

India China Standoff – Expect a long haul of confrontation with China Pakistan Nexus – Part 2

By Lt Gen V M PATIL

A veteran of 1962 India- China war and 1965 India-Pakistan war He was the first Defense Advisor in Indian Embassies in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. He was Commander of United Nation's Military Observers Group in IRAQ and IRAN. He is President of Akhil Bharatiya Purva Sainik Seva Parishad and Vice President of Forum for Integrated National Security (FINS).

Present Scenario – Xi Jinping's Objectives

Xi Jinping has decided to teach India a lesson, perhaps a couple of years ago because he has realized that India has the potential and with the present leadership, increasing Indo-US strategic cooperation and as an active member of Quad, would remain a major hurdle in Asia against Xi Jinping's ambitions of Chinese Century.

Present Status

After five rounds of talks between military Commanders of India and China up to 2nd August, overall 'de-escalation' has taken place in Eastern Ladakh, 'disengagement' has however not been completed in two of the four friction areas – i.e. Gogra sector and North Bank of Pangong Tso.

Complete disengagement has been achieved at PP15 in Hot Springs & PP14 in Galway valley primarily because India and China differ in meaning and interpretation of de-escalation and disengagement.

On 31st July Chinese Ambassador in New Delhi, Sun Weidong claimed that "Chinese traditional customary boundary line is in accordance with the LAC". The former Army Chiefs of India have interpreted that the Chinese Ambassador has virtually ended any possible progress in LAC talks between the military Commanders.

What Next?

India's strategic planners & policymakers should not overlook the following indicators confirms that China has no intention of resolving the current standoff nor returning to pre-April 2020 position.

China is prepared for a prolonged confrontation with India over the LAC.

24th July: PLA along the Southwestern borders – Xinjiang, Tibet, Yunnan, Hainan received orders for preparations for a 'colder winter militarily'.

27th July: Xi Jinping instructed the PLA to follow CCP's command to prepare for war. PLA's exercises in Tibet in 2020 were under conditions of simulated combat.

From April 2020, China has extended the arc of military pressure on India from the initial 1100km in Eastern Ladakh to Nakula in North Sikkim to the entire 4057km of a stretch of LAC.

By instigating Nepal through its Communist party, China has broadened anti-India nexus with Pakistan & Nepal.

Chinese covert activities in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka merit deeper scrutiny & surveillance.

China is stretching negotiations into winter, anticipating operational advantages in severe winter.

PLA's build up in the areas of Pangong Tso, PP14 in Gogra, Finger Areas and Despang plains with preparations for winter stay is part of an overall design.

Pertinent for India to consider a fivefold increase in Chinese media in reporting on Arunachal Pradesh in the first half of 2020.

India's response suggestions

Part I – Operational-cum-Military.

Our immediate priority should be preparations for worst winter scenarios and unexpected contingencies.

Comprehensive surveillance of LAC 24X7. Focus on existing and potential hotspots, including intelligence gathering in high mountains surrounding Ladakh.

Integration of satellite imagery, drones, UAVs, human intelligence and deep assets along the LAC and borders.

Build up the infrastructure for specialized training of – observers, analysts and researchers to arrive at reasonable conclusions from inputs received from above resources in point 2.

The convergence of the China-Pak axis in Turtok area must be prevented at all costs and with all means.

Since Ladakh will remain in strategic objective for both India and China, we should not be surprised any more by any moves of China.

Infrastructure in forwarding areas must cater for enhanced capacity and capability for operational deployment of combat forces, weapon systems and improved logistics for sustained operations.

Develop and improve the economic standards of people living in border areas on a war footing before the next misadventures by China, which will be bigger with deeper objectives.

Part II – National Response

The need of the Hour – A comprehensive “Grand Strategy” with focus on national unity based on national consensus on national policies to convey to the world that the nation is United to face Chinese threat.”Those who are today supporting soft line and compromise based solutions towards China must be made realize that people of India stand by “national interests & national unity” without branding any party as anti-national in the political slugfest. We must draw appropriate lessons from the USA, where both the major political parties stood by the President during the crisis of 9/11 attack on the US soil.

Pending Major Bottlenecks for Improving Bilateral Relations

India China bilateral relations have suffered many setbacks in the last decade-plus. We, as a nation, should not forget the following:

Stalled talks of Joint Working Groups (JWG) in the late 1990s & early 2000, when Chinese refused to show their marked maps with their perception of LAC, which they have been claiming.

Indian Government was ready to exchange marked maps, but the Chinese refused, no progress on this.

Widening Trade deficits from \$1Bn in 2003 to \$36Bn in 2012 and now \$55Bn leading to our over-dependence on China for raw materials would remain a major bottleneck.

