

THE
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CONFLICT OR RECONCILIATION

In Focus

Africa Heats Up
as US & Russian
Forces 'Face- Off
In Niger

Counter View

Even War
Has Rules

War Strategy

Russia-Ukraine War:
Phase of Engagement
with Long- Range
Weapons

TNJ's Power Panel



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|| Foreword



|| News and Views of Substance ||

It is with immense pleasure and enthusiasm that I extend my heartfelt congratulations on the launch of The News Analytics Journal (TNJ). In an era where information is abundant yet nuanced, thoughtful journalism stands as a beacon of clarity and insight. The inception of this magazine marks not just the beginning of a publication but the advent of a platform dedicated to fostering understanding, inspiring creativity, and challenging conventional wisdom.

The News Analytics Journal emerges at a time when the world is hungry for content that is both enriching and enlightening. Your commitment to delivering high-quality journalism, in-depth analysis, and diverse perspectives will undoubtedly carve out a unique niche in the media landscape. It is through such endeavours that readers find not only information but also inspiration and a deeper connection to the world around them.

The launch of this magazine is a testament to the years of continuing hard work, dedication, and vision of your entire team which will build upon the success of News Analytics web portal. It is an embodiment of your collective passion for storytelling, your relentless pursuit of truth, and your unwavering belief in the power of the written word. In these pages, readers will discover stories that resonate with their experiences, challenge their viewpoints, and broaden their horizons.

Congratulations once again on this remarkable achievement. Here's to a future filled with endless possibilities, groundbreaking stories, and lasting success for The News Analytics Journal!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Arup Raha'.

(Air Chief Marshal Arup Raha (R)
PVSM, AVSM, VM, 21st Chief of the
Air Staff of the Indian Air Force.
Former Chairman COSC)

|| Complimentary Message



|| An Inspiring Journey Well Begun ||

These are intriguing, exciting, and complex times in which we all live! In this globalised world developments anywhere have an impact everywhere. In this context, being abreast with global developments becomes imperative. It is indeed a privilege to write this Introductory note for the Inaugural publication of 'The News Analytics Journal'. My perusal of the website of 'News Analytics' provided me enough proof of the in-depth reporting and analysis of global developments from the lens of India's strategic interests.

As this issue reaches your hands, the 2024 Indian elections would have been completed and the Indian voter would have expressed their mandate for the next five years. The government that assumes office would be expected to steer the country over the next five years. These would be critical years for the country from multi-track perspectives.

India would be exploring a larger role in global politics besides expanding both its strategic and economic presence. At the domestic level, an increasingly younger population with visible aspirations closely look at the road-map that the government outlines for the coming decade.

A second factor that is relevant is the focus on 'analytics' when presenting news. Analytics involves data and we are in a world of large data sets. In an increasingly polarised world are we searching for data to reach our pre-determined conclusion or are we drawing our conclusions on the basis of data that is available at a given point in time? I am confident that 'The News Analytics Journal' aims at achieving the latter and would stay away from the former. My best wishes for it's continued success.



Sandeep Shastri

Former Vice Chancellor, Jagran Lakecity University and Former Pro Vice Chancellor, Jain (A Deemed to be University). Presently Director-Academics, Nitte Education Trust & National Coordinator, Lokniti Network

Editor's Note



Widening Conflicts & Growing Challenges

In the years since the hotly contested Galwan conflict with China, there have been numerous military-to-military interactions between India and China all resulting in very limited success. The ploy the Chinese side has adopted runs counter to engagement reference for resolving a border region dispute. Their continued disinterest in going back to pre Galwan status quo and the brisk pace adopted for infrastructure development of the border region are all marred by shadowy intent.

The News Analytics Journal (TNJ) delves into these challenging issues faced by the nation. Globally it appears the conflicts are only expanding to newer territories. The showdown of rocket fires between Israel and Iran, Niger turning over to Russia resulting in US and Russian forces within the same military compound, the new narratives being built by proxies, the role of the International Court of Justice in Gaza conflict, and the evolving war in Ukraine all adding to geopolitical complexities.

As we bring out our current edition, TNJ reflects upon these pressing global challenges and some home realities. These burning issues have been deeply analysed by our expert panel of authors with an extraordinary grasp of these domains. TNJ will continue to bring a well-researched, factually authentic, and clear perspective to events of global consequences, strategic security, and emerging technologies. As an online news journal with a vast global reach, we willingly undertake the responsibility to be balanced and expressive. TNJ strives to bring out aspects of Diplomacy, Defence, and Emerging Technologies as all three perfectly interwind together impacting upon strategic security.

As we continue our inspiring journey we will evolve and adapt learn things and reflect upon newer realities for the benefit of our esteemed readers, authors, and valued partners. Happy reading.....

Jai Hind!

Sandhya Srivastava
Business Director &
Editor

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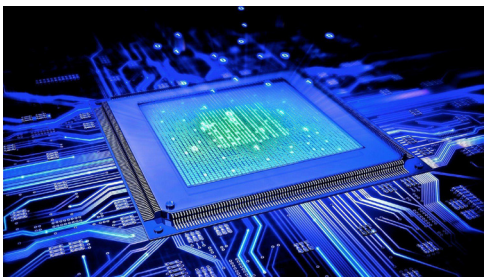
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Africa Heats Up as US & Russian Forces ‘Face-Off’ In Niger



IN FOCUS

The US ignored longstanding patterns of governance, neglected the pro-sovereignty movements, and denied any role of independent local African blocs in the political structure. The current cacophony was long in the making as the new players enter the fray.



Ambassador Soumen Ray
for TNJ

RAMPANT CORRUPTION

Countries south of the Sahara, the Sahel, were mostly French colonies. Historically, the US ceded policy priorities in francophone Africa to France. However, unlike Britain, France maintained strong links with former colonies. They cooperated in the economy, defence, and resource extraction, to mention a few areas. The cosy relationship between French officials, companies, and Francophone African autocrats came to be known as *Françafrique*, a complex system of political, economic, and military relationships between France and its former colonies in Africa,

characterised by neocolonialism, paternalistic arrangements, and rampant corruption.

The past few years have witnessed a wave of anti-French sentiment hitting the Sahel. Powerful military establishments there helped foment the anti-French sentiment, but they did not control it. Local elites, various civil society groups, and ethnic and tribal groups are mainly behind these protest movements, while the military took advantage of the situation by removing the “elected” governments. During the last five years, there were five coups in the Sahel (Gabon, Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso, and Niger). There were

also attempted military takeovers. Going a few years back, the list will include Gambia, Chad and Sudan.

In all these cases of undemocratic change of government, economic stagnation, ongoing violent attacks on civilians, autocratic and ruthless governments managing elections and distrust in civilian leadership were the primary reasons for the forceful removal of “elected” rulers by the military and subsequent taking over of power by them.

The US ignored longstanding patterns of governance, neglected the pro-sovereignty movements, and denied any role of independent local African blocs in the political structure.

ALLIANCE OF SAHELIAN STATES

They are now accusing Russia of driving major political shifts in the Sahel. But the US misses the reality that Africans, not Russians or Americans, are in command. Three countries under military rule formed the Alliance of Sahelian States (AES), for example, was a project initiated by Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. Their first and foremost

objective was to counteract the military threat from a regional bloc, ECOWAS. The AES continues to gather steam, with Chad now expressing interest in joining.

Ukraine, Moscow has not cut back its ambitions in the Global South. Over the past few years, Russia has doubled its focus on Africa’s Sahel region. Moscow is inserting itself in countries such as Mali and Burkina Faso and is taking advantage of Western policy missteps and growing anti-European sentiment.

It has gone to the extent of warning any outside country or regional organisation to militarily intervene in these countries’ internal affairs. Moreover, the African Corps, formerly known as the Wagner Group, has been cooperating with autocratic governments/ factions in many African countries as far as Sudan. The Russian move is to be

SIGNIFICANT DAMAGE

The coup in Niger last July was somewhat different amongst the “junta group” in the region. After taking over power, unlike his other compatriots, General Abdourahmane Tchiani and his National Council for the Safeguard of the Homeland (CNSP) did not snap Niger’s relations with the US. With around 1000 troops, they were allowed to operate from two drone bases: Air Base 101 in Niamey and Air Base 201 near Agadez. These two air bases are strategically located, enabling the US to easily fly surveillance and reconnaissance drones from there to cover the Sahel, Western and Central Africa, for counterterrorism operations against al-Qaeda and the Islamic State in West Africa.



Despite Russia’s military struggles in Ukraine, Moscow has not cut back its ambitions in the Global South. Over the past few years, Russia has doubled its focus on Africa’s Sahel region.

Russia welcomed the development, but it does not mean Moscow inspired it. The US considered AES as a Russian project and suggested its impact can “spill” across borders, creating further instability and insecurity. Despite Russia’s military struggles in

seen as part of the West African nations’ deepening security ties with Moscow as they pull away from close cooperation with the United States in counterterrorism efforts, turning instead to Russia for security.

But the situation took an abrupt turn after a visit by the US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Molly Phee, and AFRICOM Commander General Michael Langley in March 2024. It did significant damage, the two senior US officials warned the government

not to cooperate in any way with Russia and Iran. This irritated CNSP, like other African leaders, they hate to be lectured upon. So, soon after the US officials' visit, Niger declared all their security agreements with the Americans to be null and void and told them to pack up. The action was preceded by Niger's abrogation of security arrangements with France and the EU.

A first set of about 100 Russian advisers had arrived in Niger on 10 April 2024, along with air defence systems. This was followed by three cargo planes with more trainers, equipment, and food products. However, Russian forces did not mingle with the US troops. They are using a separate hangar at Airbase 101, which is next to Diori Hamani International Airport in Niamey. However, the close proximity of the US and Russian troops at a time when the

nation's military and diplomatic rivalry is increasingly acrimonious over the conflict in Ukraine has the potential to escalate tensions.

If we analyse the reasons for this shift in seeking partners for security and economic development by African nations, the facts are clear. While Western Allies demand the rule of law, democracy, and human rights in return for security and economic support, Russia portrays itself differently. With its mantra of "noninterference" and "respect for sovereignty", Russia has become more acceptable to ruthless military dictators and civilian autocrats of the Sahel.

Russia has strategically capitalised on failed peacekeeping missions and military withdrawals by Western powers, stepping in to offer diplomatic support, security assistance, and anti-terror aid to countries like Mali and Burkina Faso, and now, Niger without any strings attached. These new alliances and access to resources have proven particularly useful for Russia as it faces stringent sanctions for its invasion of Ukraine. The Sahel region is rich in natural resources such as oil, uranium, natural gas, and lithium.

African countries are stressing that ongoing violence underscores the complex and evolving geopolitical dynamics in the Sahel, highlighting the mixed results of foreign military interventions in the region.





GEOPOLITICAL DYNAMICS

Coinciding with Russian support, Burkina Faso has experienced similar security issues. Since January 2024, a shipment of Russian arms and a team of 300 paramilitary fighters have arrived. However, despite these efforts, violence in the region continues to escalate exponentially. Around 2.1 million people have been displaced from their homes, and most of the schools are inoperative.

Thousands of civilians were killed in this region, and importantly, a substantial portion of these recent casualties have been linked to operations involving the Wagner Group/ African Corp. Under the circumstances, Africa has “heated up”. African countries are stressing that ongoing violence underscores the complex and evolving geopolitical dynamics in the Sahel, highlighting the mixed results of foreign military interventions in the region.

If the US and the EU lose a foot in the Sahel, which is possible, it will be the result of their efforts to force Africans to choose sides. In the long run, if the West and Russia wish to fight Islamist militancy in the Sahel to safeguard their own countries as well from jihadi attacks, they will need to find a way to, if not cooperate, at least deconflict and accommodate each other’s presence. If not, they’ll both find themselves on the outside looking in. Nature abhors a vacuum.

*(Ambassador Soumen Ray, IFS (Retd.), Former Indian Ambassador and the noted Columnist on current world affairs. The views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of **The News Analytics Journal**)*

Chinese Conundrum: Co



COVER STORY

The possibility of a political initiative to resolve the crisis between India and China must be welcomed. It reiterates that continued large-scale deployments by both sides on contested and undefined LAC can lead to miscalculation and swift escalation.



Lt Gen(R) KJ Singh
for TNJ

POLITICAL INITIATIVE?

Two contrasting trends have emerged in the four-year-old and still unresolved Sino-Indian imbroglio. The first—the Directorate of National Intelligence, in its report released in Mar 2024, warns of the distinct possibility of Sino-Indian conflict. It reiterates that continued large-scale deployments by both sides on contested and undefined LAC can lead to miscalculation and escalation. The obvious questions are -will the PLA attempt another foray to realise its Tibet objective? Does integration of Xijang (Chinese term for Tibet) take precedence over Taiwan? Chinese are known

for utilising historic milestones. Will the window between 2024 (the 75th anniversary of PRC) and 2027(the centenary of PLA) turn out to be ominous, leading to another bigger and bloodier conflagration?

The second, somewhat reassuring sign is PM Narendra Modi's recent interview with US magazine, which indicates the possibility of a political initiative to resolve the crisis. This statement must be in direct contrast to his articulation of another adversary, Pakistan, which rules out the possibility of rapprochement. The global strategic community is waiting anxiously to decipher these trends, especially those pertaining to

Conflict Or Reconciliation

reconciliation, which could potentially bring about a positive change, albeit after the elections.

China has catapulted itself as the second largest economy and competing pole to the USA in the bipolar global power matrix. Its ambitions are clear-it seeks to be at the very helm.

