on the Raksha Mantri's ops directive which only visualizes current contingencies.

The above leads to a very faulty acquisition system tuned to largely covering the current voids, and necessarily results in procurements, especially in the case of the army, which are termed as urgent operational and inescapable requirements or requirements that are needed to make up force levels approved decades ago. The Government is then in fact coerced into a buy/ buy and make route which cannot lead to meaningful indigenization and

* *Vice Admiral (Retd) Raman Puri, Distinguished Fellow, VIF*

self reliance and even covering the current voids for reasons explained below. Except for one to one replacement of imported spares and aggregates whose manufacturing technology is transferred, no other indigenisation by and large takes place. Indigenisation which gives us a design to build capability is possible only in systems developed domestically. The Navy with its integral design capability has done better though in the crucial requirement of combat and main propulsion systems, its indigenous quotient is average to poor.

Substantial procurement lead times exist even for

Substantial procurement lead times exist even for foreign in production Buy/ Buy and Make/Make even with JV programmes.

foreign in production Buy/ Buy and Make/Make even with JV programmes. RFI, Firming up the QR, AON, Issue of RFP, Trials & evaluation in different terrain and climatic conditions, OEM selection, price & contract negotiations have to take place, on completion of which there is a lead time to supply in various phases with increasing indigenous production content. Our experience is that the start of delivery can take 6-8 years and more so that while procurements are initiated to cover immediate

operational voids these continue to exist. Also while this system designed to fill existing voids carries on, new voids emerge and are recognized.

As regards indigenization, it may be mentioned that by definition it is a process of converting raw materials into equipment and systems acceptable to the user such that we do not need to go to the OEM for deep repair/ upgradation of the system and then productionising them (Mark II and so on.) Joint Ventures /TOT

agreements with a production agency essentially result in Licence Production and cannot meet the

goals of indigenization. This is as the design technology is not transferred and is very difficult to transfer anyway because the process of technology development remains opaque and critical design is all held closely by the OEM or as a result of its country's policies.

The Systems and production technologies released to the country will further be governed by the Wassenaar Arrangement (WA), the Export Control regimes in place and the OEM's internal policies, so that critical sub

systems and aggregates continue to be OEM supply. This is so for example in the SU 30, 4phase TOT case and enhanced FDI or otherwise will not substantially alter this situation

Finally, transfer of technology based on licensed production of systems even with joint ventures result in a built to prints capability which implies that a system in production elsewhere is productionised by an industry (public or private) in India through transfer of production drawings and software programs. The design and development aspects remain opaque. This is very different for prototype to production capability required of the industry when productionising indigenously developed systems where prototype drawings through some iterations as trials progress have to be converted to production standard drawings by the industry. There are some exceptions like Bharat Electronics but largely industry in India is tuned to license production. It can be said that excessive dependence on license production has

degraded the industries capability to productionise indigenously developed systems.

It can, however, be established that considerable technology base has been established in the country including in the private sector as the IGMDP (Missiles Systems), LCA, MBT, ATV Lakshya, Naval Projects and others have matured and have been productionised\ are in the process of productionisation after trials and evaluation. It is this base that can now deliver results in many areas in a 5 to 10 year time frame and as a matter of policy concentrated upon. Many structural and process changes will be required and projects related to Mission Needs approved in a 5 to 10 year and more time frame depending on the Technology Readiness Levels in the country as is the practice all over the world. These are, however, worth making if we are to have a self-reliant and affordable armed force which underpins our foreign and internal policy objectives with confidence.

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A Perspective on India's Approach to the G20 Summit 2014

- ***Brig (Retd) Vinod Anand & Sobha Menon****

Having come to power on the slogan of development and growth, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's approach to the issues to be discussed at the G20 Leaders' Summit 2014 on November 15 and 16 in Brisbane will be influenced by domestic priorities, while at the same time taking into account the realities of the international system and relations. Not that there will be any major departure in India's economic policies: As stressed by him, sustainable growth, job creation, infrastructure development and food security are Modi's major priorities, most of which rhyme well with the goals of the G20—a forum of the world's 20 major economies. There continue to be differences among the developed countries and the emerging economies of the G20 on the way to respond to the persisting weaknesses in the world economy. India's position of strength, in this context, lies in the fact that it was not much affected by the 1997

Asian financial crisis or the global meltdown of 2008.

The G20, also known as the Group of 20, which was formed in 1999 as an expanded and more inclusive version of the club of rich nations called G8, has given developing nations a more powerful voice in contributing to decision-making about global economic issues. What began with G7 as an informal get-together of finance ministers and central bankers is today a forum that represents two-thirds of the world's people and 85 per cent of the world economy. The Asian economic slump—which hurt most the ASEAN nations, besides Hong Kong, South Korea and Japan—was the first to indicate how a global economic system, skewed in favour of some powerful nations, could negatively impact the weaker economies. However, it was the financial crisis of 2008 that was the biggest motivating factor in giving more importance to the G20. Triggered off by the trillions of dollars of

* *Brig (Retd) Vinod Anand is Senior Fellow, VIF & Sobha Menon is an independent financial journalist*

debts incurred by the investment banks of Wall Street, it had wreaked havoc in North America, Europe and Japan.

In marshalling a response to the crisis (and to prevent future ones), the US invited the G20, not the G8, to Washington. Under the circumstances, that was expected: After all, it's the growth of Brazil, Russia, India, China (the BRIC countries) and now South Africa that has driven the global economy; the G8 countries are growing slower. Therefore, the BRICS countries were seen to be critical for ensuring continued global economic prosperity.