China has conveyed several times through their lobbies between 2003 -2011 that India must resolve Kashmir issue with Pakistan by compromise solutions (what it means, has not been spelt out) if Delhi wants to settle LAC issues with Beijing.

Yet, to appease Pakistan and China, we almost agreed to demilitarise (DMZ) Siachen in 2007-08 and reduce force levels in Ladakh. Thanks to vehement opposition by MK Narayan (then NSA) this proposal was dropped.

Was reluctance of Govt of India (GOI) for any tough response to Pakistan's over 17 terrorist attacks in 8 cities between 2006-07 resulting in over 1200 casualties and massacre of 192 innocents in Mumbai on 26/11/2008 due to Chinese cautioning or ruling Party's internal dynamics? It merits deep research and deeper probe!

Present Dilemma before Xi Jinping & CCP

Deteriorating economy and high unemployment?

Immense pressures because of US actions, which could lead to US-China clashes in areas unforeseen so far.

Xi Jinping is in his most dangerous predicament since taking office according to credible observers of Chinese internal dynamics.

Does the United States have a chance that it dared not imagine to force Xi Jinping to step down? Will the US pursue it or not depends on the outcome of Presidential elections in the US.

If multiple pressures mount on Xi Jinping, he could resort to taking military initiatives against neighbours he perceives as unfriendly.

Conclusion

The world is dealing with a leader driven by a sense of his vision/genius and belief that he will shape the Chinese century.

A successful offensive against India will yield Xi Jinping multiple gains such as –

Xi Jinping is capable of defeating a friend of the USA.

Cautions other nations in the region to fall in line or else their ally from 12000km will not be of much help.

Leads to enormous consolidation of Xi Jinping's position inside China with far-reaching implications for the dynamics of Indian polity and its stakeholders.

To counter above threats from Xi Jinping's China on multiple fronts effectively, the people and their leadership of India have to think – “out of box solutions” and implement them from 2020 onwards by involving all the stakeholders in an integrated manner.

Core of the State Power

By Gopal Dhok

Gopal Dhok is a researcher with Forum for Integrated National Security.

Mao said that power flows through the barrel of the gun. However, he didn't mention that you need money to buy those guns. In 1949, the Republic of China under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek had military superiority over Mao's communist rebellion. Kuomintang (KMT) government received weapons and ammunition from the United States. However, weapons, ammunition and strong military were not enough to check on the Communist revolution in China. In 1930, China spent 60 percent of its budget on the military.

The KMT lost popular support due to hyperinflation, steep economic decline and widespread corruption. KMT's efforts to curb corruption with heavy-handedness ruffled some influential feathers in China. Chiang Kai-shek's efforts to curb corruption at individual level backfired.

The economic decline resulted in mass unrest and created support for Mao's revolution. Mao's revolution that promised land reforms was perceived as an alternative to failing agrarian economy. Rather than Mao's thought, economic compulsions turned the table on the Chinese Nationalist Party (Panikar, 1954).

KMT's over-dependence on military did not save the day for the nationalist government. When Chiang Kai-shek realised the gravity of the situation it was too late for course correction. As fall of Nanjing (China's Capital under KMT) became imminent, Chiang Kai-shek moved gold and foreign currency from Shanghai to Taiwan. Eventually, building the economic foundation for modern prosperous Taiwan.

In 1989, the Tiananmen Square protests did not garner support of larger Chinese society. The student-driven democratic movement for minimal democratic rights was crushed. Majority of the Chinese society saw Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms as stabilizer after a disastrous period of the great leap forward and Cultural Revolution. Again it was economy at play.

The collapse of USSR once again proved that economic power is supreme. Militarily of the USSR was a formidable match for the USA. Though, economies of two powers differed drastically. The highly controlled state-driven economy of USSR paved the way for 1991 collapse and free-market economy made United States winning power of the century and beyond. The American economic gains also translated into economic gains for its partners like Japan, the Republic of Korea, Taiwan and other European nations.

In '80s strategic experts could not envision the collapse of USSR in a short span of time. In 1985, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia withdrew from controlled oil production agreement and increased its oil production. As oil production surged, prices of oil declined from around \$30 to as low as \$10 per barrel. Lower fuel cost also fueled growth in other economies. But in producer USSR sudden drop in revenue shocked socialist economy. USSR tried to salvage hyperinflation, pandemic corruption propelled by economic decline. The culminating effect of various economic factors led to the eventual collapse of USSR in 1991. It was a shock for other socialist and communist economies to avoid such pitfall. It was also a lesson that seller driven market can turn in a buyer-centric market in a very short span of time. The collapse of USSR exposed the limitations of state-driven growth in the authoritarian communist state. The communist or autocratic system of governance can work as long as its economy is firing on all the engines. It was a lesson for others.