CHINESE CORE INTERESTS

China has emerged as the pivotal manufacturing hub in the global supply chain, a position it seeks to leverage through BRI connectivity as a radiating spoke to reinforce influence and dependencies. China has a surplus of funds and infrastructure creation capability, which it wants to leverage through BRI. It is important to reiterate that India is the most prominent nation to oppose BRI, justifiably so,

Indian aspirations and contemptuously rejects formulations like 'Indo-Pacific' and 'Indian Century'. The extent of China's influence and its refusal to accommodate others' aspirations is a significant factor in the Sino-Indian conflict.

CHINESE PERCEPTION OF INDIA

Noted Chinese affairs expert Vijay Gokhale has outlined Chinese beliefs and perceptions about India. While India may find them diabolic, they merit consideration as they shape Chinese policies till India can force narrative correction. First, China views India as an unequal and unreliable neighbour, unworthy of any stand-alone status or consideration. Second, India is relevant only in hyphenated mode, tagged with great powers in the strategic trinity of the USA, USSR, and China. Third, clear expectation that India should first understand Chinese objectives and play along. Fourth, China can afford to deal with India in episodic tactical mode within her long-term trajectory.



because CPEC violates her sovereignty; it runs through parts of Pak-Occupied Kashmir (POK) and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), both are contested and de-jure Indian territories.

China has catapulted itself as the second largest economy and competing pole to the USA in the bipolar global power matrix. Its ambitions are clear-it seeks to be at the very helm. It aggressively pushes for unipolar Asia and orchestrates a petty 'zero-sum' game to stymie even the modest Indian outreach, with a string of pearls and multiple connectivity projects in the extended neighbourhood. It is simply unwilling to accommodate

It is important to remember that the Chinese think of time in centuries. They aim to wear out the opponent by building overwhelming asymmetry. Chinese assertion to push the resolution of the Sino-Indian border to the back burner, coupled with salami-slicing, setting up Xiokangs (border villages), and no patrolling zones, are all part of a plan to create new and altered fait-accomplis realities for us, to fall in line. With the kind of dependencies, especially in the primary sector and adverse trade balance, India is on the back foot economically. Indian FM has even acknowledged this.

BHARAT NARRATIVE-PUSH BACK

Chinese pre-emptive deployment in Ladakh in May 2020, accompanied by hype on technical asymmetry, are manifestations of grey-zone warfare. China had literally applied its old maxim, “loot the house on fire”, by launching coordinated salami-slicing in Apr 2020, even when COVID-19 was raging. However, India has managed to push back China with a display of resilience in Galwan, Yangtze (Dec 2022), and, most importantly, quid-pro-quo deployment on Kailash Heights in Sept 2020. India has not only rebalanced its forces but also deployed a dissuasive grid backed by adequate reserves.

As per media reports, the raising of another division for Mountain Corps and the operationalisation of Area HQ into Corps HQ are under advanced consideration. There is a relentless focus on border infrastructure like the recently inaugurated Sela Tunnel and road over Saser-La to Daulat Beg Oldie (DBO). It has also added a maritime dimension with successful anti-piracy operations in the Indian Ocean, announcements of setting up the Jatayu base in the Lakshadweep Island chain and plans to expand the Andaman-Nicobar bases. Technological dimension is evident in trials of Agni-V, MIRV and MaRV tests. All these add to the unfolding Bharat Narrative, which is now being acknowledged even in Chinese media, Weibo and think tanks. The moot question is how much more is required to check the Dragon?

In ever-evolving geo-strategic flux, two critical “known-unknown” challenges are evolving. First, it is now known that Russia is in resurgent mode, but its quantum and inter-se influence in the Russia-China-India trinity is unknown. Indian concern would be to ring-fence and strengthen Indo-Russian commitment to strategic cooperation, regardless of growing Sino-Russian ties. The second imponderable is that while the USA has forged bipartisan consensus on check-mating China, its character, especially in the likely Trump regime, is difficult to predict. India must be cognizant that heavy lifting its burden and external assistance from groupings like QUAD would be limited. QUAD, itself is creating complementary groupings like AUKUS and I-5. There is growing parallel engagement with Japan and South Korea, with India being pushed to the periphery.

WAY FORWARD-NARROWING ASYMMETRY

Pre-mature and ill-advised Chinese foray in Tibet has exposed limitations of the application of coercive deployment. The recent conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza have further reinforced the very futility of the application of kinetic force. Most importantly, it has jolted us out of our Pak-centric fixation and skewed focus on counterinsurgency. The irrational, wolf-warrior approach of China under Xi Jinping has foxed the global community. On a positive note, it has also busted the very myth and hype of Chinese asymmetry, which is certainly not debilitating and is being managed well. However, the next arenas in grey-zone warfare are likely to extend into cognitive domains. Yet, India cannot afford to let its guard down on LAC, notwithstanding the huge fiscal burden.



The irrational, wolf-warrior approach of China under Xi Jinping has foxed the global community. On a positive note, it has also busted the very myth and hype of Chinese asymmetry, which is certainly not debilitating and is and is being managed well.

GUARD RAILS OF RECONCILIATION

For India, while Pak remains a permanent irritant, China is the primary challenge. The threat is further accentuated by growing collusive linkages between the two. India is making steady progress but has decades to go before it narrows the existing asymmetry for stable and credible deterrence against the Dragon. The terms of reconciliation, if and when it materialises, will be influenced by levels of asymmetry. While the Ladakh foray, in all probability, was a one-off irrationality, India cannot let its guard down, not with standing financial costs and other challenges. In the short and medium term, it is imperative to maintain vigilance and readiness. Focused preparations and narrowing asymmetry, hopefully, will bolster the dissuasive coefficient in the Sino-Indian matrix.

It is creditable that India has maintained her stance of primacy and focus on the resolution of the border and has not fallen into the Chinese ploy of pushing the issue to the background. The way PLA has destroyed a set of comprehensive and agreed protocols in Doklam, Depsang, Demchok, Galwan, and Yangtze will indeed now make it very difficult to rebuild trust. Yet, two rising powers with large unresolved borders, both equipped with nuclear weapons, make it imperative for both to seek meaningful reconciliation. India will have to upgrade her intelligence and surveillance systems to preclude getting deceived by a repeat of Ladakh-2020. Even if the process of disengagement and de-escalation is completed, complete de-induction will be difficult. Adequate reserves and reactionary forces will have to be maintained in the theatre and well forward.



*(Lt Gen(R) KJ Singh, Former Western Army Commander and State Information Commissioner. He was Maharaja Ranjit Singh Chair Prof in PU & is Hony Prof currently in PU & CU. Regular columnist & commentator on National Security. The views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of **The News Analytics Journal**)*

In Conversation

|| Slovenia Celebrates It's Statehood Day

On the eve of Slovenia's Statehood Day on 25th June, the editor of The News Analytics Journal (TNJ), Ms Sandhya Srivastava, interacted with **H.E. Mateja Vodeb Ghosh**, Ambassador of the *Republic of Slovenia* to India.

TNJ: June 25th marks Slovenia's Statehood Day. Could you share a brief message about the significance of this day for the Slovenian people?

H.E. Mateja Vodeb Ghosh: Statehood Day is a Slovenian national holiday. It commemorates June 25, 1991, when Slovenia formally became independent. On this day, the Declaration of the Independence of Slovenia and the Basic Constitutional Charter on Independence and Independence of Slovenia were adopted. As such, the day has an enormous significance for the Slovenian people: it was the first time (after centuries and centuries) that Slovenia became an independent country again.



H.E. Mateja Vodeb Ghosh
Ambassador of the
Republic of Slovenia to India

Statehood Day should not be confused with Independence and Unity Day, which is celebrated on December 26 in memory of December 26, 1990, when the results of the plebiscite/referendum were announced, in which 88.5% of Slovenians voted for Slovenia to become a sovereign and independent country.

TNJ: India and Slovenia have enjoyed friendly relations since 1992. In your view, what are the key strengths of this bilateral relationship?

H.E. Mateja Vodeb Ghosh: Slovenia–India relations date back before Slovenia's independence, already to the times when Slovenia was part of former Yugoslavia. Slovenia as an independent state built relations with India with this historic background. The bilateral relations have broadened with Slovenia's membership in the European Union, India's rise at the global level, and with the opening of the respective embassies in our two countries (Slovenia in India in 2002/2003 and India in Slovenia in 2007).

The strengthening of relations has been demonstrated by regular exchanges of visits (Prime Minister of Slovenia's visit to India in 2011; exchange of visits of Speakers of Parliament (*Indian to Slovenia in 2013, Slovenian to India in 2016; President of India visited Slovenia in 2019; Minister of External Affairs of India visited Slovenia on bilateral visit and participated at Bled Strategic Forum in 2021; Slovenian Minister of Foreign Affairs visited India on the occasion of Raisina dialogue in 2022 and 2023*), with continuation of political consultations between ministries of foreign/external affairs, and by increasing economic cooperation between our two countries.

TNJ: Looking ahead, are there any specific areas where you see potential for increased cooperation between India and Slovenia, perhaps economically or technologically?

H.E. Mateja Vodeb Ghosh: Economic cooperation has been gradually increasing, with trade showing a big rise in the past few years. It has more than doubled in the past 3 years. With diversifying of global supply chains more opportunities arise. The sectors that Slovenia sees as the most promising for broadening the cooperation are space, green hydrogen, and water sector. As for the technology side, efforts are underway to operationalize the recently established SITE (Science Innovation Technology Economy). It aims to establish the bridge between Slovenian and Indian businesses and the transfer of technology.

TNJ: Beyond political ties, what are some ways India and Slovenia can strengthen cultural exchange and people-to-people bonds?

H.E. Mateja Vodeb Ghosh: People-to-people bonds are in my opinion the most important element of relations between two countries. As such, they importantly contribute to government-to-government and business-to-business relations. The closeness and understanding between our people can be enriched in different ways. You mentioned cultural exchanges. The other important avenues are student exchanges. We can also bring people closer together through tourism and sports.



I am happy to see that the Embassy can now support around 2-3 culture projects annually. We introduced Slovenian musicians, (multi-media) artists, and authors to the Indian audience. More efforts are needed in the student exchanges. While we do register some Indian students heading to Slovenia (including for master's and PhD studies), meeting Slovenian students in India are much rarer sight. Both sides need to undertake more efforts here.

TNJ: As India and Slovenia celebrate their respective milestones, is there a common message you'd like to convey about the future direction of our relations?

H.E. Mateja Vodeb Ghosh: We are living in turbulent times when we are witnesses of the rebalancing of international relations. As such there is a lot of instability in today's world. But I am happy to note that the relations between Slovenia, and more broadly Europe on one side and India on the other side, are pillars of stability and of growing cooperation. I think together we can importantly contribute to a more peaceful, safer, and more environment kind world.

POK: Is Pakistan Paying Dearly for Mismanagement?



NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Pakistan, already suffering from the economic meltdown, can ill afford to have another province permanently erupt in protests after the troubled Baluchistan. At the core of the problem in POK has been the uninterrupted neglect of the province by the rulers and the creeping local dissatisfaction against it.



Ambassador Jeitendra Tripathi
for TNJ

SOARING PRICES

After the four-day violent protest, which left four dead in Pak-Occupied Kashmir (POK), the Prime Minister of Pakistan announced three immediate measures to assuage the situation for the time being- firstly, Pakistan Rupees 2,300 crore (US\$ 8.26 crore) immediate relief, secondly, reduction of electricity tariff by 50 percent and thirdly, slashing the price of bread. Though these measures have been able, for the

time being, to suspend the agitation, the unrest might erupt again if the federal government fails to address the core issues.

These protests cannot be branded as politically motivated or engineered by India (as the Sharif government will certainly allege soon) as now two month-old agitation has been spear-headed by the local traders reeling under the soaring price of

electricity and essential commodities. The protests began after the arrest of 70 striking members of J & K JAAC (Jammu and Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee). Pak Rangers resorted to lathi-charge and firing to quell the protests, but it apparently backfired. Pakistan, already suffering from the economic meltdown, can ill afford to have another province permanently erupt in protests after the troubled Baluchistan. At the core of the problem in POK has been the uninterrupted neglect of the province by the rulers despite their tall claims of the region belonging to Pakistan and naming it “Azad Kashmir.” POK, with an area of 13,297 square Kilometres and approximately 40,45,000 population, does not have any significant export-based industry.

Despite accounting for more than 20 percent of the total power generated in Pakistan, POK receives not even 30 percent of what it needs as most of the power generated in the region goes to Punjab.

BOUNDLESS SCOPE

Dry dates, rock salt, cement, and gypsum were being exported to India, but that was also discontinued when Pakistan decided to sever trade relations with India, thus draining out the major source of income for POK. Despite the scenic beauty of the region, the tourism industry was always neglected by the powers that be in Islamabad. This step-motherly treatment of a region replete with natural and mineral wealth and boundless scope of development of tourism has frustrated the residents beyond the limits of meek tolerance.

The POK Government is accused of diverting a major chunk of the funds allocated for the development of the province to payment of increased salaries for the colossal provincial cabinet (the POK cabinet has more than fifty ministers) and unusually large and corrupt bureaucracy. Shaukat Nawaz Mir, President of the Joint Awami Action Committee, has claimed that there were hardly any funds left for the developmental work. This was corroborated implicitly by the premier of POK, Chaudhary Anwar-ul- Haque



who accepted that since the disbursement of salaries to Government employees could not be withheld, developmental work had to wait. Mir also claimed that despite accounting for more than 20 percent of the total power generated in Pakistan, POK receives not even 30 percent of what it needs as most of the power generated in the region goes to Punjab and for the use of more than 20,000 Chinese staying in the province for CPEC- related work.