Prior to the financial collapse on Wall Street, the leaders of the G8 would meet and decide on global economic issues without much interference from the BRICS countries. However, these countries have grown in importance as they cater to the needs of the G8 countries: Russia provides most of the natural gas to Europe, China manufactures for the US, and India has its high tech services. With growing concern among developing countries that the world's financial architecture

benefits the rich countries to the detriment of the growing economies, it was about time that the G20 took centre stage.

For India, there's a lot to gain from the deliberations at the summit. The country accounts for just about 3 per cent of world GDP and an even smaller share of world trade. One of the goals of the new government is to improve those numbers, and being a part of the G20's deliberations can go a long way in helping achieve that.

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New Developments

In the run up to the G20 Summit, a number of economic developments, such

as the formation of the New Development Bank by BRICS and the China-sponsored Asian Infrastructure Development Bank—of which India is also a founding member—has been unpalatable to the West, especially the US. These institutions are being seen as direct competitors to the western-dominated IMF and World Bank as also the Asian Development Bank.

From the Indian perspective, the huge requirement of funds for its infrastructure development has to

be sourced from as many sources as possible. In the current Five Year Plan, India needs one trillion US dollars for infrastructure development. According to a World Bank estimate, developing economies spend one trillion USD a year on infrastructure currently, but maintaining current growth rates and meeting future demands will require an additional one trillion USD per year through 2020. With this in view, India has been stressing that the G20 countries should look for ways to recapitalize multilateral development banks (MDBs), such as the World Bank. Where large-scale funding for infrastructure development is the need of the hour, the MDBs' dispensation, at present, is meagre.

India is also committed to maintaining a strong and adequately resourced International Monetary Fund (IMF). And so, the government as well as other G20 countries need to push for reforms in the IMF's governance and quota system—which reflects a country's economic size and hence its voting power. The reforms will take into account the growth in the emerging economies and will, therefore, improve the quota share

of many an emerging economy. These reforms had been agreed upon in 2010 and reaffirmed at the G20 leaders' agreement in St Petersburg last year. However, the US has not yet ratified the reforms and the G20 is expected to urge it to do so.

If the reforms are carried out, India's quota share will rise to 2.75 per cent from 2.44 per cent, taking it to the eighth position from no. 11 now. Its voting share will rise to 2.63 per cent from 2.34 per cent.¹

In short, India's concerns at the G20 summit will be largely the same as last year. They will include:

- Rebalancing global governance by reforming financial institutions (and getting the US to ratify some of the reforms agreed to in 2010)
- Reforming the global financial and monetary systems to provide better financial safety nets
- Checking global macro imbalances
- Ensuring lines of credit and export finance to developing countries

- Checking any protectionist measures and
- Widening the current agenda to include developmental issues

Some Key Concerns for India

The eradication of corruption and bringing back of black money stashed by many Indians in banks abroad were some of the election promises which ensured Modi's victory. In this matter, New Delhi is in sync with the G20's endeavours on the exchange of financial information among financial centres, that facilitate tax evasion at present. An automatic exchange of financial information annually and access to dated information on request are on the cards.

To put pressure on these offshore financial centres, the G20 has asked them to commit to the new norm well in time for the Brisbane summit. At the preliminary meet of G20 finance ministers and central bank governors in Cairns in September, it was decided that the global initiative to stamp out tax evasion through automatic information exchange would begin

in 2017-2018, subject to completion of necessary legislative procedures. This will provide a step-change in the G20's ability to tackle and deter tax evasion and avoidance through cross-border arrangements.

The G20 finance ministers also resolved to expedite the OECD's latest Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) action plan—this is a move that will make it difficult for multinationals to shift profits from one jurisdiction to another to save taxes. India has

The eradication of corruption and bringing back of black money stashed by many Indians in banks abroad were some of the election promises which ensured Modi's victory.

been impacted negatively by many of the tax avoidance methods used by some prominent multinationals.

India is also looking to benefit from the G20's move to create a Global Infrastructure Initiative which will help boost quality investment and growth in the infrastructure sector. This initiative is expected to complement the World Bank Group's efforts in developing a Global Infrastructure Facility (GIF), which will help the private sector in developing economies raise infrastructure investment from some of the world's largest

banks and funding agencies. World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim has said that the GIF was being designed to tap into expertise from within and outside of the WBG and deliver complex public-private infrastructure projects that no single institution could address on its own.

India also wants the G20 to consider creating currency swap lines to protect currencies of emerging economies against excessive volatility caused by any withdrawal of the U.S. Federal Reserve's monetary stimulus. One instance was the alarming depreciation of the rupee last year when the Fed first signalled that it would reverse 'quantitative easing'. This is an unconventional monetary policy which allows a central bank to purchase securities and increase the money supply in the market. The sudden exit from such policies can be damaging to the growth of emerging economies. Indian interlocutors like the Reserve Bank of India governor Raghuram Rajan have called for rich nations to take greater account of the spillover effects of their monetary policies on emerging markets. In the current uncertain economic environment, currency swap facilities between countries help

minimize foreign borrowing costs and hedge exposure to currency rate risks.

Indian finance ministry officials are of the view that the volatility in the external environment is worrisome, and there is a need for the G20 to seek collaborative solutions with guidance from the IMF.