Coming back to modern-day situation. The scenario that other economies are dependent on Chinese goods is changing rapidly. China is no longer a world factory producing cheap products. As Foxconn Chairman Young Liu said this week that 'Trump's trade war against China meant China's days as the world's factory are done. China is dependent on the world (mostly democratic world) for selling its goods. With a changing scenario, industrial overcapacity will haunt China. The world can change its sourcing pattern in a short span post-pandemic era. Can China change consumers that fast in a limited market? Declining demand and industrial overcapacity are two factors that can lead to economic decline, as seen in earlier examples. Such situation creates ghost towns and investment in infrastructure goes down the drain.

A small story to end with

Choluteca Bridge in Honduras was built to withstand nature's fury. The bridge did a pretty good job at that. After Hurricane Mitch, rain flooded river. The river meandered and changed its course. The storming flood washed away road connecting the bridge. As flood subsided, Honduran President Carlos Flores said, "We lost in 72 hours what we have taken more than 50 years to build, bit by bit."



Choluteca Bridge after Hurricane Mitch on Choluteca river

That bridge flawlessly performed its design function, but the river changed its course. The bridge became obsolete. Just like that, capacities built over decades can become obsolete quickly. When economic and industrial capacity takes a beating, it directly affects state power.

As Chanakya said *कोष मूलो दण्डः*. The core of state power is its economy, and it flows through the people – the consumer.

DEFENCE SELF RELIANCE

By Lt Gen Vishwas A Bhat

Author is former Director General of Quality Assurance (DGQA), organisation which is responsible for quality standard and excellence of every war or non war like equipment of Indian Army. General has indepth understanding of critical policy parameters which is of strategic importance.

The Chinese aggression of 1962 rudely awakened the Government of India, from its deep slumber, to focus on the requirements of the Armed Forces, to protect the territorial integrity of the Nation.

1) India has been the biggest importer of defence platforms inventory. Though the mantra was Indigenisation, not much was realised and the import not just continued, but only kept rising in leaps and bounds. Efforts were being made to indigenise both major and minor equipment and weapon systems, to reduce imports and make equipment battle worthy, with maintenance and desired modifications within the country at the least cost. Previous governments enhanced direct foreign (FDI) investment for defence requirements to the extent of 26%. Even this policy failed to discourage imports and encourage local manufacture of the military hardware, the imports continued unabated. Finally, the GOI decided to raise the FDI to 49%.

2) The present Government in its First term made Make in India its mantra. Unfortunately, this too did not yield the desired results. Breaking past traditions, present government, in its initial term, for the starter, placed an order for manufacturing of Self Propelled (SP) Guns, on Larsen& Toubro (L&T) India. L&T had participated in a global tender for this order and won the contract the hard way. Second big change was, changing the management system of the Ordnance Factory, Korba. It will now be headed by a retired Major General and will hence be a joint Indo-Russian defence enterprise. About 50 SP Guns have been supplied by L&T till date and the Ordnance Factory, Korba will soon start production.

3) The present stand-off at LAC with China and Covid-19 pandemic (ironically), have been blessing in disguise for Make in India mission in defence production compelling the government to bring about major changes, in the policy of procuring defence hardware of all kinds, for all the three services. In May, Finance Minister, Smt Sitharaman, allowed FDI in defence up to 74%. This was followed by another disruptive improvement, brought by MoD, to ban imports of 101 items, for procurement by the services over the next five years. Some of these Items may have been already introduced into the Services or may be in the pipeline in various stages of Procurement. Those already in Service can enhance their Qualitative Requirements to desired levels.

4) Certain important initiatives taken in the last 8-10 months which finally led to the BAN on 101 Items.

Feb 19 - Introduction of Intellectual Property Rights and Patenting of Defence Technology and Products developed in India.

September 19 - New Items added for granting License to produce in India. Artillery Guns, Warships, Tanks.

December 19 - Formulation of New Department of Military Affairs and Appointment of Chief of Defence Staff. One Important Task was to regulate the Defence Procurements of all Three Services in Acquisition Wing of Min of Defence.

Feb 20 - Indian Embassies in 10 more countries to have Defence Attaches. Task to attract FDI and Export of Indigenous Equipment.