GROSS NEGLECT

The Joint Awami Action Committee also claimed that the electricity tariff in POK was much higher than elsewhere in Pakistan, unemployment was rampant, and even wheat flour was being sold at the rate of Pakistan Rupees 700 per kilogram against Pakistan Rupees 200 per kilogram in Punjab and Sindh. The credibility of these allegations is doubtless; otherwise, Shahbaz Sharif would not have announced the slashing of prices in the region. It is not that there

are no business opportunities in POK. Even though the population of POK has basically been agrarian, the Geological Survey of Pakistan boosts the presence of coal, marble, copper, mica, bauxite, soapstone, fire clay in sizable quantities, and gold, uranium, and arsenic in the region. However, the “Azad Kashmir Council” does not mention any metallurgical industry in POK except Siraz Steels. This amply substantiates the gross neglect of the industrial development of the region by the puppet provincial government and its master, the federal government of Pakistan.

Though the problems in the POK have now come to the forefront, Pakistan, in general, is reeling under the high inflation (24.7 percent despite various rescue trenches by IMF), dismal growth rate (less than two percent for the current fiscal year according to IMF), dwindling FOREX reserves (less than US\$ 13 billion as on 31 March 2024) and soaring unemployment (over eight percent).

While the public of Pakistan, in general, is finding it difficult to make ends meet, the corrupt leadership, utterly selfish bureaucracy, privileged Armed forces, and fanatic clergy are having a field day.

According to E24 (a Norwegian outlet), OCCRP (Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project), and “Dubai Unlocked”, an estimated 17,000 Pakistani nationals own 23,000 properties in UAE with a combined value of US\$ 11 billion. The list of these persons, as revealed by Pakistan’s leading daily “The Dawn” in its May 13 issue, gives a virtual tour of the country’s who is who. It includes the three children of Asif Zardari-Bilawal, Bakhtiyar and Asifa, son of Nawaz Sharif, late Parvez Musharraf, former PM Shaukat Aziz, son of former Army chief Qamar Javed Bajwa, two former chief ministers of Baluchistan, many members of the National Assembly and State assemblies and a horde of leading businesspersons who have invested in huge real estates.



Some of the leaders, according to the newspaper, have shamelessly admitted owning these properties but claimed that they had acquired these by 'legal means'. These revelations have further angered the protesting public of POK. In an interview at a YouTube channel of Pakistan named "Real Entertainment TV", some of the protesters can also be heard demanding the demolition of the border fences between the two Kashmir so that they can move to a more developed Indian side!

FUTURE INDEFINITE

What should be the Indian response to the explosive situation in POK? The Government of India has not issued any official statement though External Minister S. Jaishankar has reiterated that POK was ours and will always remain ours. However, the reaction by many Indian leaders (mostly from the ruling coalition) has been more aggressive. Some have declared that we will take POK forcibly. Even PM Modi has gone

overboard with his now-viral "bangle" statement during an election rally. Claiming the POK to be ours is alright, as the POK is indeed ours, but going beyond this and resolving that the POK will be annexed by force is, though good for kindling the public sentiments during the election time, should be avoided in diplomacy. India should not and need not react to these developments in POK as Pakistan is harming itself with its misguided, narrow, India-centric, and counter-productive domestic and foreign policies. Contemporary Pakistan does not need an enemy to blame, as it has proved to be its enemy. Using the jargon of English Grammar, Pakistan can be described as a country with a past imperfect, present tense, and future indefinite. If things remain as they are, Pakistan is heading to a repeat of 1971 due to its own doing.

India should not and need not react to the developments in POK as Pakistan is harming itself with its misguided, narrow, India-centric, and counter-productive domestic and foreign policies.



(Ambassador Jeitendra Tripathi, IFS (Retd.), Former Ambassador to Zimbabwe. He has vast experience of Africa, Europe, Middle-East and Latin America. He was also India's Ambassador to Zimbabwe. The views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The News Analytics Journal)

The Continuing Impasse in India-Canada Relations



TIMEPIECE

The Indo-Canadian relations have nose-dived in recent times in the aftermath of the June 2023. The killing of Canadian Sikh separatist leader Nijjar in Vancouver in the Canadian province of British Columbia. Many tit-for-tat steps have only complicated the relations further.



Ambassador Srikumar Menon
for TNJ

SEPARATIST GROUPS

A lot has transpired during the past eleven months. The Indian establishment has its work cut out, as it tries to recover lost ground while attempting to restore normalcy in its longstanding bilateral relationship with Canada. The year-long stand-off started in June 2023, when Canada accused India of possible complicity in the killing of the Sikh separatist leader, with India outrightly rejecting the accusation as “absurd and motivated”. This, in turn, led to the continuing unfortunate diplomatic stand-off, marked initially by a series of tit-for-tat expulsions of diplomats from both sides.

India has over the years, faulted Canada for shielding members of militant separatist groups operating from Canadian territory. India has often conveyed its frustration to Canada for the latter not doing enough to rein in such Canada-based operatives and for not acting upon “specific evidence about their criminal activities”. All along, India’s concern has been the lack of intent and action shown by the Canadian government in addressing and reining in the overt and covert threat posed by Sikh extremists.

India has time and again flagged the anti-India activities being propagated and launched from the soil of Canada, which directly impact the security and

sovereignty of India. All along, Canada has chosen to ignore these red flags, while taking the easy way out by abdicating its bounden responsibility as a defender of the rule of law. The matter came to a head, when the Canadian Prime Minister chose to go public, by making unsubstantiated claims in the Canadian Parliament, about the Indian government's involvement in the Nijjar episode, without providing any concrete evidence. In fact, to date, Canada has not provided any evidence publicly to authenticate its claims.



POLITICALLY MOTIVATED

As seen from the Indian perspective, it was a wholly uncalled-for, knee-jerk reaction from the Canadian PM. An obvious part of a politically motivated appeasement policy, orchestrated and playing to the gallery, ostensibly to gain the support of a particular vote-bank constituency in Canada. While doing so, the Canadian leader was evidently seeking to garner political support and shore up his own waning personal popularity, while also attempting to halt the ruling party's declining electoral prospects.

while also suspending visa and consular services temporarily in some Indian cities.

From the Indian perspective, the unfortunate fallout from this stand-off was the suspension of visas for Indian nationals seeking to travel to Canada and the dilution in security and diplomatic immunity for Indian diplomats based in Canada. The most affected continue to be the large group of Indian students studying in various cities in Canada and the numerous prospective students awaiting their turn to

already visible with large numbers of Indian students already looking elsewhere, considering alternative destinations for pursuing their study and residency. In the midst of all these negativities creeping into the bilateral relations between India and Canada, the US media reported in April 2024, about the possible involvement of an Indian intelligence operative in an alleged conspiracy to assassinate another pro-separatist Sikh leader. As we now approach the completion of a year since the

The Indian government set a deadline for Canada to take steps to cut down the strength of its diplomatic staff in India, to match the diplomatic staff strength of the Indian Mission in Canada.

The immediate upshot of this was that India suspended visa services in Canada citing "security threats" faced by its High Commission and consulates. The Indian government set a deadline for Canada to take steps to cut down the strength of its diplomatic staff in India, to match the diplomatic staff strength of the Indian Mission in Canada. On its part, Canada withdrew 41 of its diplomats posted in India,

take up admissions in Canadian Universities. All of them continue to face an uncertain and bleak academic future, unless there is a resolution of this impasse, sooner than later.

STALEMATE CONTINUES

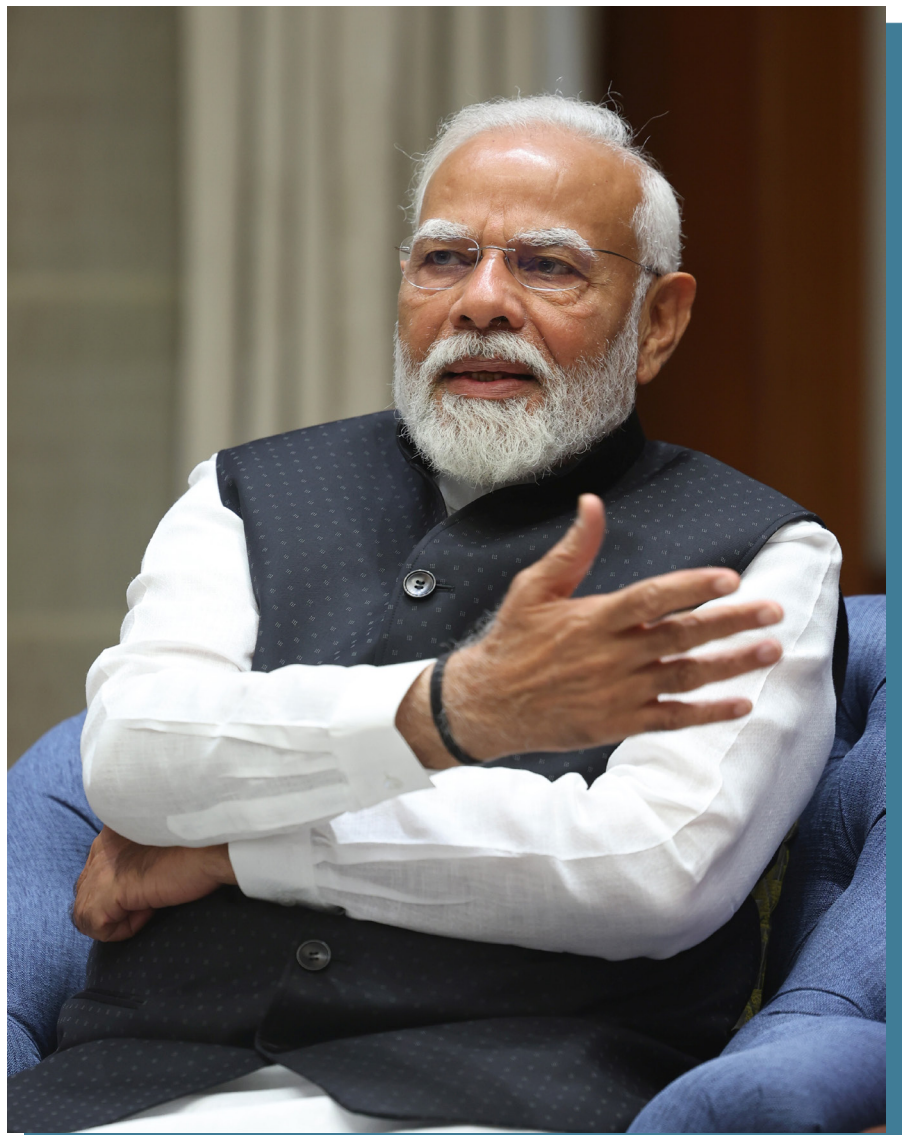
The adverse impact on Canada's image as a "study destination" offering high-quality higher education and research opportunities is

unfortunate issue erupted, the fact remains that the stalemate continues as bilateral ties remain strained and frosty with Canada, time and again, choosing to escalate the issue, while doing little to defuse the tension. It certainly did not help matters, when last month in April, the Canadian PM chose to attend a pro-separatist rally in Toronto, prompting a vigorous and scathing protest from the

Indian Government. The Canadian leader's presence at the event was even more galling for Indian sensibilities, considering that rabid anti-India and pro-separatist slogans were raised without any restraining action from the local authorities.

Later, the Indian government had to castigate Canadian authorities for permitting a controversial rally organized by radical separatist elements in Malton Ontario, on 5 May, where a staged tableau-float depicted the Indian Prime Minister in an offensive and bad light. The participants at the rally also displayed posters and banners inciting violence against Indian diplomats. In a strongly worded statement on the issue, the Indian External Affairs Ministry called on Canadian authorities "not to allow intimidation by radical elements in the name of freedom of expression."

As these differences between India and Canada have come to a head, what is significant is that the US administration has, all along, taken a measured, pragmatic approach to the issue, by maintaining a nuanced balance in its public statements and encouraging the two countries to cooperate and engage with each other in dialogue to sort out their bilateral relations. Though it stated that it viewed it as a serious matter, the US was quick to express satisfaction with the steps taken by the Indian government to put a process in place to investigate the issue. The US stand has been that its relationship with India is an important, strategic, and consequential partnership. And the UK, on its part, without taking sides, has called for de-escalation of the matter.



The Canadian leader's presence at the event was even more galling for Indian sensibilities, considering that rabid anti-India and pro-separatist slogans were raised without any restraining action from the local authorities.

PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

In these circumstances, while there has been a clear lack of direct or overt international support for its stand during the early part of this stand-off, Canada was forced to tone down its rhetoric and take a less belligerent approach. Canada, for a brief while, showed that it was inclined to feel the need to re-engage with India and find an amicable way out of the unfortunate

predicament that the two sides found themselves in.

However, subsequent events and stage posturing by the Canadian leadership have only contributed to more rigidity in the relationship. It goes without saying that the two countries have had a warm relationship based on shared common traditions of democracy, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious pluralism, and

strong people-to-people connections. Thus, there is a need for both sides to re-engage and work constructively together to repair the damage and find practical solutions for the contentious issues through the time-tested mode of dialogue.

Of course, with the political and security stakes being so high, talking about such options is easier said than done. Both sides will have to climb down from their positions of taking the high moral ground. Both sides do realize that it is in their interest to de-escalate and talk with each other rather than have a slanging match with each other. The sorry episode should not be a distraction from focusing on priorities and other matters of greater importance from the bilateral perspective.

For this stalemate to end, it is important that both sides work together to achieve the goal of restoring bilateral relations to the calm, rational levels that existed before this unfortunate episode. While recognizing

the need to address the contentious issues, it would do a world of good for both sides to leverage and focus on the strategic and prosperous trading relationship that has hitherto existed.

That can be achieved by de-escalating the big talk, getting away from making populist public statements, and getting down to real dialogue through a structured diplomatic channel of engagement between specially nominated representatives. It is hoped that, for the sake of good Indo-Canadian relations, both sides will soon be able to invoke the required level of confidence and trust in each other to re-engage in constructive dialogue.