Meanwhile, there has been a call from environmental activists to include climate change on the G20's agenda, but Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott has categorically stated that the Brisbane summit's priority would be global economic growth and not the environment. The Indian government's stand too is no different. The United Nations Climate Change Conference in Lima, Peru, after all, is slated just a couple of weeks after the G20 summit.

State of Economy

The recent G20 finance ministers' meeting at Cairns also reiterated the group's commitment to develop new measures that aim to lift the collective GDP by 1.8 to 2 per cent by 2018. This is expected to add two trillion dollars to the world economy in the next four years.

The contribution of India and the other emerging economies of G20 is likely to be much more than that of the developed economies. India's GDP growth is showing an upward trajectory of 5.6 per cent in 2014 and 6.4 per cent in 2015, according to IMF's projections.

In a global economic environment that still faces persistent weaknesses in demand and supply side constraints that hamper growth, G20 foreign ministers declared they were united and determined in their response to these challenges.

Some Strategic Aspects

Prime Minister Modi will travel to Australia for the G20 Leaders' Summit after attending the ASEAN-India Summit and the East Asia Summit in Myanmar. He will have a bilateral meet with Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott, who recently visited India and signed a Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement that enables supply of uranium to India; it had been denied so far due to geo-political constraints. Modi will be one of the three visiting dignitaries (other two being Chinese President Xi

Jinping and Britain's David Cameron) among the G20 leaders to address the Australian Parliament. Modi will also travel to Sydney to address people of Indian origin at Olympic Park in an event that is expected to be similar to the Madison Square Garden experience during his US visit. The overall objective is to paint a positive India story and invite investment. Strengthening India's relationship with Australia forms part of the 'Act East Policy' of the new government.

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Modi will also travel to Fiji where no Indian PM has visited since 1981. People of Indian origin make up over 35 per cent of Fiji's population.

Modi is expected to use the opportunity to meet many other leaders of the region and strengthen the existing ties the country has in the South Pacific region. As it happens, President Xi will also be travelling to Fiji at the same time.

The Prime Minister is likely to have bilateral meetings with German Chancellor Angela Merkel and British Prime Minister David Cameron on the sidelines on the

G20 Summit. There could also be other bilateral or multilateral meets (for instance BRICS)—however, there is little information on those meetings. The agenda for all such meetings will be mostly economic, but strategic underpinnings are also likely.

Concluding Observations

For India, G-20 is an important platform to show to the world its capabilities in helping shape international agendas, especially those which affect it economically. With 19 of the largest economies and the EU as members, the institution carries enough weight to be able to bring about changes on a global arena. But then consensus among the members is lacking (which is not surprising as it is characteristic of any

multilateral platform) because of the contrasting interests and objectives of developed and emerging economies. Having observed how such international institutions have been used by dominant powers to push through their views, India would like to be a participant in defining new international norms that guide such institutions. This is part of a strategy of broadening India's options in exercising influence in different areas.

¹ http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/us-reluctance-forces-imf-to-put-off-fresh-quota-reforms-114012400236_1.html

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Wagah attack: New Groups Reviving Terrorist Activities in Pakistan

- *Gaurav Dixit**

In one of the deadliest attacks to hit Pakistan in several months, a suicide bomber detonated explosives near a Pakistani paramilitary checkpoint near Wagah border in Punjab province on November 2, killing at least 60 and injuring over 100 persons.

The blast took place at a checkpoint near the Indo-Pak border when hundreds of people were returning from a military ceremony carried out by both the Pakistani and the Indian military on their respective sides of the border. Soon after the attack, the Pakistani Taliban (TTP) claimed responsibility for the bombing. Two other militant groups - Jundullah and the Jamat-ul-Ahrar, a splinter group of the TTP, laid claims for the attack. It is not clear yet which group actually carried out the attack. However, the rise and possible involvement of Jamat-ul-Ahrar can be seen in a larger context which can have a cataclysmic impact on Pakistan.

The incident took place in the

backdrop of a steady decline in terrorist attacks over the last four months, especially in Pakistan's Punjab province which has witnessed a decline with an average of 1.75 attacks per month as against 4.5 before the army operation began. Although low in number of incidents, it had inflicted severe casualties. According to South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP), Punjab in 2014 has recorded a total of 162 fatalities, including 122 civilians, 18 forces as against 55 fatalities, including 43 civilians, four Security personnel in the corresponding period of 2013. Punjab also recorded four suicide attacks, resulting in 82 fatalities, as against no such attack in the corresponding period of 2013.

Overall, Pakistan has witnessed a decline in number of casualties for the first 10 months of this year- 1,369 civilians have been killed in terrorist attacks in Pakistan, compared with 2,845 in the same period last year.

The Wagah attack cannot be seen

* *Gaurav Dixit is an independent strategic analyst*

in isolation as it points towards growing instability in Punjab province. The attackers have sent strong signals by this spectacular attack, the deadliest since September 2013, when more than 100 people were killed at a church in the northwestern city of Peshawar. The recent attack has exhibited the terrorists' intention to carry out attacks on some crucial location in Punjab such as Wagah Border.

Few security experts believed that the attack was aimed at establishing the Jamat-ul-Ahrar's supremacy over other Taliban factions. Rivalry between various groups in pursuit of their extremist goals has been a key factor in inflicting maximum civilian and economic losses in the past.