5) BANNED ITEMS. : By prohibiting import these 101 items will now be available, for Indian industry, to produce and supply to the Services. Additionally, only Indian companies will be able to compete among themselves and no foreign vendor will be able to bid. These 101 items will come, in the Ban List, in a phased manner. To make this clear, there will be different cut-off dates for various items starting from December 2020, December 2021 and so on. Some of these will be banned by December 2020 and the last in December 2025. This is an excellent way ahead, as the Services will not be starved of vital equipment needed to upgrade or replace the existing critical gaps in their inventory and yet gradually but definitely progress to made in India military hardware. We all are aware that the lead time for manufacture of defence platforms are long. Rafael was ordered in 2016, and the first batch has been received now and supply will continue till 2022 (or last will be received not earlier than 2022.).

6) MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX: Manufacturing of equipment required by the Army in particular, has been in the domain of Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) and Defence Public Sector Undertaking (DPSU). It was a legacy of the British Raj which continued for 70 years after Independence. As it is, procurement of such critical and exorbitantly costly weapons from a Government Owned Public Sector Undertaking was not the best way ahead after the English left. The Army has no other option, but to obtain their requirements from these government agencies, and there can be other scenario which can be worse than this. Immediately after independence, India had to balance the economy between defence requirements, social needs and infrastructure development. On this tightrope walk, not surprisingly defence was relegated to the last, in terms of budget allocation, the bulk of which is now being spent on Pay and Allowances leaving little for modernisation. This has led to procurement on a piecemeal retail basis, rather than bulk. This makes the allotment of these resources to be controlled centrally, and unavailable when needed most. The changed environment of NO Imports of 101 items must be seized by the industry captains and made full use of, to create military-industrial complex in defence clusters like Uttar Pradesh is presently planning to develop. There is a budget of 4 lakhs crores up for grabs. Additionally, it will open up possibilities of export of these equipment to other nations. The Armed Forces will get all their needs to face their adversaries in the most efficient manner. It will also deter our neighbours, to cast an evil eye on the Indian Territory.

7) Government of India (GOI), Industry Captains the Three Services have a golden opportunity to Join Hands and make this decades old dream come true. As a starter GOI must fund research in high value cutting edge Equipment needed for the Services. Private sector must choose partners who a high reputation in the world as Exporters of highly proven Equipment. Feedback from the existing sold Equipment to countries can be assessed. Industry must nurture MSME Small industry to produce Quality Goods as even low tech items like Fasteners and Rubber Items are known to have the reason for failure in exploitation of the Equipment. Punitive punishments must be imposed in case the Equipment fails after being accepted by the services. Bulk Production must adhere to Quality. All such orders must be kept out of Courts which will lead to inordinate delays if failures occur.

8) Advanced Light Helicopter Light Combat Aircraft Pinaka are examples of already introduced equipment. Rifles, Night Vision Devices, Tanks, Infantry, Combat Vehicles, Guns are examples of Prototypes developed and being tested by Private Industries. The Indian Industry has enough experience to produce Drones, Radio Sets, Remotely Operated Vehicles UAVs, Robots and many other equipment. There is no doubt in the next decade India will move from Importer to a Major Exporter of Defence Platforms.

THE EMBARGO
List of items that **won't be imported** prepared after talks with armed forces, DRDO, defence PSUs, Ordnance Factory & private players
Defence minister Rajnath Singh said more equipment will be identified for import ban

Ban to be implemented from 2020-2024
Contracts worth ₹4 lakh cr will be put up for domestic cos in next 6-7 years
₹52,000 crore Separate budget allocated this year for local procurement

LOCAL PLAY
High-tech systems like artillery guns, assault rifles, corvettes, radars listed for domestic production
Major systems include wheeled armoured fighting vehicles, submarines, light combat aircraft
Small arms and a range of ammunition also on the list

BCCL

Controversy over NEET & JEE

BY Dr Bala Bhaskaran

Author, a graduate of IIT Madras and IIM Ahmedabad, is senior visiting faculty with 'Entrepreneur Development Institute of India', Ahmedabad. He evolved the Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP) model, which is widely being implemented as EDI-EPP model at national and international level. His area of specialisation is "Finance and Strategy"

It agonising to watch the controversy over conducting JEE and NEET. On one side we see the anguish of young people coping with the uncertainty of the entrance exams, admissions and the academic career. On the other side we see the concern of students and parents to participate in the admission-tests safely. To this you add the concern of those who are currently afflicted [either to themselves or to their near ones in the recent days]. You also notice the concern of the authorities to carry out the admission process as early as possible so that academic process is not postponed indefinitely. The concern is also concerned about creating/instilling hope and confidence among the people to fight the pandemic decisively.

Many Chief Ministers are up in arms against the Central Government for conducting the exams immediately. For anything and everything they want to go to Supreme Court. Political tug of war and vote-bank politics have made the order of the day.