*(Ambassador Srikumar Menon, IFS (Retd.), Former Ambassador of India to South Sudan, Angola, and Sao Tome & Principe. The views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of **The News Analytics Journal**)*



GLOBAL INFLUENCE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Propels

TNJ | Special Coverage

Economic Resurgence

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has emerged as a pivotal figure on the world stage, transforming India's global standing through dynamic leadership, strategic diplomacy, and a visionary approach to international relations. Over the past decade, Modi has leveraged India's economic potential, cultural heritage, and geopolitical significance to position the country as a key player in global affairs.

One of Modi's most significant contributions to global politics is his ability to elevate India's profile as a major economic power. Under his leadership, India has achieved remarkable economic growth, becoming one of the fastest-growing major economies. India will likely step into 'Amrit Kaal' as it is set to become the World's fourth-largest economy by 2025 and the third-largest by 2028. This economic resurgence has enhanced India's clout in international forums, enabling Modi to negotiate favorable trade deals, attract investment, and contribute to global economic stability.

Contemporary Realities

Modi's leadership has been instrumental in advancing India's role in multilateral organizations and initiatives. Under his guidance, India has actively participated in forums such as the United Nations, G20, BRICS, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Modi's emphasis on multilateralism and his calls for reforming global institutions to better reflect contemporary realities resonate with many countries seeking a more equitable international order.

Modi's efforts to foster regional cooperation and stability have also been significant. His "Neighborhood First" policy emphasizes strengthening ties with South Asian neighbors, promoting regional integration, and addressing shared challenges. Modi's outreach to countries in South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Africa has resulted in enhanced economic cooperation, infrastructure development, and people-to-people connections.



ER OF THE MONTH

lling India Into Global League

Domestic Achievements

Additionally, Modi's leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic showcased India's capacity to contribute to global health and crisis management. India's role in supplying vaccines, pharmaceuticals, and medical equipment to countries in need demonstrated Modi's commitment to global solidarity and humanitarian assistance.

"Atm Nirbhar Bharat," or "Self-Reliant India," has made significant strides since its inception. Launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2020, the initiative aims to reduce India's dependency on imports and bolster domestic production across various sectors. The initiative has also seen success in promoting local industries, particularly in pharmaceuticals, electronics, and defense, leading to increased exports.

In the aftermath of the Russo-Ukraine war, India has taken decisive steps to bolster its energy security amid global disruptions. Recognizing the volatility of international energy markets, India has diversified its energy sources, from concessional Russian oil to seeking long-term contracts with alternative suppliers. India has very smartly circumvented the US economic sanctions on Russian products to continue benefitting from its long-term strategic relations with Moscow.

Contemporary Realities

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's global importance is reflected in his ability to elevate India's international standing through strategic diplomacy, economic growth, and a commitment to global cooperation. His visionary leadership, pragmatic foreign policy, and proactive engagement with the international community have positioned India as a key player in shaping the global order.

However, his tenure has also been marred by various challenges and stormy debates. From concerns about democratic erosion and social polarisation to economic mismanagement and environmental neglect, Modi's leadership has elicited criticism from some quarters. Some have also questioned the direction of India's democracy and its commitment to inclusive development and pluralism.

Though many have pointed out the success of Modi's model of inspiring leadership. With a clear vision, bold reforms, and unwavering determination, Modi aims to build on the achievements of the past decade and propel India towards greater heights of success, prosperity, and global leadership. As India embarks on this journey of progress and transformation, the future is bright with promise and possibilities. India now looks all set to continue its charted course of development at home and play a more engaging role on the global stage in the near future.

Even War Has Rules



COUNTER VIEW

Though Israel continues to feel it is waging a just war against Hamas there are applicable international laws and norms it must not ignore. Whether Israel has unrestricted rights while using force in self-defence? What are the limits which Israel is supposed to comply with and has Israel violated those limits set under international law?



Dr Aftab Alam, Professor and HoD of Strategic and Security Studies, AMU
for TNJ

DELICATE BALANCE

Ever since Hamas's October 7 attacks on Israel, killing close to 1,200 people and taking around 240 hostages, the besieged Gaza Strip has been subjected to relentless airstrikes to ground operations by Israel invoking its right of self-defence, in which, as of now, nearly 34,950 Palestinians, most of them women, and children, have been killed, and around 78,600 others injured. The continuing conflict has damaged or destroyed approximately three-quarters of its buildings across the Gaza Strip. The UN Security Council, the premier global body for maintaining

international peace and security and enforcing international law, appears to be helpless and a bystander in the face of escalating and unprecedented fatalities and wanton destruction, with no end in sight. The continuing conflict in Gaza raises serious questions about the efficacy and relevance of international law governing the use of force (*jus ad bellum*) and the conduct of hostilities (*jus in bello*).

Jus ad bellum and *jus in bello* are two distinct but increasingly interweaving branches of international law applicable to the present Israel-Hamas conflict. While *jus ad bellum* deals with the reasons for fighting

and aims at maintaining peace, *jus in bello* contains rules regulating the conduct of hostilities and seeks to mitigate the horrors of war by striking a delicate balance between military necessity and humanitarian imperatives and restricting belligerents' choice of means and methods of warfare. *jus in bello* or International Humanitarian Law (IHL) norms are equally applicable to all parties, irrespective of their status as aggressors or victims, or irrespective of what the other side has done.

The basic rules of *jus ad bellum* are set out in articles 2(4) and 51 of

THE CORE PRINCIPLES

One of the most fundamental principles of contemporary international law is the general prohibition against the use of force. However, recognising the fundamental right of every state to survive international law allows a state to use force in self-defence, provided it is a victim of an armed attack. But based on a conjunctive reading of articles 2(4) and 51 of the UN Charter, self-defence is generally interpreted to constitute a state-centric right. The right to self-defence cannot be invoked

Furthermore, even if we recognise that Israeli invocation of self-defence is permissible, it certainly fails to meet the requirements of a lawful exercise of such a right. For example, while exercising the right to self-defence, Israel must meet the twin requirements of 'necessity' and 'proportionally' in addition to observing the core principles of IHL. The Caroline doctrine, a customary international law formulation, requires a victim state to show a "necessity of self-defence," which must be "instant, overwhelming, leaving no choice of means and no



the United Nations (UN) Charter of 1945, which prohibit the use of force unless it is undertaken in self-defence. IHL relies on international customary rules based on recognised state practices during armed conflicts as well as treaty laws, which most importantly include the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Additional Protocols of 1977.

against non-state armed groups. The International Court of Justice (ICJ), in its Wall opinion (2004), denied Israel the right to self-defence against terrorist attacks on this ground. Thus, the invocation of the right to self-defence by Israel against Hamas, which is a non-state actor, will be a difficult proposition to justify.

moment for deliberation." The victim's response is allowed only as a last resort when there are no alternative peaceful means available to it.

There is no evidence on record to show that Israel ever made any genuine and serious attempt to employ any alternative peaceful method, either before launching

While exercising the right to self-defence, Israel must meet the twin requirements of 'necessity' and 'proportionally' in addition to observing the core principles of International Humanitarian Law.

full-fledged military attacks on Gaza or during the ongoing conflict, to address the challenge posed by Hamas, let alone find out any solution to the question of Palestinian statehood, which lies at the root of the present conflict. Contrarily, Israel has defied all the UN resolutions concerning the Palestinian question, including the most recent one calling for a 'lasting, sustainable ceasefire.'

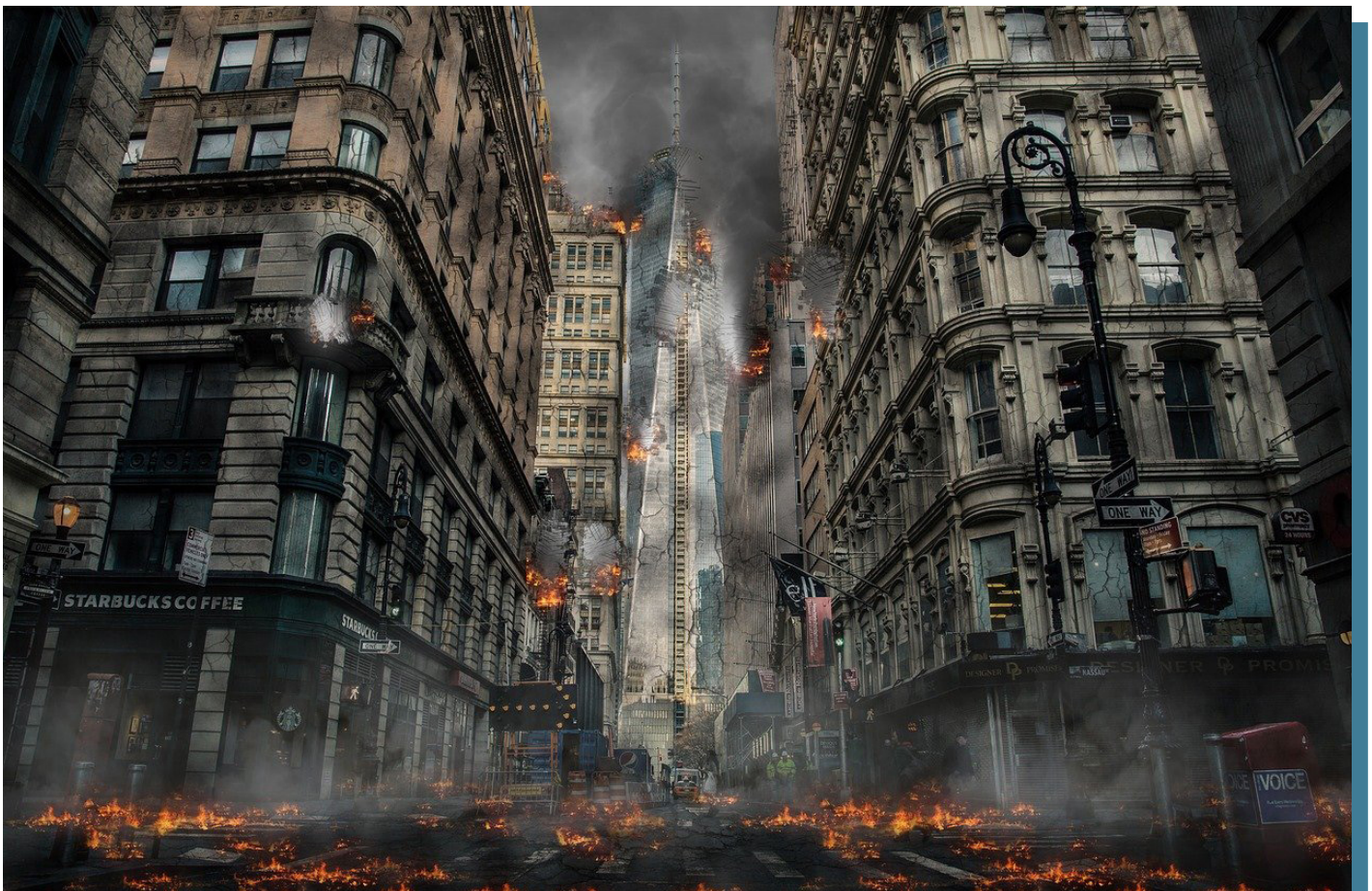
It must be noted that the right to self-defence does not entitle a victim state to unrestricted and indiscriminate use of force for any period of time. International law allows a state acting in self-defence to use only such amount of force as is both necessary and reasonable in order to defend oneself and to halt and repel an ongoing armed attack that gave rise to the right of self-defence. The goal of defensive use of force is limited to driving the aggressor back.

CONFLICT OBLIGATIONS

However, the stated goal of Israel seems to be to destroy Hamas, and it treats entire Palestinians as either members or sympathisers and therefore considers all of them legitimate military targets. In February, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared that its offensive in Gaza will continue until it achieves "absolute victory." Israeli President Isaac Herzog claimed that there were no innocent civilians in Gaza and that the entire Gazan population was responsible for the October 7 attacks. The characterisation of the entire Palestinian population of Gaza by Israel as armed enemies is again a problematic proposition. Israel, while using force in self-defence, is also required to meet the requirement of proportionality, which is generally judged first in terms of the 'act' that provoked it

and secondly, against the legitimate 'goals' of defensive force. If we consider the enormity and scale of Israeli military operations in Gaza, it is amply clear that they violated the principles of proportionality, as they are exceedingly violent, causing more deaths and destruction compared to the October 7 Hamas attacks that provoked them.

There is also damning evidence of Israel violating its obligations under IHL, including its core principle of 'distinction', which requires all parties to an armed conflict to distinguish, at all times, between combatants and civilians, and military and civilian objectives and direct their military operations only against combatants and military objectives. Civilians and civilian objects must never be the target of a deliberate attack. Parties to an armed conflict are obligated to take steps to minimise the harm caused



to civilians and civilian objects. IHL prohibits attacks on even otherwise lawful targets when the expected civilian casualties would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated. The UN agencies and other human rights organisations have documented the Israeli violations of IHL, including the principle of distinction, and human rights law in its operations against Hamas. Israel is routinely bombing and raiding healthcare facilities such as hospitals and ambulances, blasting civilian dwellings, including schools and places of worship, and destroying roads and other infrastructure. Israel has not even spared UN personnel and other humanitarian aid workers. The high number of civilian casualties caused by the air strikes suggests that Israeli attacks are unlawfully disproportionate.

To protect civilian populations from the horrors of conflict, the UNSC, after several unsuccessful attempts, called for an immediate ceasefire and the unconditional release of the Israeli captives taken by Hamas.

