

Good for Pakistan

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capable force adept at meeting emerging regional and global security challenges."

The CR or combat ratio with Pakistan has consistently been eroding: "...the army is actually adding more units in the hope of re-establishing the conventional edge it once enjoyed over Pakistan and to combat the interrelated Kashmiri insurgency." The CR, 1.74:1 in India's favour before 1990, is 1.22:1 today. This attrition is caused by "fatigue from extended counter-insurgency deployments, inefficient and bureaucratic modernization procedures, lopsided promotional policies underpinned by increasing political interference and an acute officer shortage," said an officer to JDW.

As for the IAF "...the delayed induction of new and upgraded aircraft has forced the service to cannibalise other platforms in order to keep aging aircraft flying... Since 1990, 143 IAF pilots have died and 303 aircraft (nearly 19 squadrons)... have been lost in accidents. On average, this is an accident every fortnight."

Obviously India can't leave matters as they are. What does it do? Three things. First, upgrade the military. The notion of reduced conventional forces by going nuclear has gone out of the window, not least because of Kashmir. They're making 25-30 more rifle battalions in addition to the 36 existing ones for Kashmir operations, forming a second artillery division by reorganizing existing artillery brigades, and the IAF is getting hundreds of new aircraft, Su-30s, Mirages, Jaguars and MiG-21s. By 2010 the Indian navy is envisaged "as a strategic force, centred around two aircraft carrier battle groups, nuclear-powered submarines and strategic bomber/maritime strike aircraft, playing a dominant role in the Indian Ocean Region." Pakistan will also upgrade, so India's future military plans will not improve its conventional war capability. As to the nuclear option, only a madman would contemplate it, hopefully madder than the fanatical fundamentalist mob that rules India.

Second, a military solution to Kashmir having failed, India is looking for a political solution. It's not just US cajoling but the Indian military condition too that forms an important backdrop to Vajpayee's talks offer. They cannot take the degradation of their officers, men and material in Kashmir any more; they cannot defeat Pakistan conventionally and the nuclear option is so unthinkable that it makes a possible conventional breakthrough by either side undesirable, thus the talks offer. That's great since the most important backdrop is the billion poor of the subcontinent. Now that India is hurting and is caught by the short and curly, we must extract maximum advan-

tage, not forgetting that we cannot decide whom the beloved goes with or how she is 'shared' without her consent. Thus the Kashmiris have to be an integral part of any solution.

Third, having lost the winning edge in conventional warfare India has to do something out of the ordinary. Confident that Pakistan's alliance with the US will remain tactical so long as it is Israel's enemy, India's not-so-recent but recently accelerated military-political relationship with Israel is the lynchpin of its emerging strategy. Says JDW: "In January, [India's] Cabinet Committee on Security sanctioned four additional Special Forces battalions that will be trained by Israel in 'irregular warfare'. They will be equipped with Israel Military Industries' 5.56mm Tavor 21 assault rifles and 7.62mm Galil sniper rifles and will be stationed in Kashmir... The IAF's planned force levels would be further augmented by the proposed acquisition of at least two Israeli Phalcon airborne early warning systems mounted on Russian Ilyshin Il-76TD aircraft after the US approved their sale last year." More ominously, during his recent visit to the USA Brajesh Misra, Chairman of India's National Security Advisory Board, suggested a US-Israel-India alliance to fight global terrorism, thus trying to make Pakistan a target. It's the growing Israel-India military political nexus that is India's future trump card against Pakistan with America there covertly, if not overtly. If the US can be brought into the nexus the better, because they will do their dirty work for it, or so India imagines.

It is for Pakistan to knock the lynchpin out of India's strategy. Before taking any action or decision we must always ask ourselves: "Is it good for Pakistan." If it is, go ahead; if not forget it. The good of others comes after Pakistan's good. Pakistan comes first. This has to be our cardinal principle henceforth. The argument that those we have supported have never supported us as facetious as it is hypocritical, if not naive. What's relevant is to ask why they didn't support us? Because it wasn't in their national interest, that's why. There's no justice or morality in international affairs, only self-interest. What good is it supporting others if we are weakened in the process, or eliminated even? If the beloved has gone to the other guy, be a gentleman and congratulate them both rather than persisting with the animosity. When those whose fight it is, the main antagonists and their regional brothers and supporters, are recognizing Israel, who are we to persist with the acrimony? The world is changing and we have to change with it. Roll with the punches. Bend with the wind like the willow instead of falling like the oak. Why don't we start considering and debating about recognizing Israel for our national good, when the time is right of course? Go into it carefully but open the mental window at least. Pakistan may then possibly become America's strategic and not simply a tactical ally that is discarded when the need ceases. It will certainly knock the lynchpin out of India's strategy and make its plans go awry. Peace will become possible instead of probable.

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What's good

The services are battling against a traditional mindset, an ambiguous defence policy and a crisis in decision-making. Finally, an unrelenting squeeze on financial resources is hampering urgent equipment modernization efforts. This predicament is exacerbated by the continuing rivalry between the divided armed forces and the civilian dominated Ministry of Defence." That's an Indian Rahul Bedi on India's military in the authoritative journal, Jane's Defence Weekly. Things aren't always what they seem. It's not a simple numbers game. Equipment, human capital, morale, fatigue and so much more come into the equation. Most Pakistanis assume that in conventional warfare India has an advantage. A recent British TV film, 'Situation Room', also shown privately in Pakistan with great fanfare, fortified this notion. The truth is that with about 70 percent of the Indian army trapped in Kashmir, they cannot attack across the international border, only defend it. Yes, they can attack along two or three points on the Line of Control, but Pakistan can deal with it adequately. It's not 1965 or '71 when we erroneously assumed that India wouldn't cross the international boundary. Today, bogged down in Kashmir, they cannot.

India can, at best, deploy 140 aircraft in Kashmir. We can deploy 114, so big deal. Their aircrafts' night vision is somewhat better than ours, but that will be corrected soon. Their navy cannot blockade Karachi without an aircraft carrier. Theirs moves one inch an hour for half an hour before being towed back. Tankers carrying oil for India from the Gulf, though, come within our submarines' crosshairs. A couple gone and there will be an international uproar.

JDW lists India's woes. There's the military-civilian rift: neither the political leaders nor the bureaucracy cares "two hoots about national security," says former vice chief of air staff Lieutenant General Vijay Oberoi. There's corruption: "The alleged arms corruption scandal involving senior army officers and MoD officers...has almost permanently scared decision makers into deferring the acquisition of necessary hardware." There's incompetence: "Apart from the ninth five-year defence plan...none of the previous eight plans received government approval" leading to "lopsided growth."

There's low confidence: "The flagging morale of the 1.1 million-strong Indian Army following last year's 10-month deployment along the Pakistan frontier in a heightened state of alert, plus the further degradation of its dated equipment, has only added to the problems of an overburdened force." Some Indian media put the cost at Rs 90 billion; JDW at 10. There's war tax and obsolescence. The deployment "led the [Indian] government to impose a special state levy and cancel all annual major army manoeuvres... it has contributed to the postponement of new, long-awaited equipment. The army's...allocation of Rs 345.74 billion is barely enough to maintain its existing assets, leaving a meagre amount... to modernize and purchase new equipment."

There's the nuclear conundrum. "India's armed forces are struggling to overcome a number of obstacles as they strive to rebuild themselves into a nuclear-