Series of Splits and rise of Jamat-ul -Ahrar

Jamat-ul-Ahrar is a splinter group founded during August 2014. The group is led by former TTP leaders such as Ihsanullah Ihsan, the former spokesman of the TTP, and Omar Khurasani, another

powerful senior leader of the TTP. Its cadres comprise mostly from the Mohmand Agency and claim to have the support of 70 to 80 per cent of TTP commanders and fighters¹.

Internal differences and tensions within TTP had been growing ever since the group's leader, Hakimullah Mehsud, was killed in a U.S. drone strike in November 2013. The battle for power along

with difference in functioning, adherence to Islamic laws as well as differences in ideologies and over war with Pakistan army had created much fissures in the TTP movement.

The result had been three major split in last one year including the crucial split of Jamat-ul-Ahrar. In February, Ahrar-ul-Hind, headed by Maulana Qasim, a former leader in the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, was formed after the TTP opened peace talks with the Pakistani government². Within few months, unhappy with the dictatorship of the central leadership of the TTP, the Mehsud tribe led by Said Khan Sajna decided to break up with the

The attackers have sent strong signals by this spectacular attack, the deadliest since September 2013, when more than 100 people were killed at a church in the northwestern city of Peshawar. The recent attack has exhibited the terrorists' intention to carry out attacks on some crucial location in Punjab such as Wagah Border.

TTP following Mullah Fazlullah's (chief of TTP) May 14 decision of sacking Sajna as the Ameer of the South Waziristan chapter of the TTP³.

The latest break of Jamat-ul-Ahrar has been the biggest split since formation of TTP in 2007. The new group includes TTP factions from the tribal agencies of Mohmand, Bajaur, Khyber, and Arakzai, and the districts of Charsadda, Peshawar, and Swat. Additionally, Ahrar ul-Hind has now merged with Jamat-ul-Ahrar. According to Pakistani intelligence chief, majority of Taliban commanders in Pakistan have broken away from the group's leadership in a feud over an army offensive in the country⁴.

The split was long overdue as the tension was mounting between the TTP chief Maulana Fazlullah and the Mohmand Agency chapter Chief Omar Khalid Khurasani, finally leading to termination of Khalid Khurasani. The reason cited for termination was for indiscipline and for patronizing 'suspicious' militant groups such as Ahrar ul Hind and Junood Khorasan.

Omar Khalid Khurasani has accused TTP leadership of

diverting from the aim and ideologies of TTP and following un-Islamic activities like kidnapping for ransom. TTP leadership under Fazlullah is also accused of being involved in the killing of its commanders Nadeem Abbas, Asmatullah Shaheen Bhattani, Tariq Mansoor and 200 fighters of the Mehsud tribe⁵. The differences in TTP ranks further deepen under attack by the security forces during the military operation Zarb-e-Azb, many blaming Fazlullah of weak leadership.

Recently, TTP faced another blow when Punjab Chapter (Punjabi Taliban) leader Asmatullah Muawiya announced termination of its militant activity in Pakistan and intention to limit its militant activity to Afghanistan. Later, TTP commander Abu Basir declared Asmatullah as an ISI agent. Jamat-ul-Ahrar has claimed support of Commander Abu Ibrahim of the Punjabi Taliban.

Strengthening Jamat-ul-Ahrar and trouble ahead

Jamat-ul-Ahrar claims to have dozens of Punjabi fighters. "The majority of our fighters in the Punjab are highly educated people", said a member of the

group⁶. The merger of Ahrar-ul-Hind, a group with strong hold in Punjab with Jamat-ul-Ahrar, and good relation with Junad-e-Hafza, another shadowy organization based in Punjab has made Jamat-ul-Ahrar presence stronger in the Punjab. Ahrar-ul-Hind has been involved in some of the most brutal and spectacular attacks in 2014 including attack on an Islamabad district court on March 3. On March 13, the group claimed deadly attacks in Peshawar and Quetta which killed a total of 19 people⁷.

The splinter group is itching to project power and establish itself in Punjab, primarily in urban areas

Al Qaeda has longstanding links with anti-India terrorist groups including the dreaded Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) operating from Punjab.

which has been stronghold of now merged Ahrar-ul-Hind. The struggle for power between the factions as well as other groups has turned violent in the past and could be expected to continue. Earlier this year, Sajna and Sheryar groups of the TTP have been involved in violent infighting in order to control South Waziristan's Mehsud tribal area. Similar infighting can be expected in Punjab which is home to at least 57 terrorist groups along with being safe haven for

transnational groups fighting in Afghanistan & Uzbekistan.

Jamat-ul-Ahrar has earlier welcomed Al Qaeda chief Ayman Al Zawahiri's announcement of the launch of a South Asian branch of the terror network. Al Qaeda has longstanding links with anti-India terrorist groups including the dreaded Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) operating from Punjab. On the other hand few factions of TTP have pledged their support for Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (IS). Al-Zawahiri and the core of al

Qaeda are locked in battle with IS for the leadership of the global jihadist movement. This could further intensify the battle

for supremacy in Pakistan.

As these groups are unwilling to negotiate with the Pakistani government and have vowed to continue attacks in the country, the possibility of more bloodbaths in the region cannot be ruled out. Pakistan is now confronted with a scenario where Al-Qaeda in alliance with these splinter groups on one hand and inter group rivalry on other hand might create more destruction in order to destabilise Pakistan.