COMPLETE SIEGE

The deliberate blocking of humanitarian relief by Israel from reaching civilians in need has led to starvation and the onset of famine in the Gaza Strip. This amounts to collective punishment, a prohibited act under IHL, and a war crime. At the very beginning of the current conflict, Israel's Minister of Defence,

Yoav Gallant, stated "We are imposing a complete siege on [Gaza]. No electricity, no food, no water, no fuel – everything is closed. We are fighting human animals, and we act accordingly."

Realising the need for international action to uphold the principles of IHL and human rights and to protect civilian populations from the horrors of conflict, the UN Security Council, after several unsuccessful attempts, called for an immediate ceasefire and the release of the Israeli captives taken by Hamas. It also reminded all parties to comply with their obligations under international law. However, defying the UN call for a ceasefire, Israel has launched fresh massive attacks in the southern Gazan city of Rafah.

An immediate ceasefire and unconditional release of all hostages, along with permanent actions towards a two-state solution and compliance with international legal norms by all parties, could only help to bring about long-term peace in the region. The core principles of IHL and human rights law remind us that humanity must prevail even in times of armed conflicts, and basic human rights cannot be cast aside in dire emergencies. Israel cannot use its right to self-defence against Hamas as a blanket license for IHL and human rights violations.

(Dr Aftab Alam, is a Professor and Head of Department of Strategic & Security Studies, Aligarh Muslim University. He also teaches international law. The views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The News Analytics Journal.)



Russia-Ukraine War: Phase of Engagement with Long-Range Weapons



WAR STRATEGY

The Russia–Ukraine war, now in its third year has raised several questions for instance, whether Russia has deployed its full military might and failed, or alternatively, is Russia adopting a more nuanced approach to using force and the resulting destruction? The war has reached a phase of engagement with long-range vectors and drones, with no end in sight. Despite this, an analysis of geopolitical aspects, and the conduct of military operations can yield valuable insights.



Air Marshal Anil Khosla (Retd)
for TNJ

GENESIS

On the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Ukraine voted in favour of independence from the Soviet Union in a referendum. Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus set up a Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). In December 1994, after the end of the Cold War, Ukraine, Russia, the UK, and the US agreed to respect Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, and borders in exchange for Ukraine abandoning the

nuclear weapons it inherited from the Soviet Union. In May 1997, Russia and Ukraine signed a friendship treaty that allowed Russia to retain ownership of most ships in the Black Sea fleet (based in Ukraine's Crimea) in exchange for Moscow paying Kyiv a modest rent to use the port of Sebastopol. Moscow also remained Kyiv's most important commercial partner, with Ukraine dependent on Russian oil and gas.

Ukraine, perceiving the CIS as a potential tool for Moscow's influence, maintained a cautious stance and showed an apparent inclination towards the West, actively seeking ties with the US-led NATO military alliance. In 2005, Ukraine reiterated its desire to join the EU, along with NATO. In 2008, at a summit in Bucharest, NATO leaders agreed that Ukraine had a future in the alliance, sparking Moscow's ire. In 2014, Russia sent its Special Forces to take control of strategic sites on Ukraine's Crimea peninsula. In March 2014, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a treaty absorbing Crimea into Russia. The annexation provoked a diplomatic crisis between the West and Russia. In April 2014, pro-Russian separatists in Donetsk and Luhansk declared their regions to be independent. The clashes became a full-blown conflict in May 2014.

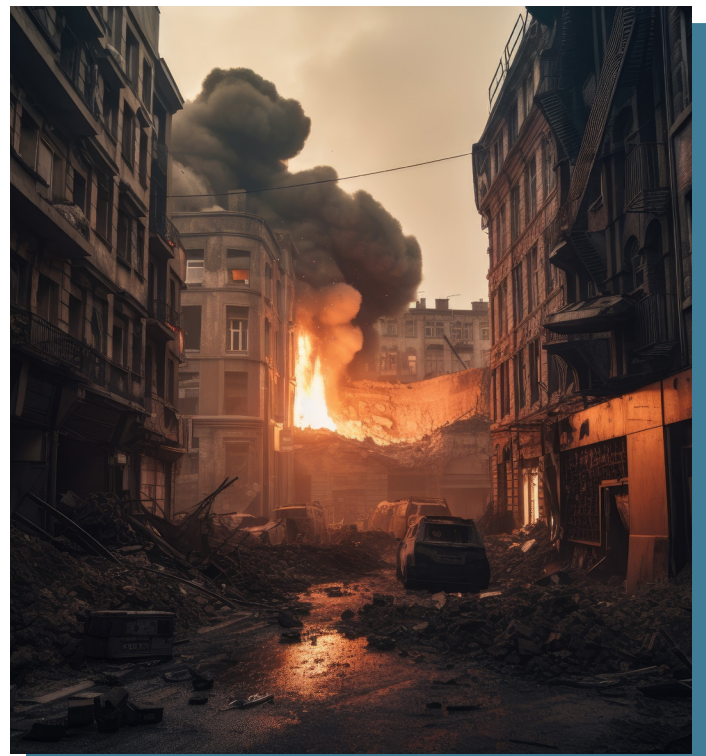
PERSPECTIVE OF PRESENT CONFLICT

On 24 February 22, Russia invaded Ukraine, calling it a special military operation. The Russian narrative is that “The US-led West (the USA, NATO and EU) is the aggressor, using Ukraine against it as a pawn, not honouring its commitment and expanding the NATO westwards, bringing it to the Russian doorstep, and compelling Russia into taking this drastic action”. On the other hand, the Western narrative is that “Russia is the aggressor, trying to rebuild its lost empire, with Ukraine being the victim, and the West is supporting the democratic rights of the victim country”.

Russian Objectives. Officially, Russia stated its objectives of the “special military operation” as “demilitarisation, denazification and assurance about the neutral status of Ukraine (i.e., not joining NATO).” This operation, also known as the 'Russian-Ukrainian War ', was justified by Russia citing a call for help from the Donbas region for its liberation from Ukraine. An undeclared objective is also to consolidate the Russian hold on Crimea.

Military Power Comparison. There is a significant disparity between the strength of Russia's and Ukraine's defence forces. Russia is the number two military power globally. The Russian Air Force is ranked second, whereas the Ukrainian Air Force is ranked 27th globally. Numerically, the Russian Air Force is about 8 to 10 times the size of the Ukrainian Air Force. The Russian army is 3 to 6 times that of the Ukrainian military compared to the army's strength and equipment.

Orchestration of Operations. The operations were initiated by Russia with hybrid warfare using disruption (cyber-attacks) and destruction (using surface-to-surface and air-delivered long-range vectors). A fair amount of air superiority was achieved in the initial stages. The surface operations were three-pronged, with attacks from North, East and South. In the North, the advance was towards Kyiv and Kharkiv, intending for regime change at the capital. In the east, advances towards Donbas, Luhansk, Donetsk, and Mariupol were obviously to liberate the Donbas area and create a Russia-friendly corridor. In the south, addressing Kherson, Mykolaiv, Odesa, and Snake Island was to consolidate hold on Crimea and deny sea access to Ukraine.



Phase I of The War. In this phase, the Russian intention was to take over the capital with swift action and bring in a regime change. Surface forces advanced towards Kyiv on two axes, with the third axis being by the air domain. The Russian Special Forces took over the Hostomel airport (25 Km from Kyiv) to pump in combatants, equipment, and supplies. However, the helicopters and the heavy-lift transport aircraft could not land due to vulnerability from shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles, failing the overall plan.

Phase II of the War. A few weeks into the war, the Russian forces reorganised, and concentration shifted from northern to eastern and southern areas. The operations in this phase were like urban guerrilla

warfare, with Russian forces surrounding the cities and Ukrainian forces employing defensive, hit-and-run tactics. What stands out in the entire operation is that the Russians did not utilise the full potential of the airpower despite the significant disparity between the forces of the two countries.

Russian Referendum. In late September 2022, Russia held referendums in four areas of Ukraine – Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia. On 30 September 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced the takeover of Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia in an address to both houses of the Russian parliament. As far as Russia is concerned, this marked the completion of its special operations in Ukraine.

Achievement of Objectives. So far, Russia has been able to create a 'friendly corridor' in its eastern region, a term used to describe the areas under Russian control that serve as a buffer zone between Russia and Ukraine. The Russians have considerably reduced the Ukrainian combat potential by destroying most of its military bases and selective defence industry. Russia has also consolidated its hold on Crimea, ending its water and power blockade. In addition, it has stalled the possibility of Ukraine joining NATO for the time being.

WESTERN AID TO UKRAINE

Though defence and security links between Ukraine, NATO members and other allies and partners started soon after Ukraine's independence in 1991, it intensified when Russia annexed Crimea in 2014. However, it was limited to training and provision of non-lethal military equipment. Bilateral military assistance has been significantly stepped up after 24 February 2022. In addition to massive funds, the West gave Ukraine lethal weapons like anti-tank missiles and drones to stem Russian ground advances. Much more important were the Air Defence systems that prevented the Russian Air Force from using Ukrainian skies with immunity.

While maintaining the high priority of air defence and the supply of ammunition, the West has gradually enhanced Ukraine's long-range strike capabilities. Initial aid packages had limited-range howitzers for use at the frontline. Later, the High-Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS—with 77km range rockets) was added to the package. This was a significant boost for the Ukrainian military, allowing it to target Russian forward weapons storage facilities.

After that, a 150 km range Ground Launched Small





Diameter Bomb (GLSDB) was included. It put within reach all of Russia's supply lines in the east of the country as well as part of Russian-occupied Crimea. Late last year, the US began to supply Ukraine with the older medium-range Army Tactical Missile Systems (ATACMS) armed with wide-spreading cluster munitions that can travel up to 160 Km. Now, the US is leaning toward sending the longer-range version of the missile with a 300 km range.

These weapons, along with drones, provide Ukraine with the capabilities to strike deep farther inside the Russian-held territory. Kyiv has already embarked on a drone attack on oil and energy facilities inside mainland Russia and an attack on a Russian military airfield in Crimea. It also struck the province of Tatarstan earlier, marking Ukraine's most profound attack inside Russia so far.

CURRENT PHASE AND THE FUTURE PROSPECTS OF THE WAR

Overall, the pace of the war has slowed down with periodic fluctuations. Russia is trying to hold onto the so-called liberated territories, while Ukraine is trying counteroffensives. Ukraine cannot sustain the war on its own and needs economic and military aid from the West. However, they cannot accept backtracking

now. Acceptance of the loss of Ukrainian territory would be seen as a defeat for the US-led West. Loss of occupied territory back to Ukraine would be considered a defeat for Russia. In this stalemate, there is no honourable exit possibility for either.

The prevailing domestic situation in both countries is an aversion to further loss of human life. The West is encouraging Ukraine to continue and is enhancing its offensive capabilities with stand-off weapons. Russia has also responded to the Ukrainian counter-offensive attacks with punitive strikes using long-range weapons and missiles. This engagement phase with long-range stand-off weapons, drones, and missiles will be long drawn. So far, due consideration has been given to the escalation control. However, a miss calculation by either side could be catastrophic for the involved countries, the region, and the world.

(Air Marshal (R) Anil Khosla, Former Vice Chief, Indian Air Force Researcher & Analyst Distinguished Fellow - USI & CAPS. The views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The News Analytics Journal.)

In The Spotlight

China's latest aircraft carrier embarks on its maiden voyage



On 1st May, China's newest, largest, and most advanced aircraft carrier, the Fujian, embarked on its first sea trials, moving closer to joining the world's largest naval fleet. These trials are expected to occur in the East China Sea, approximately 130 kilometres from the Jiangnan Shipyard, where the carrier has been constructed over six years, according to Shanghai's Maritime Safety Administration. The primary focus of these sea trials is to assess the reliability and stability of the carrier's propulsion and electrical systems.

Türkiye aims to join South Africa against Israel at the ICJ



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Germany vows to respond after Russia's "intolerable" cyberattack



Germany has attributed an "intolerable" cyberattack on members of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) to "state-sponsored" Russian hackers and warned of consequences. German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock announced that a German federal government investigation into the 2023 cyberattack on the SPD, a key member of the governing coalition, had just concluded and attributed this cyberattack to a group called APT28, which is steered by the military intelligence service of Russia.

Defying expectations, Japan's "Moon Sniper" wakes again



Japan's "Moon Sniper" lander, also known as SLIM (Smart Lander for Investigating Moon), has remarkably survived its third frigid lunar night, despite not being designed for such harsh conditions, according to the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency. According to NASA, lunar night temperatures can drop to minus 208 degrees Fahrenheit. Initially not expected to endure even one lunar night, SLIM touched down on January 19 near the Shioli Crater, about 322 kilometres south of the Sea of Tranquillity. This achievement makes Japan the third country this century and the fifth ever to land on the moon.

Ukraine targets Russian oil refineries, military airfields, and thermal energy plants



Ukraine initiated drone attacks on Russia's Kushchevsk military airfield in the southern Krasnodar region, along with targeting two oil refineries. The source characterized the operation as "explosive," noting that fires erupted at all three locations. The Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) is reported to be actively engaging military and infrastructure targets in Russia, aiming to diminish Moscow's capacity for warfare. Earlier, Veniamin Kondratyev, the governor of the Krasnodar region, mentioned that a Russian oil refinery was affected following Kyiv's drone launch.

Britain says Kyiv can use its weapons inside Russia



UK Foreign Secretary Lord Cameron has expressed support for Ukraine's right to determine how to utilize British weapons, emphasizing its sovereignty to target locations within Russian territory. During his visit to Kyiv, he pledged ongoing financial assistance of £3 billion (\$3.75 billion) annually as long as needed. Cameron justified Ukraine's defensive measures, stating that just as Russia conducts attacks within Ukraine, Ukraine has a legitimate need to defend itself. In response, Russia criticized Cameron's remarks, labeling them as "another very dangerous statement" and warning of escalated tensions that could threaten European security, as stated by Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov.

