12. Resource Management to Complement Military Strategy

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Introduction

The greatest challenge today for nations and their militaries across the world is to realign policies and strategies to the rapid pace of disruptions across spectrums. The winds of change are blowing as never before, driven by radically altered geopolitical equations infuenced by geoeconomics. Technology has not only revolutionised the wherewithal and management of warfare, but its path-breaking innovative technologies have peneterated the erstwhile inviolate frontiers of the 'Global Commons', ie, space and cyber. The exploitation of these has both positive and negative impacts on security.

In the case of India, the security challenges for the armed forces have compounded. The future conflict spectrum has to not only address the impact of the militarisation of two new frontiers of cyber and space, but will also have to continue to focus on the complexities created due to the historical wrongs at the time of independence, ie, the unsettled borders with Pakistan and China. The differing perceptions on the legalities of the territories / regions astride the Line of Operational Control (LoC) with Pakistan and Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China, have created disharmony, tensions and is a trigger for conventional conflict. All three countries being nuclear powers, creates further complications / sensitivities for the world. The prevailing state of relations has also resulted in Pakistan sponsoring a 'proxy war' in the state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) and becoming the breeding ground for terrorism. The internal discords within India and their military manifestation, at times externally supported/ abetted, need focussed attention in military strategy and procurement of suitable resources. In addition, with its growing stature, there will be an increasing demand for India to be a faciltator in the security spectrum of the future world order. This again has implications for the shape and capacities of the armed forces.

Therefore, for a developing country like India, it is necessary to maintain a fine balance in pursuing socio-economic reforms, sustainable developmental objectives, nation-building tasks and ensuring optimum capacity development of the miltary. The success of any military strategy in such a situation of multiple threat vectors demanding near similar resources in spatially separate areas and the growing responsibilities as a pillar for collaborative security in the region demand effective resource management.

In this article, I shall look at the contours of future conflict/ strategy that should influence resource procurements and long-term capability development to complement the country's military strategy. Also, dilate on a few issues that need to be addressed comprehensively for effective resource management, which is the soul of a military strategy.

Tenets of Military Strategy

The military strategy of a nation converts its geopolitical policy objectives into militarily achievable goals and is evolved from the tenets enunciated in the nation's 'national security strategy'. In the case of our country, the latter has not been stated in unequivocal terms, but the key elements of the national strategy are discernable from the stated pronouncements and actions of the national leadership, the current situation astride the national frontiers and the prevailing state of internal dissension within a developing country.

The violence and instability in India's near and extended neighbourhood, its pivotal domination of the sensitive 'Sea Lanes of Communication' (SLOCs), protection of the dispersed island territories, vast Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) and own assets worldwide, have an impact on the security structures and resources. This growing stature of India in the international environs, its growing economic capacities and focus worldwide on 'collaborative security', require a more active participation of the military as a major security provider, and this needs to be suitably addressed in the military strategy . The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) revolution and increased dependence on space for communication and Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance (ISR) are the new areas that need to be addressed with appropriate modulations in existing processes, and the creation of suitable organisational structures and resources as effective counter-measures. It is from these pointers that the key military tenets can be gleaned to formulate the framework for a military strategy.

In war, there is no place for a second position and, therefore, the *military strategy has to be dynamic, all encompassing and forward looking*. The earlier chapters in the

book would have dilated on the contours of military strategy in detail, therefore, I shall highlight a few *key issues of the strategy that have a major impact on identifying 'resources' that are essentia*l for optimising military strategy.

Firstly, the external security requirements need to be viewed through the prism that India is the *only country* in the world which has two inimical neighbours with nefarious intentions across nearly 8,000 km of land borders. The prevailing animosity with both Pakistan and China and their despicable actions astride the disputed border, comprise a flashpoint for conflict in the near and mid-terms. The impact of *open land borders* with Nepal and Bhutan, adherence to the *16 km 'Free Move Regime'* along the Myanmar border and specific land and maritime border provisions with Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, need to be addressed in the military strategy. Thus, conventional war is a reality and the war-waging equipment to achieve this is an essential component of the required 'resources'.