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Vimarsha on Teacher's Day

Noted educationist and former NCERT Director Prof J S Rajput addressed the Vimarsha programme at VIF on the occasion of Teacher's Day on September 5, 2014.

Speaking on the topic, 'Education and Teachers: Emerging Perspectives', he outlined the problems Indian education is facing as a fall out of practicing Macaulay's philosophy. He lamented that Indian education system is still devoid of the philosophy that "education has to be rooted in culture and committed to progress". Referring to the class structure within the schooling system, he said while on the one hand many children are taking advantage of the internet, on the other for many even the basic facilities of chalk and black boards are not available. We must do everything to remove this disparity and provide equal opportunity to the best education for one and all, he said.

Prof Rajput pointed out that one of the main reasons for the falling standards of the education in the country was the Government's total apathy towards recruiting qualified teachers and handing

over the entire generation to unqualified teachers on contract basis without any check, balance and monitoring. Emphasizing on the need for a massive recruitment drive for trained teachers at the school level, he said today more than 40% of the sanctioned teaching posts in the universities also are vacant and they need to be filled up with the people who have right kind of approach to education and have the intellectual bent of mind. Quoting Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan's words, "Intellectual work is not for all, it is only for the intellectually competent", he said only such people should get a place in our universities who are intellectually equipped and competent to handle higher levels of learning, teaching and research.

Earlier, introducing the subject, Gen. N.C. Vij, Director, VIF, underlined the need for an education system which would enable the country to emerge strong in the comity of nations. Highlighting the role and importance of teacher in the Indian society, he pointed out the age old system where a teacher occupied the same place in the life

of an individual as that of God and Parents. In this regard, he referred to the three *rinās* (debts) one owes in life – *Daiva Rina*, *Pitra Rina* and *Guru Rina* (Debt to God, Parents and Teacher).

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Book launch: “Decoding India’s Defence procurement: An Analysis of Defence Procurement Procedure 2013”

On 12 September 2014, General Shankar Roychowdhury, PVSM, ADC (Retd), former Chief of the Army Staff and Member of Parliament released the book ‘Decoding India’s Defence procurement: An Analysis of Defence Procurement Procedure 2013’ edited by Gen NC Vij. The edited volume is based on the proceedings of a seminar organized by the VIF wherein renowned military and civilian experts expressed their views on a wide variety of issues connected with defence procurement. The preface of the book has been written by Mr. Ajit Doval, the erstwhile Director of VIF and now the national security Advisor. In the final chapter a number of critical recommendations have been listed which are relevant for the policy makers and practitioners. The book release ceremony was attended by a large number of both serving and retired military officers representing all the services as also other stakeholders who are concerned with defence

procurement and acquisitions including research and development.

Before the launch of the book Gen NC Vij welcomed the Chief Guest and introduced the subject. The book covers all aspects of Defence Procurement Procedure 2013 (DPP), the opportunities and challenges, operationalising of DPP, the questions of Offsets and price negotiations, need for establishing a robust defence industrial base, the roles of Private and Public Sector Enterprises, need for indigenization and the way ahead. Release of the book was followed by short presentations by the book chapter contributors

Lt. Gen. JP Singh, former Chief of Integrated Defence Staff and also Deputy Army Chief (Policy and Systems) presented his analysis of the current state of ‘Offsets’ and the functioning of Defence Offset Management Wing. He brought aspects of revised offset guidelines and problems and prospects

related to same. He stressed on what needs to be done further to operationalise offsets that would help us reinvigorate our defence industrial base. He gave examples of how other countries have managed offsets successfully. And he approved of the current policy of asking for 30 to 50 percent of contract as offsets. Vice Admiral Anup Singh, former Chief of Western Naval Command and Deputy Chief of IDS gave out his views on establishing a Defence Industrial Base through full participation by public and private enterprises. He was of the view that a huge potential of the private sector still remains untapped. Capability of Defence Public Sector Units (DPSU) and Ordnance Factories has remained insufficient to meet the growing demands of technology. He welcomed the announcement by the government in enhancing the Foreign Direct Investment from 26 to 49 percent in India's defence industry.

Mr. Satish Kaura, Chairman and Managing Director of the Samtel Group, felt encouraged by the DPP 2013 and was of the view that it will go long way in building a strong foundation for indigenization. He spoke of PM Modi's drive for 'Make in India'.

However, the objectives of indigenization can only be achieved if conducive environment is provided. The private industry was looking for a level play ground vis-à-vis multinational companies and DPSUs. He also made a number of other recommendations that could enhance the participation of the private sector in building defence systems including weapons and munitions. There is a requirement of building and nurturing private companies especially in some niche areas e.g. in electronic warfare or other high technology areas. He stressed on manufactures to develop technologies as any imported technology would continue to be controlled by the foreign owner. He also said that there is a need for a continuous dialogue with the decision makers; as DPP 2014 is being prepared no such dialogue has taken place between decision makers and manufacturers.

Gen. NC Vij gave out some of the critical recommendations that have been made. He dwelt on criticality of defence preparedness, need for appropriate defence budget to ensure availability of wherewithal for the same and establishing timelines for acquisitions and ensuring accountability. He was of the view

that our modernisation plans must also cater for timely and constant upgradation of equipment. Indigenization has to be stressed upon with the government amplifying some of the definitions of 'Buy', 'Buy and Make'. Forthcoming revision of DPP is expected to go into some of these issues. Level playing field for the private manufacturers in terms of equal tax treatment and minimizing the technical and financial risks would encourage the private sector to build up defence industrial base. There is also a need to incentivize defence exports where the government has had some inhibitions. Many other additional details regarding the improvements that should be

brought about in DPP have been given in the book.