US and Russia in 'close proximity' as Austin confirms deployment at Niger



US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin has verified reports of Russian military personnel entering an airbase in Niger, which also accommodates US forces. This development comes subsequent to Niger's military leadership decision to expel US troops from the country. The decision was conveyed to Washington by Niger's military rulers in March, demanding the withdrawal of nearly 1,000 US military personnel stationed in the country.

Poland launches project "Shield-East", to fortify borders with Russia



Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk announced a significant investment of \$2.5 billion to enhance border security along the shared borders with Russia and Belarus. Speaking during an event commemorating the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Monte Casino in Cracow, southern Poland, Tusk revealed the initiation of the "Shield-East" project. This project aims to reinforce military checkpoints along the border with Russia and Belarus. Tusk emphasized the decision to allocate PLN 10 billion towards enhancing security, particularly focusing on securing the eastern border.

Finessing India's Strategic Deterrence - Ten Pathways



INVESTIGATING

A significant part of the globe is currently engaged in conflicts in Ukraine and West Asia and, prospectively, in the Western Pacific. Even as the conflicts simmer, glaring inadequacies have come to light in the Military Industrial Complexes (MICs) of nations as diverse as the USA, UK, Germany, wider Europe, Israel, and Japan. Operational Readiness is being reviewed, and Stockpile Levels are being revamped with a renewed sense of urgency.



Lt Gen (R) Raj Shulka
for TNJ

COLD MILITARY STEEL

India, currently in a state of relative peace, must not be complacent. The peace dividend should be utilised to build robust military capabilities, for it is 'cold military steel' that triumphs in wars, not mere #hashtags or online aggression.

What should really worry us is the fact that in an era of war, the Mighty USA and the West are unable to

create capacities on a war footing. The cumulative effect of a corroding MIC is that the Arsenal of the Global West seems to be losing to the Arsenal of the Global East (China, Russia, Iran and North Korea). It is not that the West is not doing enough; it is, in fact, doing a great deal, but that which it is doing is just not enough to win; that is how complex and sophisticated the MIC challenge is. In a predominantly Artillery

War, North Korea has transferred more artillery ammunition to Russia than the West has been able to supply to Ukraine. Two days before the final defeat in Advika, an operational audit of two Ukrainian brigades was carried out: one had a bare 15 artillery rounds to fight, and the other had only 42 mortar rounds left. Even as the 61 BD aid package for Ukraine gets converted into military deliverables, the frontlines are shifting rapidly Westwards, and territories are continuing to crumble – in the last week alone, six Ukrainian villages have been lost. If the Russians are winning, it is on account of the superior quality and delivery of the Russian MIC. That is how salient the capacity and quality of a Nation's MIC is to its National Security Prowess. Reports reveal that for a possible

Taiwan contingency, the Americans (yes, the Mighty Americans) don't have seven days of missiles and precision munitions to sustain a fight.

So, what must we do in the Indian context? The many splended initiatives under Aatmanirbharta in Defence (AID) have given us a wonderful, transformational start, a very strong edifice. Given the lessons of the global conflicts of the recent past, however, we may like to re-invigorate the Indian Defence Framework in terms of ten pathways.

SPEED AND SCALE

First and foremost, we need to smell the new brew in geopolitics, namely, the decisive tilt towards hard power, the fact that wars are unfortunately back in business, the steady gravitation of the arc of conflict from Europe to West Asia to the Indo-Pacific and the significant prospect of a Sino-Indian conflagration. We need to upgrade our capacities on a war footing. Come 2026/2027, if India is faced with a perilous situation with China, we must not regret that we did not do enough through almost a decade

A comprehensive status audit of our defence ecosystem in terms of readiness, stockpiles, inventory variety and depth, precision and digital capacities, supply chain autonomy, and critical technological chokeholds.



of warning. We will do well to remember that while deterrence is costly, wars are costlier.

Two, one of the biggest strategic follies of recent times has been the myth of ‘short, swift, wars. ‘It does seem that for the foreseeable future, conflicts will be long in the time frame (or at least unpredictable in length), industrial in nature, with an ever-enlarging digital component. To sustain such conflicts, a vibrant, technologically enabled, innovation-driven, indigenous, industrial base is a necessary pre-requisite.

Three, carry out a comprehensive status audit of our defence ecosystem in terms of readiness, stockpiles, inventory variety and depth, precision and digital capacities, supply chain autonomy, and critical technological chokeholds. The consequences of such an audit may be revealing.

Fourth, initiate responses on a war footing. American studies/ estimates suggest that the Chinese production & procurement enterprise (MIC) is five to six times more efficient and faster than that of the Americans. If we are to deal with the abject reality successfully, the Indian ecosystem will have to obviously pick up speed and scale – our stockpile levels and surge capacities will need comprehensive upgradation. American studies estimate that in a possible conflict with China over Taiwan, the US Military will expend more than 5000 long-range missiles in the first three weeks itself. How many will we need? How many do we have?

In the initial stages of the conflict, the Chinese air defences will be pretty formidable, precluding most IAF aircraft from penetrating them sufficiently to be able to drop short-range munitions effectively. What is the status of our bombers and cruise missile stockpiles that

can degrade Chinese AD from standoff distances? Do we need to build an A2AD system of our own in the IOR to deter/degrade Chinese naval ingress in the future? Given the great success of Ukrainian missile-drone combos against the Russian Black Sea Fleet, do we need to hybridise our air and naval fleets in far greater numbers? Our Ordnance Factories Network is a dumb munitions behemoth – it needs a comprehensive transformation towards precision capacities – a precision overdrive perhaps – all these domains need our focused attention.

Five, the one lesson coming out of the recent conflicts is a fundamental transformation in the nature of space, airpower and the emergence of the drone-missile complex. Look at the underwhelming performance of Russian airpower in Ukraine, both in terms of air supremacy and interdiction, for the better part of two years. That is the time it took for the Russian Air Force to convert dumb munitions to very precise & effective, lethal glide bombs. Drones and Storm Shadows missiles on the other hand, have combined to degrade the Russian Black Sea Fleet significantly.

Iran has made intelligent use of the Ukraine Theatre as a laboratory to upgrade their dronery for useful effect during the attack on Israel on 14 April 2024.

Another significant development in recent times is that firepower is no longer siloed in terms of ISR (combat and open-sourced intelligence), artillery, air, armed drones, air defence, etc., but has been aggregated through networks, algorithms, and coding into Integrated Kill Chains. It is, therefore, imperative to set up an Integrated Drone-Missile Force as also a Space Force without any further delay. As India steps into the big league, we will need to pay far greater attention to numerous facets of strategic deterrence and power projection than we currently do. The nuclear domain, missilery, space, cyber, long-range precision, stealth capacities like bombers and hypersonics are arenas that need far greater resourcing with a dedicated industrial base.

Six, a valuable lesson to be learnt from Ukraine is the manner in which the relationship between Airpower, Manoeuvre and Firepower has evolved. The proliferation of Air Defences



therein stymied the attainment of Air Superiority; in the absence of Air Superiority, Manoeuvre was severely eclipsed, leading to the phenomenal domination of Lethal Firepower. A comprehensive review and upgradation of our air defence network, from space-enabled early warning to multiple layers of interception, is urgently called for.

Seven, a transition to digital combat is critical because, in the data domain, the margin for error is shrinking, the decision cycles are shortening, and the attack surfaces are growing. We need to treat data as a weapons system and align the orientation of AID to digitise our combat philosophy and systems: we need to manage, secure and use data for superior operational effect. AI and Deep Tech (the onset of a wave of game-changing technologies) are transforming Deterrence and Warfighting in hitherto unprecedented ways and maybe the secret sauce for the Asymmetric address of China.

A smart trade-off between what we must spend to deter, the monies we would need to fund sustained, high-intensity combat, how we could offset combat differentials through innovation and international technological collaboration.

Eight, we need to appreciate that the capital and personnel investments that are required in Defence are so long-term and huge that without a clear and consistent demand signal and a firm financial commitment from the government, business propositions are unlikely to flourish. Private companies will not invest in plants, machinery and production lines unless there is a reasonable guarantee of orders. We need to set aside the tyranny of L-1, overcome the ring-fencing of mediocrity and embrace a culture of talent identification /enablement/maximisation: create National Champions in Defence.

We need to identify talented MSMEs, Start-Ups and Private Companies and help them grow, not only to meet domestic defence needs but also in order that such entities can survive and even thrive in international competition. Defence Majors all over the world (from China's NORINCO to South Korea's Korean Aerospace Industries Limited) have received active handholding/propping up from their respective governments. So have billion-dollar Defence Start-Ups like USA-based Anduril (advanced military autonomous systems) & Europe-based Helsing (Defence AI). We need to create our own Defence Majors that are globally competitive.

Nine, the proposed restructuring of our Defence Enterprise will be an expensive proposition. It must, therefore, be premised on the metrics of an affordable Risk Equation: a smart trade-off between what we must spend to deter, the monies we would need to fund sustained, high-intensity combat, how we could offset combat differentials through innovation and international technological collaboration and what we could hold off by way of acceptable risk.

Ten, in the long term, India must grow into this responsible Defence Powerhouse, not only to secure our territorial sovereignty and expanding interests but also as an instrument of business, revenue generation and geo-strategic heft. If as many as seven Chinese Defence Majors rank in the top twenty Defence Entities in the world, India needs to be similarly competitive. We must do all that we can to create a vibrant and as indigenous as possible Indian MIC – an essential prerequisite for India to attain its place and promise in the world.

*(Lt Gen (R) Raj Shukla, former Army Commander and currently a Member of UPSC. The views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of **The News Analytics Journal**)*



Countering Proxies & Violent Non-State Actors



BEYOND CONVENTION

The modern conflicts are evolving, differentiative parameters have come into play that were not present earlier and hence the very changed outcome being witnessed in the world today – the phenomenon of proxies! Unless the global community decides to call out all the ‘third parties’ with vested interest the resolution of such raging conflicts will be unlikely.

Ravi Srivastava
for TNJ

UNRESTRAINED TERROR

When Hamas launched an unrestrained terror strike on Israel last October, little did we realise that the world has gravitated to an entirely new phenomenon of proxies causing a conventional war. This was exactly what unfolded, within no time Israel announced a state of war and truly it began as promised. Israel was determined for multiple reasons to have this incident go down in history as a major turning point

in its relationship with Palestine and the larger Arab World. There were many other pressing questions that had emerged at that point in time especially the failure of famed Mossad or the limitations of, till then almost impregnable Iron Dome. However, what was shocking was the ‘almost official’ ownership by Iran a seemingly ‘third party’ for sanctioning this audacity.

Hamas is known as a dogged fighting group mixing popular Palestinian independence sentiments with barbaric terrorist operations. Flushed with funds it has an easy recruitment base within Gaza, such resources of having an unending supply of radicalised youth willing to die allows Hamas leadership a resource it feels sells very well in some countries, and we are talking of some staggering numbers.

Statistics suggest a full-fledged new-age war between Armenia and Azerbaijan which lasted for 44 days, resulted in 7000 fatalities of Armenians and Azerbaijanis including civilians. As per the latest figures of BBC, Russia suffered casualties of 50000 servicemen as against 70000 Ukrainian personnel. A quick back of envelop calculation would give an average monthly fatalities figure of 4773 for Armenia and Azerbaijan, 4455 during Ukraine, and Russia war. Whereas for the Gaza war figure stands at 6428 in one month. These are all official figures while discounting inflated and deflated claims during the hostilities.

The matter of an extreme diabolic concern is Hamas a global terrorist organisation supposedly with its limitation of resources and geography has been withstanding the might of Israel. Not to forget, it is the same country that holds a record of sorts of defeating the combined Arab Army in the Six-Day War. How is that even possible? This is a baffling question for any war analyst. So something has changed as we watch history evolve, differentiative parameters have come into play which were not present earlier and hence the very changed outcome being witnessed in the world today – the phenomenon of proxies. These can be loosely

referred to as mercenaries on hire and analysis suggests, that there is a clear pattern in this new progression!

VYING FOR INFLUENCE

Almost every country's polity has some form of governance system in place which is managed by the local leadership, civilian or military included. The constitution or any other equivalent statute book gives the authority, direction, and responsibilities to these governments to manage their national affairs. However, when there is a clash of perceptions, which is inevitable, the resolution mechanism enshrined in the statute book gets tested. But if this fails, the beginning of conflicts commences.

The regional powers in most cases canvas their ground actions to showcase their 'moral, political and diplomatic support' for the greater cause of the very same people has created inhuman conditions for generations to suffer.

As the experience suggests more mature nations successfully manage their dissent within the framework but the same is not the fact with smaller states. This has been the genesis of trouble in most of the conflict-ridden countries in West Asia or Africa. The geopolitical yearnings of the global and regional powers make them end up choosing sides. A classic case of Syria, the country torn in pieces barely surviving with almost all global and regional powers actively undertaking military operations on behalf of one side or the other. The original dissenter of the domestic polity gets overwhelmed and replaced by a new narrative. The narrative of aspiring powers for whom the subject territory, its people, and their national resources become a mere means



to demonstrate their influence.

It creates a non-ending loop of external actions and counter actions ruining the subject territory with unimaginable trauma. The

land becomes the battleground of competitors who cannot spare a thought for the unspoken. These regional powers in most cases canvas their ground actions to showcase their 'moral, political and diplomatic support' for the greater cause of the very same people has created inhuman conditions for generations to suffer. The rest of the world then had to endure all avoidable conflicts, the International Crisis Group in its January 24 report listed 10 conflicts the world must watch for including Gaza, the Middle East, Sudan, Myanmar, Ethiopia, Africa's Sahel region, and Haiti among others.