Secondly, the complexity of formulating the military strategy /security no longer encompasses only the defence of the national borders from external aggression, but needs to address the complexities of internal dissensions. For an evolving society in a developing nation like ours, where everyone aspires for equity, the probability *of intra-community strife* will continue to be a reality. This discord will be anchored on *socio- economic disparities* and increasing fervour of *ethno-nationalist identities*. The space is further confounded by the impact of increased radicalisation, fundamentalism, terrorism and internal dissonance. This impacts the safety and security of the citizens, while disrupting governance within the country. Therefore, the armed forces will, in all conceivable scenarios have to be prepared to address such adversities, as an instrument of last resort. This has to be viewed in the light of the on-going commitments of the military to counter 'proxy war' and the varying levels of Counter-Insurgency/Counter-Terrorism (CI/CT) and anti-Naxal operations, in different parts of the country. Their external abetment, exploitation of territory of the neighbouring countries with or without their tacit support, and the covert machinations of both the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and, recently, the Chinese intelligence agencies' support to the Northeast (NE) insurgent groups, are areas of key concerns.

Thirdly, as dependence increases on the cyber domain, the frequency of its exploitation by 'nation-states' to achieve political objectives by '*Distributed Denial of Services (DDOS) attacks* 'on the '*National Critical Infrastructure'(NCI)*, is an area of major concern. It is emerging as a new battle front in any future conflict. Thus, it is important to appreciate the impact that is being created

with the convergence of communications with computers and their seamless integration through cyber space. It has made 'information' available at a pace and quantum, across spatial distances that was hithertofore, unimaginable. The increased reliance of 'national critical infrastructures' for their functioning through cyber linkages and development and induction of 'Operational Information Systems (OIS)' and 'Management Information Systems (MIS)' as major 'force multipliers' for the military forces, have also created vulnerabilities. These systems, referred to as Command, Control, Communication, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance (C4ISR)/Command, Control, Communication, Computers, Information, Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance (C4I2SR)/Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Control Systems, Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance (C5ISR) are continuously evolving to higher levels of performance, with breakthrough technologies of machine-to-machine learning, artificial intelligence, data mining and analytics and robotics. These radical developments in the sphere of ICT not only empower the military leaders with greater transparency but also assist them to exercise '*the art of command with an enhanced science of control*'. From the security perspective, the *combinations of cyber and social networking sites* have the capacity to *impact the critical human resource* of the armed forces. It is a vulnerability that will need to be addressed in any military strategy. The militarisation of space is still at a nascent stage and will need to to be looked at seriously in the near future. Concurrently, the *technological advancements* in the weapon systems have precipitated *a relook at the legacy security processes and management.*

Fourthly, there is a need to identify the resource modulations required to execute and counter the growing reliance of nations to achieve their national objectives by waging asymmetric / non-contact/ sub-conventional and more recently, 'hybrid war', on their adversaries. India is at the sharp end of countering the machinations of Pakistan, that continues to support a 'proxy war', and the efforts of the Chinese to create vulnerabilities in our digital domain for manipulation at the time of their choosing. The experience of meeting these challenges needs to be encapsulated in *the roadmap of capacity building.*

Lastly, in the near term, there is a need to identify the contours of a framework that will ensure the *operational effectiveness* and *operational preparedness* of the armed forces. 'Operational preparedness' relates to the ability of a formation to shift from peace to operational profile. This, in terms of resources, demands flexible force structures, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and necessary

infrastructure to mobilise, move and deploy/ be employed from peace-time locations to the desired operational profile. Whereas, 'operational effectiveness' is based on organisational strengths, serviceability state of in-service equipment and war-like stores, level of training of the rank and file, including the leadership, and intangibles like morale and motivation.

Resource Development Imperatives

It is indisputable that the *success of any military strategy is based on the twin pillars of detailed planning-cum-training and the resources*, i.e., quality of equipment and war-waging capabilities. To optimise/ ensure the availability of the best resources, there is a need to see the future employment profile of the military. It is imperative that there be a continuous focus on capacity building, across the complete spectrum of resources, so that the armed forces are always prepared to meet the emerging security challenges. Also, the availability of appropriate resources will result in their effective exploitation at the time of execution. Thus, it is necessary to empower the military leadership at all levels, be it the tactical, operational or strategic, with effective resources, so that superior 'Generalship' will translate the science of military strategy into an art, that ensures victory.

It is also a universal truth that 'military institutions' by their very nature are very conservative and more often than not prepare for the last war/ conflict. Therefore, a word of caution for our military heirarchy that we as a nation can ill afford to follow in the footsteps of those who have rested on their laurels, failed to appreciate the emerging challenges and build up the required capacities for a future war, in time.