Towards the end Gen Shankar Roychowdhury spoke on his experiences during his Army tenure and difficulties regarding defence acquisitions. He emphasized on the need for putting into place appropriate procedures for defence procurement and development of an indigenous defence industrial base. Finally, Mr. Shobit Arya, publisher of the book gave a vote of thanks and mentioned that the book has already attracted buyers from as far away places as North America.

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Round Table on PM Modi's US Visit

AVIF Round Table was organized on 15 September 2014 to deliberate on core issues in India-US relations on the eve of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the United States. Ambassador Lalit Man Singh, former Foreign Secretary and Ambassador to the US chaired the meeting while General NC Vij, Director VIF, made the introductory remarks and conducted the proceedings. Others present included Mr. CD Sahay, Lt. Gen. RK Sawhney, Mr. Rajiv Kumar, Ambassadors Kanwal Sibal, TCA Rangachari, Sanjay Singh, Rajiv Sikri, Brig. Vinod Anand and Dr. Harinder Sekhon.

The discussions revolved around trade and economic links, defence and security cooperation, the evolving strategic relationship, climate and WTO issues especially the Trade Facilitation Agreement, regional security issues and global issues. There was a general consensus amongst the participants on the aforementioned issues. Finally, a set of recommendations were arrived at which could serve as a useful input for policy makers.

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Round Table on Cyber Security

The VIF held a Round Table Discussion on 18 Sep 2014 to examine the national perspective of cyber security in terms of social, economic, political and military dimensions. The panel of discussants, comprising a select group of professionals including Mr Chandrashekhar, President NASSCOM, Mr Kiran Karnik, former President NASSCOM, Dr Gulshan Rai, Director General CERT-In, Dr Kamlesh Bajaj, CEO, Data Security Council of India (DSCI), Dr Prem Chand, Lt Gen (Retd) Davinder Kumar, Cdr (Retd) Mukesh Saini and Mr Loknath Behra, among others, discussed India's lackadaisical cyber defence capabilities and the various remedial measures needed to bring it at par with the developed nations.

The team comprehensively dealt with issues such as threat landscape in the cyber domain including the social media, cyber security as a strategic enabler, reviewing and rebooting India's National Cyber Security Policy (NCSP) and building eco system to enhance and operationalise it, road blocks preventing India to build a robust cyber security capability, and major strategic

initiatives. The conference extended over five sessions in a single day, with a session each devoted to Environmental Scan & National Cyber Security Policy (NCSP), Building Comprehensive Capabilities, Protection and Assurance, Cyber Warfare, and Enablers.

In his opening remarks, General (Retd) NC Vij, Director VIF, reiterated that in order to safeguard our vital national interests, it is imperative to invest in security capabilities. Security is often viewed as a bottomless pit to sink more and more money even as threat perception increases. Such a perception however needs to be changed. India needs to build contemporary security capability not only to protect its vital national interests but also to be in league with the developed nations. Pointing to the inadequacies in the current NCSP, General Vij stressed on the need to address issues such as organization structure, military dimension and responsibility. He also underscored the need to build and position security capability as a strategic asset where our workforce, facilities and know how can constitute a global sourcing

hub for the rest of the world to build next generation security technologies and solutions.

The keynote address by India's present Deputy NSA, Dr Arvind Gupta highlighted the rapidly changing dynamic of cyber security and its growing linkages with conventional threats including the nuclear threats. He particularly dwelt on the missing international norms to govern the cyber space which make it even more difficult to conceptualize a proper response to those threats. He also stressed on Transparency and Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) among key international players. Dr Gupta also touched upon the initiatives taken up for cyber security architecture including those in the pipeline.

With Mr R Chandrashekhar in the chair and also as a panelist, the opening session carried out a comprehensive review of the NCSP, touching upon aspects such as organization, structure, regulatory and policy framework at national and state levels for synergy and operationalisation of NCSP. It is paradoxical that despite India being highly developed in Information Technology, sharing almost 52 percent of the global IT market,

the country remains vulnerable in the cyber domain. Part of the reason for this sorry state of affairs is because most of the underlying equipment and technologies are not produced in India. Mr Chandrashekhar also elaborated upon the issue of internet governance and the efforts underway in some countries to balkanise the internet. He felt that given India's expanding influence in the global IT industry, the country is uniquely placed to leverage its strength in the strategic space. Mr. Gulshan Rai, another panelist, spoke on the framework for awareness, incident reporting, compliance, monitoring, enforcement, incentives and penalties.

Mr. Hemal Patel, in the second session, discussed the roadmap for development of indigenous software, operationalisation of technologies for cyber security and vulnerability assessment, semiconductors, electronic products and manufacturing infrastructure as envisaged in the National Policy on Electronics, while Dr Prem Chand gave a detailed presentation on the plan and methodology for the establishment of R&D facilities, testing laboratories, centres of

excellence and training infrastructure. He also presented a roadmap for skill development of cyber security personnel, tackling crime, cyber leadership and measures to ensure retention. Dr Chand said that the need to sensitize or reenergize our national efforts is felt strongly because cyber threats to India's security have outpaced our national efforts in capacity building. In this effort, the NCSP should serve as a baseline.