In the next few months, conducting an exam on any day would result in some people missing it for reasons of the pandemic. In effect it is impossible to find a perfect date for any exam in the next few months. Let us accept this reality and explore solutions rather than searching for that Perfect Friday to hold the exam.

According to me the real cause for this controversy and conflict is our intellectual inflexibility in exploring tangible solutions to the problem at hand. India is heterogeneous country on multiple counts; the pandemic has made the made situation more complex because of differential impact of Covid-19 in different parts of the country. And we want JEE or NEET to happen on a single day on a single time slot, with a single question paper universally across the country. Should we tackle an infinite problem with a finite solution or with an infinite solution?

National Testing Agency [NTA], the authority bestowed with the task of conducting various admission tests across the country, should plan to hold JEE or NEET or similar exams on multiple dates, spread across a wide window, and aspirants should be allowed to take on a date convenient to him/her. This would resolve the situation amicably to all stakeholders.

Academics know how to normalize the levels of difficulty of the Question Papers used in such examinations. In fact, the question-papers will be created with such intent. Empower NTA with necessary resources and authorities and let the politicians back off from exam related discussions and decisions. Are we not familiar with GMAT, GRE and other exams happening across the globe on dates spread across the year? The tragedy is that we are fixated on single dated, single exam, with finite syllabus and finite pattern of questions. Our focus has been on rote memory; critical thinking is alien to us. This has led to the mushrooming of coaching classes which has emerged as a major industry.

The pandemic is giving us an opportunity to change our mindset; a change for the good indeed! I wish NTA take the lead to reform the regime of admission tests in the coming years. Single dated exams are fine for small numbers. When you have large numbers and we want to give a fair chance to every aspiring candidate we need to switchover to the new regime. We should have implemented this system long back. Even in the CBSE exams this year we would not have had to give average marks in some subjects when we could NOT hold exams in those subjects. We are not being fair to the students and their future.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors. They do not purport to reflect the opinions or views of the FINS or its members.

Nation is Indebted to:

Havaldar Digendra Kumar, MVC, SM
2nd Bn of Raj Rif



A saga of unparalleled bravery

On June 2, 1999, General V. P. Malik, the then army chief held a "Sainik Darbar" at Gumari in the Drass sector after three failed attempts to recapture Tololing Hill, which stands at 15,000 feet. After 59 Indian soldiers were martyred, Gen Malik summoned the commanders of the 2 Rajputana Rifles to present their plans.

The Army chief was just not convinced by their plans when a 30 year old commando from the last row got up, summoned all the courage and said: "Sir, I am Naik Digendra Kumar known as Cobra, the best commando of the Indian Army. I have a plan that guarantees our victory". "Explain" said the general. "Sir, the hill is straight," Digendra offered. "We will take the same route as the enemy." A surprised General Malik countered saying death is certain on this route. "Sir, Death is unavoidable otherwise too." said Nk Digendra.

"Give me the tools, and I shall win the battle." He got what he wanted. 100 Mtrs of Russian rope (Weighing 6 Kg only) that can bear up to 10 tons of weight, Russian nails that can easily be put into rocks, and high powered injections to get rid of fatigue.

The story of Nk Digendra, who received the Mahavir Chakra for his valour, is a tale of courage.

On 8 and 9 Jun, Digendra and his colleagues reached the area and subsequently fixed the rope on hill, a task that took 14 hours. On June 12, Digendra and nine fellow commandos began the mission to free Tololing. All of them were carrying their basic Infantry weapons and Hand Grenades. Each of them was assigned to blast one bunker each of the 11 Pakistani bunkers. "I assigned myself the first and the last bunker," says Digendra.

The group began to climb the hill in the dead of night. It was pitch dark. At one point, he touched something; it was an enemy machine gun barrel. "He pulled it, and threw a grenade in the bunker. It caught fire. And Pakistani's retaliated.

Around 250 enemy soldiers and artillery guns began firing. Digendra and his team were unable to move. "I asked that our Artillery Guns be made to fire a meter above by changing the angle." It worked and the team moved under the raining bullets and cannons.

As they were moving ahead, Digendra was hit by three bullets in the chest, one in the left thumb and another in the lower waist. Four of his colleagues died. Soon, the Pakistanis overwhelmed Digendra's team with sheer numbers, and all nine died. Digendra used 18 Grenades of his martyred soldiers and blasted off 11 bunkers.

All of a sudden Major Anwar Khan of Pak Army appeared to confront him. "I lost my gun. I grabbed him with his hair and beheaded him with my dagger." He was soon able to take the hill and place the Indian flag on top. By then, he was unconscious. He woke up in a military hospital.

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