To be prepared for the role and task of future conflict, the *key pointers for the Army to formulate a long-term strategy for 'capability / resource development', based on the tenets of military strategy,* are elucidated below:

- There is a need to *develop a national vision on security*, instead of a tunnel vision and myopic 'silo' mentality. In simultaneity, there is a need for contextual policies and suitably tailored plans to address the emerging conflict spectrum of the 21st century. This should thereafter spearhead and facilitate capacity building and resource development in the armed forces.
- In the case of the Army, there is a need to urgently enhance its integral capacities for *third dimension manoevure* with 'attack helicopters' for optimising the tactical land battle and the *capacity* of the *Special Forces*. Integral rotary/ fixed wing assets for lift and logistic capability are also a critical priority, to mitigate the time penalty imposed on the miltary forces due to terrain friction astride our frontiers.

- *Border management* is a prerequisite for the armed forces, as a large portion of the external borders is unsettled, undemarcated and disputed. Also, the exploitation of the open border policy with some of the immediate neighbours and its wrongful exploitation by the inimical countries, requires effective counter-measures. Development of advanced ISR capabilities on the latest technological advancements is a logical priority.
- An all out conventional war or a limited conventional conflict, in both *space and duration,* is a reality in the context of our country. So preparing for it will remain a priority. The present format of a *balanced inventory* in the Army of 30 percent advanced weapon platforms, 40 percent current equipment and 30 percent equipment approaching obsolescence, needs to be implemented strictly. This, as of now, is skewed and for redressal of the situation, there is a need for a more user friendly policy for procurement. The new induction of equipment should incorporate the revolutionary technological developments / upgrades that are resulting in enhanced ranges, better accuracy and precision, increased lethality, strategic-cum-tactical mobility and better protection and survivability.
- Internal commitments to combat 'proxy war' and CI/CT operations will remain a long-term commitment. Therefore, there is a need of modern Close Quarters Battle (CQB) weapons, personal safety equipment, suitable weapons accessories, including explosives and special CT equipment.
- The Army will remain a key responder at the time of national emergencies and natural disasters. Therefore, it needs to be equipped to address these contingencies.
- The organisational structures need to be revisited to combat cyber warfare, information operations, execute 'Out of Area Contingencies (OOAC)' and integrated operations instead of synergised operations. In addition, in the era of 'collaborative security', there is a need to keep in mind the aspect of interoperability within the armed forces and those countries with which we are forging closer relationships. The related aspect is that our equipping profile for the UN commitments must reflect the stature of India's growing influence.
- Human Resource (HR) development will continue to retain a position of primacy as hithertofore. Focus needs to be given to training/skilling, in both the formal and informal domains, towards integration of new weapon platforms, technological innovations and superior technical upgrades in war-like equipment/ stores, in view of the changing face of conflict. HR

management needs to harmonise personal aspirations and organisational goals for a motivated and vibrant human resource.

- Infrastructure development to support the armed forces needs prioritisation and a long-term perspective, with separate funding and methodology.The present format has not met the aspirations of the nation.

Necessity for Resource Management

The above iterations in the article have highlighted the spectrum of resources that are desired by India to meet the imperatives of the military strategy. But *what is it that necessitates effective 'resource management'*? The two primary reasons are that we do not have self-sufficiency in the manufacture of quality military equipment and our acquisitions are based on the vagaries of the procurement processes. Also, the Army has to be prepared for dealing with multiple threat vectors in spatially diverse areas that strain the requirement / availability of major war-waging resources.

In India, the major impediment in procuring, in time, optimally desired resources for effective implementation of the country's military strategy, is that we are dependent for the majority of our military capability development on other countries and, to a limited extent, on our Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs) / Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). The war-like stores and products provided by the latter in most cases, due to lack of accountability, are inferior in quality and technology, but cost, at times, more than the best available in the global markets. Thus, denying the military the *desired 'bang for its buck'* from the inadequate allocations of the defence budget. The government's ongoing focus to aggressively pursue the *'Make in India'* initiative is laudatory, but it will take at least a decade before we see indigenous manufacture of major world class, technologically competitive military platforms from the public and private sectors. Till then, operational effectiveness will hinge on management of 'in service' equipment, impacting the availability of funds for modernisation, vis-a-vis 'revenue' procurements.

Concurrent to this is the fact that there is a 'two and a half front 'challenge for the country's armed forces. The spatial segregation of the sub-theatres of conflict, coupled with the poor road, rail and air connectivity astride our external borders and the inadequacy of support infrastructure, results in competing requirements of the same / similar war-waging resources in simultaneity, to meet the security requirements. Therefore, the weapon platforms selected for induction or developed in India must have the ability to be moved speedily

and employed in the diverse terrain, from the mountains to the deserts and from the jungles to the riverine. The expenditure for terrain specific major platforms like tanks and BMPs (armoured infantry fighting vehicles) and force multipliers like rocket and missile artillery are a necessary financial strain for a theatre specific military strategy.