The conflict zones may be changing but what remains constant is the incessant urge of competitive influence by the regional powers.

THE 'THIRD PARTY'

The proxies are characteristically very different than violent non-state actors or terrorists. The US Commission for Religious Freedom defines it as – “individuals, mobs, militant organisations who differ significantly in ideology, purpose, and end goals. They are generally motivated by a violent religious ideology.” In 2004 United Nations Security Council defined terrorists as – “those who use criminal acts that are intended to cause death or serious injury to civilians, with the purpose to intimidate a population or force a government to act.”

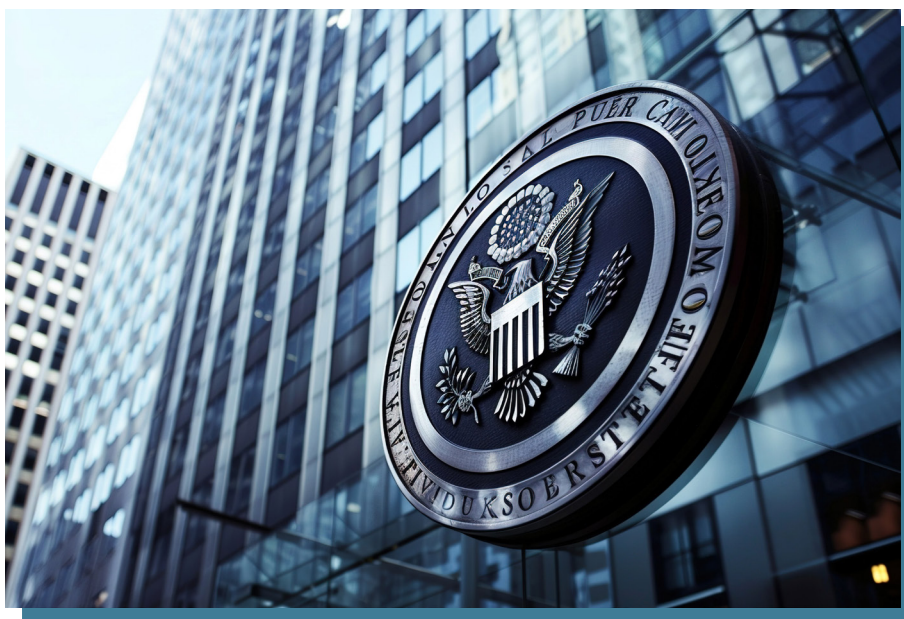
loss of innocent civilian lives what stands out is the role of the ‘third party’ which is at the root of all troubles.

The biggest hurdle in resolving global conflicts today is the strange ignorance of a deeply interested third party’s existence. Overlooking such a crucial factor will hardly lead to meaningful solutions. This third party uses unrestricted mechanisms, whether active or passive to meet their strategic goals. They offer monetary assistance, military means, training even participate with their covert forces. In more subtle scenarios

party’ is taken care of. We will continue to witness more Gaza, more Yemen, and more Syria.

Innocents will continue to bear the wrath of war from both ends losing women, children, and the elderly. At the same time, the world will find itself struggling with humanitarian assistance and ineffective attempts to contain the violence.

Allowing this catastrophe to manifest within a restricted territory is unimaginable and not right, but telling a democratic state, responsible for providing safety and honour to its people not to eliminate its fundamental threats is also incorrect. Sadly, the global community is unwilling to accept the truth hiding somewhere in between. In no time the world will find itself on the edge again with the likely eruption of more conventional wars, where just nothing appears right. The global intent is on test now, if it’s honest then they must call out these ‘third parties’ in all the global conflict zones as the real levers of resolutions are lying there!



Allowing this catastrophe to manifest within a restricted territory is unimaginable and not right, but telling a democratic state, responsible for providing safety and honour to its people not to eliminate its fundamental threats is also incorrect.

Proxies, on the other hand, can be state or violent non-state actors directly supported by a ‘third party’ who doesn’t want to participate in actual fighting but wants to influence the conflict’s outcome to advance their strategic interests. While it’s difficult to distinguish one violence from another as the end state is no different with the

they may undertake blockades, trade restrictions, apply threats of sanctions, or whatever way that works to pressurise opposing parties.

WRATH OF WAR

The principal issue here is the world cannot practically think of finding a resolution to conflicts till the time the problem of this ‘third

(Ravi Srivastava, well experienced in the geopolitics and security domain, regularly writes in national publications. The views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The News Analytics Journal)

Challenges To India's Maritime Security Strategy In The IOR



LONG SHOT

India's emergence as a net security provider in the maritime domain is increasingly evident, particularly in the Arabian Sea. With a strategic naval deployment and proactive anti-piracy measures, India is playing a crucial role in safeguarding sea lanes and promoting regional stability. However, serious challenges will test India's resolve and capacities.



**Dr Gadde Omprasad, Associate Professor,
School of International Studies, JNU
for TNJ**

HIGH-RISK ZONE

The growing incidents of anti-hijacking and anti-piracy activities of India in the Arabian Sea have intensified the debate on the question of whether India has emerged as a net security provider in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). The region ranges from the eastern shores of Africa to the western coasts of Southeast Asia, including the Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal, Andaman Sea, Flores Sea, Great Australian Bight, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman, Java Sea, Mozambique Channel, Persian Gulf, Red Sea, Savu Sea, Strait of Malacca, Timor Sea, and other tributary water bodies covering about 68.55 million square kilometers.

It also occupies about 20% of the world's ocean area which is over 10,000 km long from North to South, and about 9,500 km breadth from East to West, and ranks as the world's third-largest ocean. IOR hosts more than 38 littoral states located in Africa, Asia, and Australia with more than one-third of the world population or about 2.5 billion people. It has emerged as a focal point for geopolitical competition among major powers, harbours four crucial maritime passages, the Suez Canal, Bab-el-Mandeb, Strait of Hormuz, and Strait of Malacca.

The significance of the IOR lies in the global shipping activity. Nearly 90,000 vessels in the world's

commercial fleet transport and about 9.84 billion tonnes of goods annually pass through this region. Approximately 36 million barrels per day, accounting for around 40 percent of the world's oil supply and 64 percent of oil trade, transits through key entry points such as the Straits of Malacca, Hormuz, and Bab-el-Mandeb. The coastal areas of the Indian Ocean region contain about 58 percent of the world's oil reserves and about 46 percent of the gas reserves.

Though there is no clear-cut region-specific illegal trafficking, the share of drug trafficking in Southeast Asia dominated these activities while the hijacking of ships, and armed robberies were recorded high on the Eastern coasts of Africa. The Gulf of Aden suffers from illegal, unregulated, unreported fishing activities, and developments in the Red Sea, where Houthi's attacks on commercial fleets have made the region become a zone of high risk. As a result, about 40 to 50 percent of the ships are taking a longer route of Cape of Good Hope avoiding the Gulf of Aden increasing the freight insurance rate up to 40 percent.

and secure for international maritime traffic, conducting counter-piracy operations to prevent and respond to piracy threats, and providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR). Combating non-traditional security threats such as smuggling, illegal fishing, and environmental degradation is another critical responsibility. The role also involves participating in regional cooperation and diplomatic engagements through various forums and agreements, maintaining search and rescue operations to assist vessels in distress, and ensuring freedom of navigation by

deploying ships against piracy in the region, a significant change in India's maritime strategy was marked in 2015 when it released "Ensuring Secure Seas: Indian Maritime Security Strategy" by the Indian Navy, underscoring several pivotal aspects.

It prioritized strategic naval deployments across critical maritime zones, such as the Arabian Sea, Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Bay of Bengal, and the southern Indian Ocean, aiming to deter piracy and swiftly respond to security threats. Collaboration with regional and international partners is also



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ENHANCING INTEROPERABILITY

In this context, a Net Security Provider encompass a broad range of activities including patrolling key sea lanes to keep them open

upholding international maritime laws and norms and enhance interoperability and mutual trust.

Though, since 2008 India started

pivotal, involving coordination, joint exercises, and intelligence sharing to address common maritime threats effectively.

Jurisdictional complexities stemming from overlapping maritime jurisdictions and exclusive economic zones (EEZs) present legal challenges in addressing piracy and maritime security.

LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

In the year 2022, The Maritime Anti-Piracy Act was adopted to combat sea piracy including attacks on ships, crew, and cargo within maritime zones through patrols and surveillance measures. The Act establishes legal frameworks for prosecuting pirates. Safeguarding the economic interests of the country by reducing piracy risks to commercial shipping routes and ensuring the stability of the global trade network is also part of it. The Act underscored the protection of human rights, especially for seafarers and passengers. It covered the territorial waters, Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs), and the high seas extending from the coastline to a distance of up to 200 nautical miles. Beyond this EEZ are the high seas and international waters which need collaboration with other countries.

The agreements like United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP), participating in international naval task forces such as Combined Task Force 151 (CTF-151) and the European Union Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) are such collaborations. This represents a departure from a purely national-centric approach to maritime security and highlights India's growing role as a responsible stakeholder in the international maritime domain. Three, countering emerging threats such as missiles and drones targeting maritime assets suggests a shift towards modernizing and adapting India's naval capabilities to meet evolving security challenges. This reflects a forward-looking approach aimed at maintaining technological superiority and staying ahead of potential adversaries.

MISTRUST AND RELUCTANCE

In the IOR, there are numerous challenges, firstly, the region comprises diverse countries with varying maritime capabilities, priorities, and interests, leading to fragmented cooperation efforts. This fragmentation is exacerbated by differing national agendas, historical animosities, and geopolitical rivalries, hindering coordinated action against piracy and maritime security threats. For instance, India's naval capabilities contrast with Bangladesh's limited resources, while India-Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia-Iran tensions complicate unified action against piracy and security threats.

Secondly, despite regional mechanisms like the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and the



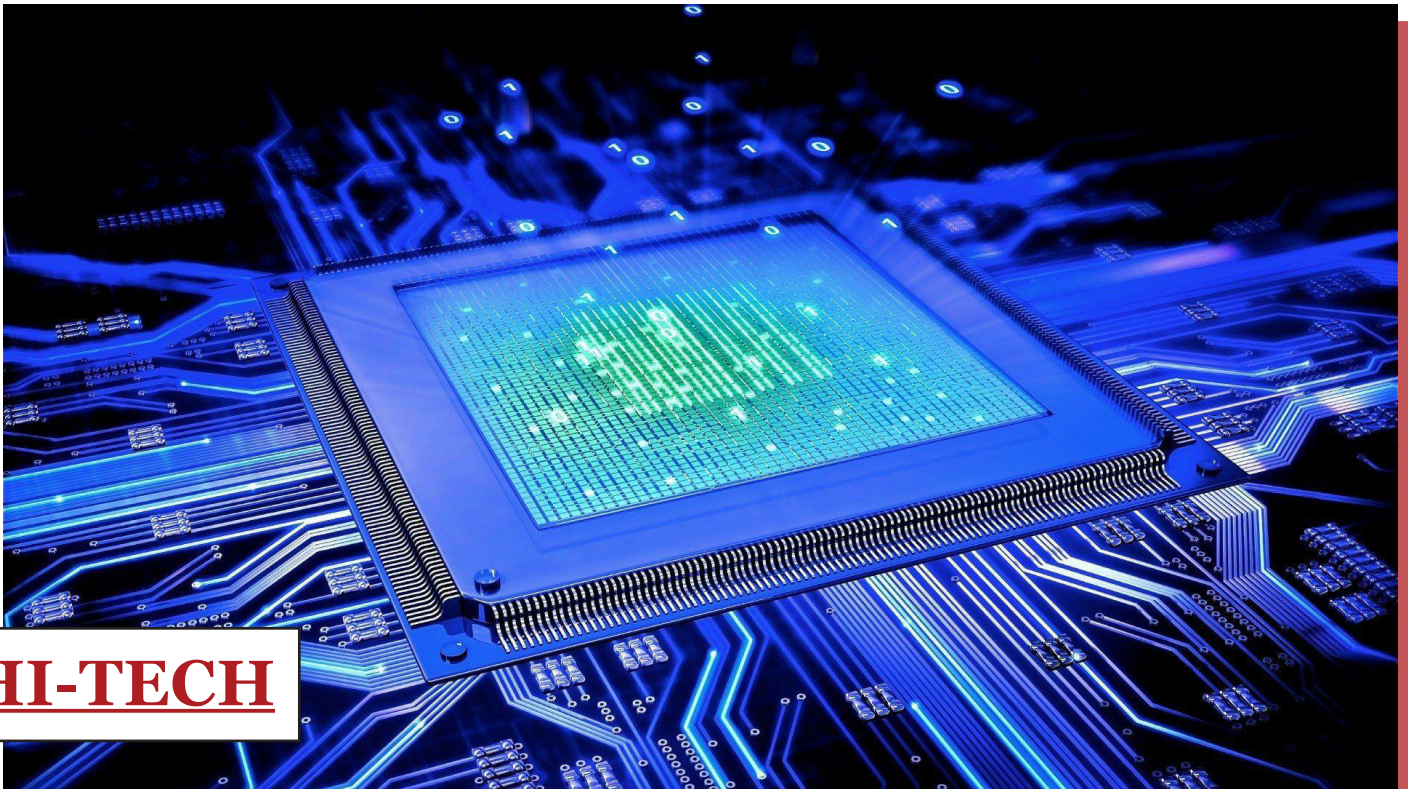
Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), limited information sharing persists among IOR countries. Inadequate communication channels and mistrust, such as the reluctance of India and Pakistan to share sensitive intelligence, hinder effective information exchange. India's advanced maritime surveillance systems are underutilised in regional anti-piracy efforts due to concerns over sharing data with neighbouring countries like Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, which may have differing security priorities and alliances. This mistrust and lack of coordinated communication prevent the effective implementation of collective maritime security strategies.