The third session, chaired by Dr Kamlesh Bajaj, CEO of the Data Security Council of India, squarely focused on protection and assurance. This session was represented by three speakers, Mr Lucius Lobo, Mr R Guha, and Mr Balaji Venketeshwar. Mr Lobo remarked that while the dividing line between civilian threats and military threats is getting increasingly blurred in the cyber space, civilian security should be made as strong as the military security. He also flagged the industry's concerns vis-à-vis financial fraud and other crimes committed by cyber criminals and organized gangs that are active in the cyber space. Dwelling on how India can push forward its agenda of 'Make in India', Mr Guha underlined the need to develop

indigenous standards and frameworks. We are still probably not catching up with the latest trend so far as common criteria is concerned, and we still seem to be talking about the previous version of common criteria. The last speaker in this session, Mr Balaji Venketeshwar spoke on the management of social networks and the balance between privacy and security. Discussing social media as a potential weapon for waging cyber war, he said we need to be predictive rather than reactive to the misuse of social media.

The fourth session, chaired by Lt Gen (Retd) Davinder Singh, former Signal Officer-in-Chief (Indian Army), comprehensively dealt with the issue of military dimensions of cyber domain, an increasing phenomenon to incorporate cyber capabilities in the warfare doctrines across the world, especially at a time when it is feared that cyber weapons over the next decade or so would have the potential to cause mass destruction similar to the nuclear weapons. The session had three specialists on the panel. While Lt Gen (Retd) Aditya Singh, a former member of the National Security Advisory Board, made an elaborate presentation on Indian Cyber Command – Doctrine,

Definition, Organization and Structure, Mr Sundeep Oberoi, Head Enterprise Security and Cdr (Retd) Mukesh Saini, former Head of National Information Security Cell, respectively touched upon Training and Development of Cyber Warriors and R&D for Cyber Weapons, and Counter Intelligence and Protection from Cyber Espionage. The discussions widely covered the role of state and non-state actors at both ends of the spectrum, as also the public-private partnership in developing robust cyber warfare capabilities for India. The approaches by different countries towards cyber warfare were examined, and policy recommendations included inter alia new structures, better structural coordination and sprucing up legislation and time-bound execution of policies.

The fifth and final session discussed the role and scope of enablers such as legal and regulatory framework, internet governance and international cooperation, incentives and sustainability, eco system, cyber forensics, law enforcement, and cyber leadership. With Air Marshal (Retd) Kishan Nowhar, former Chief of Air Staff in the chair, three other specialists

represented the panel – Mr Vakul Sharma, a practicing Supreme Court lawyer, Dr Kamlesh Bajaj, founding Director of CERT-In, and Mr Loknath Behra, a cyber-forensic expert and founding member of India's premier National Investigation Agency (NIA).

While the conference succeeded in bringing out a number of useful recommendations which could be incorporated in the action plan, it also reinforced the view that India has already lost enough time and opportunity in building a credible deterrence against emergent cyber threats. It is therefore imperative that the country needs to move with even greater speed and urgency to recover lost grounds and catch up with the developed world. The aim should be to converge, harmonize and seamlessly align all stakeholders towards an action plan, spelt out with predictable milestones so that the national leadership can make commitments and bring in responsibility and accountability metrics so as to secure India's cyber space.

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RTD on China-India Ties Post Xi Visit

A six-member delegation from China, led by former Ambassador Lu Fengding, visited VIF on 25 Sep, 2014 for an interaction which sought to assess the outcome of Chinese President Mr Xi Jinping's recent visit to India. Other members of the delegation included, Ambassador Zhou Gang, two experts on South Asian affairs, Mr. Ye Hailin and Mr. Gong Yingchun and two officials from China Public Diplomacy Association. The VIF faculty, a strong battery of retired senior officials from India's civil, military and diplomatic arena, including Adm (Retd) KK Nayyar, Shri Vijai Kapoor, Shri CD Sahay and Lt Gen (Retd) Ravi Sawhney, among others, engaged the Chinese delegation in a frank and candid exchange of views on the outcome of the visit and related developments.

Discussants on either side broadly agreed that while China and India share common interests, there are serious differences of perception between the two countries on a number of bilateral issues, including the most pertinent border problem. With the border standoff between the two countries

casting a long shadow over President Xi's visit, the interacting sides had different assessments of the outcome of the visit. From the Chinese perspective, President Xi's visit to India, a closely watched event in China, was a great success, while the VIF faculty described the visit as moderately successful, conceding though agreements reached on industrial parks, nuclear and space cooperation and cultural exchanges as important highlights of the visit. From the Indian perspective, the visit of President Xi Jinping, falling short of expectations, would go down as one of the missed opportunities in bilateral ties.

Kick-starting the discussion, Lt Gen Sawhney remarked that the euphoria generated during Xi's visit waned subsequently due to nagging tension on the border. It was also pointed out to the visiting delegates that euphoria over \$100 billion investment in India originated from a remark made by Chinese Consulate-General in Mumbai. The VIF faculty pointedly informed their Chinese counterparts that border remains central to Sino-Indian

relationship. Unless and until the prickly boundary issue is resolved amicably between the two nations, no substantial progress can be achieved on any other bilateral front. The visitors however said that deepening economic engagements would gradually reduce the border tension, a point hotly contested by the Indians. With perceptual differences over what constitutes the Sino-Indian border remaining, the border management itself leaves much to be desired. It came out during the discussion that leaving the relatively tense border to junior level military brass to handle is fraught with risks. Misadventure or miscalculation on the part of any junior level officer could flare up the situation, resulting in unintended consequences for both the nations. The Chinese, on the other hand, sanguinely felt there is no immediate cause for alarm as not a single bullet has been fired by either side on the border for the last thirty years.