The above highlights the critical necessity for resource management, for timely and optimal employment/ deployment of resources, to achieve success based on the fundamental strength of the military strategy.

Fundamentals for Effective Resource Management

In the corporate world, efficient 'resource management' is the key to successful project management practices and vital for project success. Yet it is one of the most difficult things to achieve, maintain, and control.It is defined as a "component of project management that takes care of the human, financial, distribution, and demands of project resources."

However, in the case of the military, the canvas of resources is equally vast and they are critical to give shape to the execution of military strategy. In the current dispensation, the confluence of strategy, technology, and innovation has made it possible to steer revolutionary changes and empower the military with the desired resources. Therefore, effective resource management in the Army needs to ensure a comprehensive equipping policy that harnesses technology, establishes optimal organisational structures, ensures superiority of military hardware/ weapon systems, including means for information dominance and transparency, creation / harnessing of suitable infrastructure to mobilise, train and facilitate the conduct of the tactical battle, illuminate the battlefield with innovatively advanced ISR systems and automate the management of security/ war-fighting through suitable OIS and MIS systems. Simultaneously, without delay, develop capacities to dominate the 'global commons' while articulating and implementing a dynamic HR policy for ensuring a well trained and motivated human resource. The only impediment for its timely fructification is the archaic procedure of procurements that is creating avoidable criticalities/ adversities.

The critical elements of 'resource management' that will enhance the probability of success of the military strategy always and every time are discussed in detail below.

Higher Defence Management

The present structures for management of the external and internal security

in India need to be reengineered to address the existing shortcomings at the apex level of security management by the MoD/MHA (Ministry of Defence/ Ministry of Home Affairs) and at the ground level astride India's external borders. The security structure that directs operations needs to be synergised under one commander and not be answerable to two different ministries. This format is counter-productive, and promotes one-upmanship. The advantages of a unified and singular command structure for directing actions/ operations along the unsettled and disturbed external borders, irrespective of the colour of the uniform of the forces, needs no justification. This becomes all the more important, when we are experiencing internal discord with external abetment. There is a lot more that needs to be done with the security organisational structures, but as that is outside the purview of this paper, it may suffice to state here that this is an area that requires thought followed by action.

Force Structuring

The capital investment to meet the challenge of the '*two and half front*' threat spectrum is enormous, in case we address them separately. Therefore, the acme of superior strategy is to optimally exploit the available resources, procure new and advanced weapon systems with strategic mobility so that they can be used in all the theatres – from mountains to deserts – and ensure that the supporting infrastructure is developed for ease of movement, including sufficiency with equity in placement of critical war-like stores like ammunition. In addition, the following aspects need to be looked at:

- In the architecture of force structuring, there is a need to give advantage to our forces in strategic mobility, pre-positioning, technology, training, and fielding integrated military systems to provide and retain superiority.
- In the ongoing Revolution in Military Affairs or RMA, there is a need to exploit technology to maintain this decisive force advantage in the equipment, weapon platforms and in achieving "dominant battlefield awareness." This focus on ISR systems would provide real-time inputs of the battlefield that are essential for employment of long-range precision strike vectors and military success with minimal casualties to own forces.
- Organisational structures/ institutions for developing capabilities and subsequently directing and combatting in the cyber domain and space. There is a need to have an empowered set-up that optimally looks at the role, task and employment of the Special Forces.

- There is a need to relook and review the resources and capacities with the three pillars of the armed forces, namely the Army, Air Force and Navy. This is to optimise and avoid duplication of resources. The three arms also suffer from the 'silo' and 'turf protection' mentality. There is a need to look at realigning air defence forces under the Air Force, with the Navy and Army only responsible for tactical/ combat operations and the Tactical Battle Area (TBA) with the Air Force. Also, the rotary wing effort needs to be with the Army, including attack helicopters.

Disruptive Capacities

The ICT revolution and exploitation of the cyber domain has created opportunities to achieve the elusive goal of destroying the adversary's will to resist before, during, and after battle. This will facilitate our military forces to carry out their tasks with greater probability of success. Therefore, focussed development of national defensive and offensive cyber capability, under a unitary command structure, is an urgent priority. Co- jointed Psychological Operations (PSYOPs) will have a far-reaching impact by degrading the output/ motivation of the adversary's human resource. In addition, the capability development should address the combined impact of cyber and social media

Equipping Policy

Some of the key issues are:

- The capacity building of major weapon platforms should preferably not be sector-specific and should have inherent strategic mobility for multiple domain employment. It is necessary that the range of capability development be all encompassing, from long-range precision strike to more effective close-in weapons and from advanced combat vehicles to effective aerial platforms to revolutionise ISR and manoeuvre warfare.
- There is a need to harness the latest technology for new procurements or contemplated upgrades. It is here that the 'Make in India' initiative needs to acquire the critical technologies across sectors to build up a solid foundation for manufacturing defence equipment. Advanced research should be a must for the Indian industry. To develop this culture, there is a need for this initiative to be partially supported by the government. The accountability, functioning and HR policies need an urgent review.
- In pursuit of the need to control, affect and break the will of an adversary to resist, there is a need to build the means to attack the psyche and

supporting structures of the adversary, by acquiring the wherewithal to undertake tailor-made information operations.

- The biggest impediment is the procurement process. Though in the recent past there has been a review, reflected in the fresh editions of the "Defence Procurement Procedure" and "Defence Procurement Manual", there is still a lot that needs to be done. There is a need to balance probity/ transparency and 'ease of doing business', developing an eco- system based on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and acquisitions hinged on a system of 'performance matrix'.

Infrastructure Development

Development of infrastructure for defence needs to be appreciated at different levels. The construction of national road/ rail/ air connectivity has to be sensitive to the requirements of the Army not only for facilitating movement towards the borders from the hinterland, but also intra-theatre movement in the proximity of the borders. The current methodology and pace of enhancing connectivity needs to be given an impetus along our northern borders.

The infrastructure for billeting, training and enhancing defence preparedness astride the borders needs to be given due impetus in keeping with the evolving security paradigm with our neighbours. The confrontation with China is on the increase and, therefore, new technologies/ processes need to be used to redress the existing asymmetry. In addition, there is an urgent need to meet the critical deficiencies, whether it is in ammunition, spares, or war-like stores that are scaled as per 'war wastage rates'. The build up of the 'resource reserves' is time consuming and also afflicted by archaic procedures.

Human Resource Management

Predominance of the 'human resource' by the military leadership in policy formulation is reflected in these weighted statements: "*It is the man behind the gun who is equally, if not more, important, than the weapon system itself*". And, "*Institutions do not transform – its people do; platforms and organisations do not defend the country – people do; and units and formations do not sacrifice and take risks for the nation – people do*". These wise words highlight that without a highly skilled, competent and dedicated rank and file, the military strategy would be without its battle-winning edge. It is for this reason that 'human resource management' has been accepted by the military leadership as a major policy imperative, requiring periodic review in view of the rapid-cum-dynamic changes in the aspirations .

The enormity of the task for tailoring a highly skilled, motivated and effective human resource can be assessed from the fact that India has the third largest Army in the world: a 1.2 million strong Army, with nearly 25 lakh veterans. The challenges range from dwindling-cum-deterioration in the recruitment base (as more attractive options have emerged), limited promotional avenues and early retirement, disrupted family life and increased stress levels, changing commitment / attitudes, including morals, and last, but not least, the erosion in the status, both financial and social, being relentlessly pursued by the Government of India and other sister organisations.

The singular characteristic of the armed forces is the emphasis on achieving timely results, even if it demands the ultimate sacrifice of laying down one's life for the nation. This makes the Army the final bastion and invariably the most reliable asset that the nation can fall back upon during a crisis. Therefore, it needs to be nurtured from both within and outside.

It has been stated very rightly by one of the erstwhile military commanders that HR management has evolved from a supporting role to that of a strategic enabler for the military. The current socio-economic changes, impact of disruptions due to technology, media/ social media and cyber demand superlative professional and specialised skills, interactive communication capacity ,an inner passion and self-motivation to retain the edge.

I think the Indian Army Doctrine 2004 says it all, when it states that "*the soldier of tomorrow has to be an innovator who can combine imagination and knowledge with action*". The soldier of tomorrow has to be able to exploit technology, have better technical skills, be adaptable to disruptive changes, capable of independent functioning and small team operations, while being capable of handling higher stress levels. Therefore, the complete spectrum of HR management needs to be vibrant, dynamic and relevant to the changing personnel and organisational needs.

Conclusion

The changing face of future conflicts makes it mandatory for the Army to prepare itself to meet these challenges head-on. Organisational shortcomings and equipment voids, which hithertofore were considered acceptable, may not be the case in the future. Staffing of formations and units, including maintainence of reserves, needs to be maintained optimally and at all times for operational effectiveness. In the past, the defence debate was often over how to balance the so-called "*strategy-force structure-budget*", but today the scope has changed to "*threat spectrum, strategy, force structure, budget, and infrastructure.*"