Thirdly, Jurisdictional complexities stemming from overlapping maritime jurisdictions and exclusive economic zones (EEZs) present legal challenges in addressing piracy and maritime security. Disputes over maritime boundaries, such as those between India and Sri Lanka in the Palk Strait, or conflicting territorial claims in the South China Sea involving multiple nations, hinder coordinated law enforcement actions. Differing interpretations of international law, particularly regarding the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), also contribute to the complexity, making it difficult to establish clear jurisdiction and enforce maritime laws effectively in the region.

Fourthly, resource disparities among IOR countries, especially smaller island and littoral states with limited capabilities, impede effective patrols and responses to piracy incidents. External influences from extra-regional actors and threats from non-state actors engaging in maritime crimes add another layer of complexity to the cooperation efforts. If India can address these challenges and complexities, it will be well-positioned to fulfill its role as a reliable Net Security Provider in the Indian Ocean Region.

(Dr Gadde Omprasad, Associate Professor, Centre for South Asian Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University)

Voice Cloning: A Technological Marvel & An Ethical Challenge



HI-TECH

Voice cloning involves creating a digital replica of someone's voice, typically using deep learning techniques and speech synthesis algorithms. It offers exciting solutions but also raises significant ethical concerns.

TNJ | Technology Bureau

Voice cloning, also known as voice synthesis or audio deep faking, is a rapidly evolving technology that uses artificial intelligence (AI) to create synthetic speech indistinguishable from a real person's voice. This process involves training a machine learning model on audio recordings of a specific speaker. The model analyses the speaker's unique vocal characteristics, including pitch, tone, rhythm, and inflection, and learns to replicate them. With enough training data, the model can then generate new speech that sounds exactly like the original speaker, even saying things they never uttered.

THE POWER

Voice cloning holds immense potential across various sectors. Here are some of its promising applications:

- **Accessibility Tools:** For people with speech disabilities or those who have lost their voices due to illness, voice cloning can provide a powerful communication tool. They can create synthetic

voices that sound natural and allow them to interact with the world more easily.

- **Content Creation:** Voice cloning can revolutionize content creation. Imagine generating audiobooks, podcasts, or even personalized greetings in your own voice without spending hours in the recording studio. This can be a game-changer for busy professionals, educators, and artists.

- **Customer Service:** Companies can leverage voice cloning to create custom voice assistants tailored to specific products or regions. This can enhance the customer experience by providing a more familiar and personalized interaction.
- **Entertainment:** The ability to recreate the voices of famous actors or historical figures opens doors for innovative storytelling in movies, documentaries, or even video games.
- **Language Learning:** Voice cloning can personalize language learning experiences. Imagine practicing conversations with a voice that sounds like a native speaker.



By training models on samples of the user's voice, assistive devices can generate speech that sounds more like the user, improving communication and expression.

USAGE & APPLICATIONS

Voice cloning technology has found applications across various industries and use cases. Here are some examples:

- **Voiceovers and Dubbing:** Voice cloning technology has been used in the entertainment industry for dubbing foreign films and TV shows. It allows for more natural-sounding dubbed voices that closely match the original actors' voices.
- **Assistive Technology:** Voice cloning technology has been employed to create personalized synthetic voices for individuals with speech impairments. By training models on samples of

the user's voice, assistive devices can generate speech that sounds more like the user, improving communication and expression.

- **Aiding the Visually Impaired:** Synthetic voices generated through voice cloning can also assist the visually impaired by converting text into speech, providing access to written information in a more natural and personalized manner.
- **Customer Service and Virtual Assistants:** Voice cloning technology has been integrated into chatbots and virtual assistants to provide more human-like interactions. By cloning the voices of real customer service representatives or celebrities, companies can offer more engaging and personalized customer experiences.
- **Voice-Activated Devices:** Voice cloning technology enables voice-activated devices like smart speakers to recognize and respond to individual users with personalized voices. This enhances user experience and fosters a stronger sense of connection with the device.
- **Security and Authentication:** Voice cloning technology has been utilized in voice biometric systems for authentication and security purposes. By analysing unique vocal characteristics, these systems can verify a person's identity based on their voice, offering an additional layer of security for sensitive transactions and access control.

These examples highlight the diverse applications of voice cloning technology and its potential to enhance communication, accessibility, entertainment, and security in various domains. As the technology continues to advance, we can expect to see even more innovative uses emerge in the future.

The ability to manipulate someone's voice with such accuracy can lead to emotional manipulation and exploitation. These aspects pose significant challenges to protection of privacy rights

ETHICAL QUANDARIES

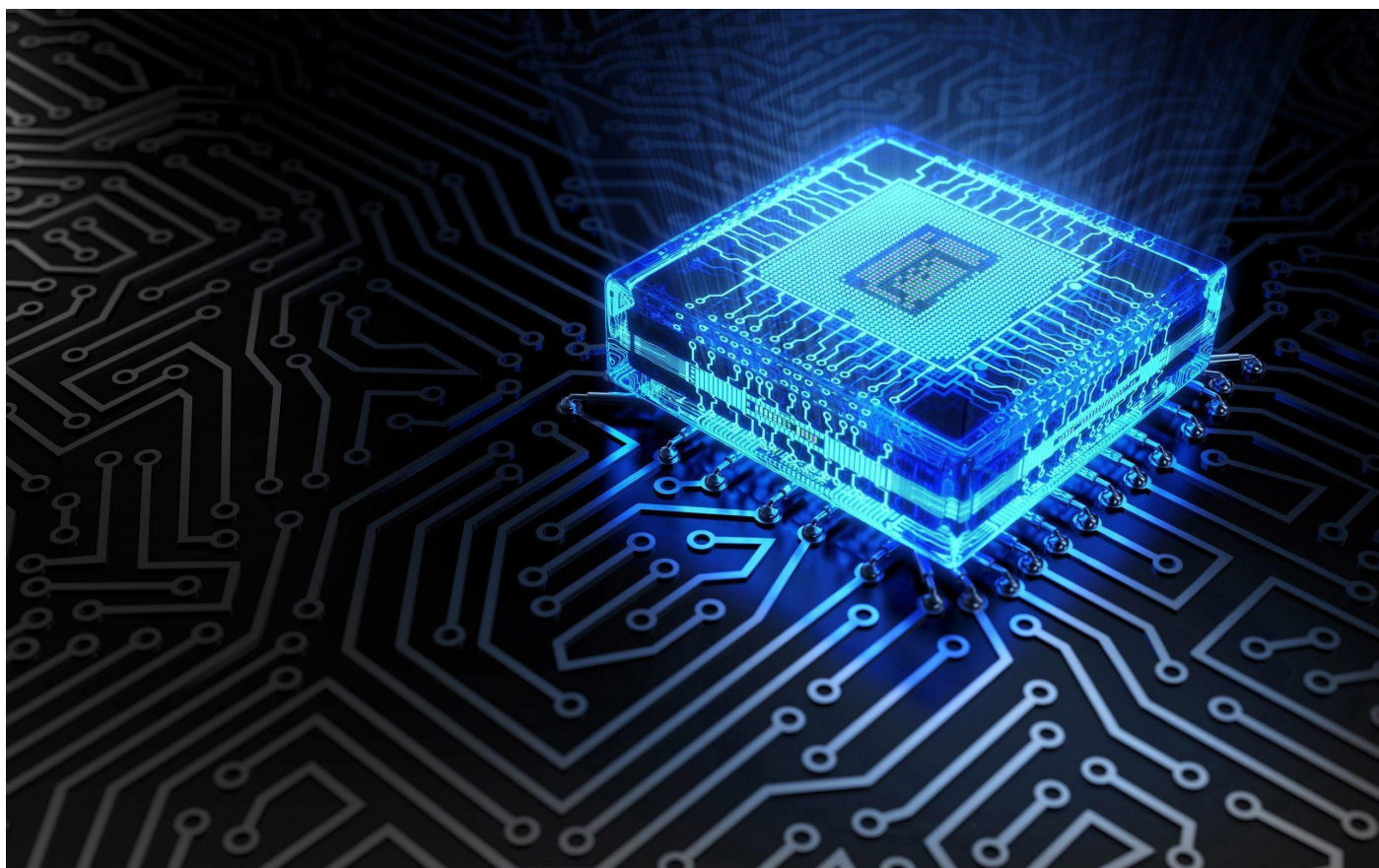
While voice cloning offers exciting possibilities, it also raises significant ethical concerns. Here are some potential downsides to consider:

- **Misinformation and Propaganda:** Malicious actors can misuse voice cloning to create deepfakes – synthetic audio recordings that make it seem like someone said something they never did. This can be used to spread misinformation, damage reputations, or manipulate public opinion.
- **Privacy Violations:** Voice cloning could be used to impersonate someone and gain unauthorized access to sensitive information or accounts. Additionally, the collection and storage of voice data for cloning purposes raise privacy concerns.
- **Identity Theft:** A perfectly cloned voice could be used to commit identity theft, such as authorizing fraudulent transactions or bypassing security protocols.
- **Emotional Manipulation:** The ability to manipulate someone's voice with such accuracy can lead to emotional manipulation and exploitation. Imagine receiving a voicemail from a loved one in distress that was actually a deepfake.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

International cooperation plays a crucial role in regulating voice cloning technology due to its potential implications for privacy, security, and ethical concerns. Here are some ways international cooperation could contribute to effective regulation:

- **Standardization of Guidelines and Protocols:** International collaboration can lead to defining acceptable practices, data protection standards, and privacy regulations to ensure consistency and interoperability across borders.
- **Information Sharing and Best Practices:** Countries can share information and best practices related to the development, deployment, and regulation of voice cloning technology.
- **Harmonization of Laws and Regulations:** Harmonizing laws and regulations across jurisdictions can prevent inconsistencies and gaps in the legal framework governing voice cloning technology.
- **Monitoring and Enforcement:** International cooperation can facilitate the monitoring and enforcement of regulations governing voice cloning technology.





- **Promotion of Ethical Considerations:** International cooperation can promote discussions and initiatives focused on ethical considerations surrounding voice cloning technology.
- **Research and Development Funding:** Collaborative research initiatives supported by international funding can advance our understanding of the technical, social, and ethical implications of voice cloning technology, and can accelerate progress in areas such as voice synthesis, voice authentication, and privacy-preserving techniques.
- **Engagement with Stakeholders:** International cooperation provides a platform for engaging stakeholders from diverse backgrounds, including policymakers, researchers, industry representatives, and civil society organisations.

NAVIGATING THE FUTURE

To ensure the responsible development and use of voice cloning technology, several measures need to be considered:

- **Regulation and Transparency:** Governments and tech companies need to collaborate to develop regulations that govern the collection, storage, and use of voice data for cloning purposes.
- **Watermarking and Detection:** Techniques for embedding digital watermarks into cloned voices can help identify the source and prevent their misuse.
- **User Education:** Raising public awareness about voice cloning and deepfakes is essential. Educating users on how to identify potential deepfakes and how to protect their voice data can empower them to be more discerning consumers of information.

Voice cloning is a powerful technology with the potential to revolutionize how we communicate and interact with the world. However, it's crucial to address the ethical concerns surrounding its potential misuse. By implementing robust regulations, fostering transparency, and educating the public, we can ensure that voice cloning is used for good and its potential for harm is mitigated. As this technology continues to evolve, ongoing discussions and responsible development will be necessary to harness its power for positive change.

UPCOMING GLO



Defence Simulation Education & Training is scheduled to be held from 10-13 June 2024 at Bristol, UK. DSET transcends being just an event; it's a year-round community dedicated to fostering exceptional networking, seizing opportunities, sharing ideas, and implementing best practices. Moreover, DSET offers a dynamic peer-to-peer atmosphere where Military, Government, Academia, and Industry participants collaboratively address current challenges and achieve tangible results. Official site : <https://dset.co.uk/>

International Defence Equipment and Services Exhibition, HEMUS 2024, Plovdiv, Bulgaria, 05 - 08 June 2024. "HEMUS, the largest Bulgarian International Defence and Security Exhibition, boasting over 29 years of continuous growth, consistently provides unparalleled opportunities for aligning the interests of Governmental Institutions, National Armed Forces, the Bulgarian Defence Industry, European and International companies, Scientific institutions, and Academia. It has established itself as a prosperous platform for enhancing business prospects within the defense sector. Official site: <https://www.hemusbg.org/en>.



Every two years, ILA Berlin brings the global aerospace industry to the heart of Europe – the next edition will take place from 5 to 9 June, 2024. For five days, Europe's leading aerospace trade fair transforms Berlin into an international aerospace hub. Industry representatives, policymakers, armed forces and academia come together under the motto #PioneeringAerospace to discuss current challenges and opportunities. Official site: <https://www.ila-berlin.de/en>.

GLOBAL EVENTS



Taking place biennially in Paris, EUROSATORY presents an exceptional occasion to engage with manufacturers and start-ups from across the globe, alongside both public and private players in the Defence & Security market. It provides a platform for fruitful exchanges with leading experts, government officials, international institutions, and NGOs. Attendees have the opportunity to participate in high-level lectures and round table discussions, explore cutting-edge innovations, and gain valuable insights into the sector's future prospects and developments.

Official site : <https://www.eurosatory.com/en/>.

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The Farnborough Airshow, formally known as the Farnborough International Airshow, stands as a premier trade exhibition for the aerospace and defense sectors. It serves as a platform where both civilian and military aircraft are showcased to prospective customers and investors. Since its inaugural event in 1948, Farnborough has been witness to the debut of numerous iconic airplanes, such as the Vickers VC10, Concorde, the Eurofighter, the Airbus A380, and the Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II. <https://www.farnboroughairshow.com/>

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