The Indian side was intrigued as to why high level visits by the leaders of two countries are often co-terminus with border tension.

In response to a suggestion made by the Chinese delegation that media in India should not hype the border tension, the VIF faculty pointed out that the Indian media is vibrant because it operates in a democratic framework. Ambassador Lu, however, asserted that China and India have had 17 rounds of border talks so far which is illustrative of China's keen desire to resolve the border disputes. He advised India to have patience in settling the border issue. Both sides, however, agreed that more exchanges at people to people level would lead to better appreciation of each other's perception leading to gradual reduction in mistrust between the two countries. With repeated border intrusion by the Chinese troops contributing to a major chunk of the interaction, the two sides also, inter alia, discussed Afghanistan's stabilization process in the post-withdrawal phase, China-Pakistan cooperation and China's proposed Maritime Silk Route.

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Vimarsha – Bahudha in the Post 9/11 World

Vimarsha, VIF's monthly series of talks on contemporary issues by eminent persons, was held on 30th Oct 2014, with Shri Balmiki Prasad Singh, former Governor of Sikkim, talking about 'Bahudha in the post 9/11 world'. In his introductory remarks, General NC Vij, Director VIF, explained that Bahudha (a Hindi acronym for pluralism or diversity) epitomizing Indian culture and civilisation, provides the right panacea to a world torn apart by religious bigotry and terrorism. He highlighted that India's unity truly lies in its diversity.

Adding a new dimension to the ongoing debate on how to deal with ideology-driven terrorism, Shri BP Singh's talk underlined that quintessential harmony among civilisations can be achieved only through cross cultural exchanges and inter-religious dialogues. It is important to accommodate other's point of views for peaceful co-existence. Shri BP Singh cited numerous

references from history to bring home the point that Bahudha in India has existed through the ages, part of the reason the Indian civilisation has survived while many other civilisations across the globe have perished.

Views expressed by the distinguished speaker were significantly different from those enunciated by Samuel Huntington almost two decades ago in his world-famous essay on 'Clash of Civilizations'. The concept of Bahudha encapsulating an eternal reality or continuum, a dialogue of harmony, and peaceful living, is central not only to the global fight against terrorism but also to creating a harmonious world amid ethnic pluralism and religious fanaticism. Highlighting the importance of facilitating exchange of views and promoting understanding of common good, Shri BP Singh underscored the need for imaginative statecraft from world leaders to deal with the growing scourge of

international terrorism. Shri Dhirendra Singh, former Home Secretary, who presided over the evening session, however said that the concept of Bahudha needs to be built into mass thinking to make the right impact. The

summing up by Shri Dhirendra Singh was followed by an interactive session, with several questions raised by the audience, adding more value to the debate.

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Talk by UK's Secretary of State for Defence, Rt. Hon. Michael Fallon MP

The United Kingdom's Secretary of State for Defence, Rt. Hon. Michael Fallon MP delivered a perceptive talk at the VIF, on 'the UK and India – together in an uncertain world', during his one-day visit to India on 30 Oct 2014 which was essentially directed towards commemorating India's military contributions to the British war efforts in World War I (1914-18). Paying glowing tributes to the Indian soldiers who made supreme sacrifices in the World War I, the British Defence Secretary said the UK would remain ever indebted to them for upholding values that were common to both Great Britain and India. General NC Vij, former Chief of the Indian Army and present Director of the Foundation had said earlier in his welcome address that high number of gallantry awards won by the Indian soldiers during the Great War stood testimony to their heroism, while the British Defence Secretary said their contributions were all the more remarkable being completely voluntary.

Hon. Michael Fallon however said the shared historic tapestry

between the two countries, especially in the military arena, continues even today, evidenced by the growing number of United Nation's led military peacekeeping operations across the globe, as also the combined studies undertaken by the militaries of the two countries. He also supported India's bid for permanent membership of the Security Council, especially in light of India's significant contributions for various UN peacekeeping missions, over eight thousand soldiers, the highest by any country in the world.

While lauding India's contributions in rebuilding Afghanistan, the British Secretary underlined the need for expanded cooperation between the UK and India, especially keeping in view the broad spectrum of emerging threats - terrorism, sea piracy, pandemics, proliferation in weapons of mass destruction, challenges in cyber and outer space, among others. The Secretary of Defence, UK however assured the audience of his country's enduring commitment towards Afghanistan. In a bid to

secure India's cooperation in stabilizing the Middle East, especially Syria and Iraq, Mr. Fallon said it is in India's own interest to tackle the ISIS (the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria). Working together is not an opportunity but a necessity, the distinguished speaker said.

Mr. Fallon also said he favoured rule-based international system and the right of self-determination of the citizens, an obvious reference to maritime disputes in the South China Sea and the

Ukrainian crisis. Among other highlights of Mr. Fallon's talk included the rise of Asia and the shift in power balance away from Europe, and the scope for expanded defence cooperation between the UK. A large audience, comprising defence and diplomatic fraternity, among others, attended the event. Hon. Michael Fallon also took questions from the audience.

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