



A Tribute to a Visionary

As our Director General, Air Commodore Jasjit Singh left this world on 4th August, he left behind in his wake a significant vacuum in the relatively small world of strategic thinking in India. He was a visionary who, over nearly three decades, led India's thinking on defense related issues.

His thinking covered a vast canvas of subjects and his incessant passion to address national security issues provided us with some very insightful, thought provoking writings by him. The man could indeed see far ahead of his time.

After retiring from the Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses, he established his own baby, Centre for Air Power Studies (CAPS), in a small two room, rented (and shared) accommodation in Basant Enclave with one



research assistant. In his belief and singular focus on scholarly development, he mentored umpteen scholars including a large number of youngsters with the mission of generating interest on 'national security' studies. CAPS, in a span of a decade grew from 2 researchers to 45 scholars. He deeply influenced and shaped the thinking of every mentee that he touched. He had the amazing ability to impact lives directly or indirectly. Many scholars who were never fortunate enough to know him personally still felt a

connect with him.

The legacy that he has left behind is enduring and will inspire many of his protégées to strive to further build a culture of strategic thinking in India.

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How do We deal with Pakistan?

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On August 6th Pakistani troops attacked an Indian post along the Line of Control in Poonch sector in Jammu and Kashmir, resulting in the killing of 5 Indian soldiers.

Reports suggest that an unsuspecting Army patrol walked into an ambush by 15 to 20 men, close to Sarla and Chhaja posts, nearly a kilometer from the cross-LOC Trade Facilitation Centre (TFC) of Ckakan Da Bagh early morning on the 6th.¹

It was clearly a planned intrusion and not a routine ceasefire violation. According to senior army officials, it was a professional assault carried out by regular Pakistani troops along with fully trained, armed militants.

Pakistan, like always, has denied any involvement in the attack and the Pakistani foreign ministry issued a statement saying, "Our military authorities have confirmed that there had been no exchange of fire that could have resulted in such an incident."

Reaction from the Indian authorities was obviously much more fierce this time and the threshold of patience to tolerate acts of this nature has been breached. Although Pakistan has denied involvement in the incident and it alleges that these were non-state actors from Kashmir (the so called freedom fighters – mujahids) who actually crossed the LOC and ambushed the Indian soldiers. But the fact remains that an act of this level could not have been carried without the full support of the Pakistan Army. The incident took place well inside the Indian side of the LOC and this does require sufficient operational planning with inputs from the professional army. Brigadier Gurmeet Kanwal, with ample experience of serving in the Indian army said:

"A large-sized terrorist group simply cannot get through the army's well-coordinated defences, navigate the anti-personnel minefields and then come back safely after several rounds of firing have taken place with enough noise having been generated to wake up the sleeping soldiers of the Pakistan army – that is if they were asleep in the first place. They are more likely to have been waiting

eagerly to welcome back the raiding party. In short, explicit connivance is an inescapable prerequisite for a trans-LoC raid to succeed."²

Political leadership in India has issued firm statements condemning the act. Congress President Sonia Gandhi said that the "Indian soldiers could not be cowed down by such blatant acts of deceit and urged the government of India to take appropriate measures".³

There has been a significant increase in the numbers of ceasefire violations this year, and the number of infiltration attempts have reportedly doubled this year as compared to the previous year in 2012. There have been 57 ceasefire violations till August 2013, which is 80% more than the violations last year during the same period.⁴

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The recent incident has not taken place in isolation and is part of a series of very crucial events which have taken place this year. Early this year, we had the incident of Indian soldiers being beheaded, followed by Sarabjit's death in a Pakistani prison. And on 3rd August, suicide bombers targeted the Indian consulate in Jalalabad killing 12 civilians.

The latest ceasefire violation happened just before India-Pakistan talks were about to take place. Pakistani Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, from the time of his election campaign has repeatedly expressed desire to improve the relationship with India. In fact, India has been one of the leading items in his agenda. Also, the Pakistani Army Chief Ashraf Kayani has talked about India not being *enemy number one*, and that the real threat to Pakistan lies within. In July, Sherry Rehman, former Pakistani Ambassador to the United States, in her detailed talk at the Jamai Milia University, New Delhi, repeatedly asserted that Pakistan does not see India as the 'prime enemy' and the nation has far too many pressing issues to worry about. Her talk revolved around the fact that both the nations need to put the past behind and move forward.

Pakistan has major challenges to counter, which include rising extremism, economic downslide and massive power

shortage deeply impacting the industrial and the social sector, leading to added unrest in the country. However, in recent times, there is a shred of hope emerging in the country with democracy managing to sustain itself. With the civilian regime seemingly keen on the normalization of relations between

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the two countries, the question that needs to be answered is why such ceasefire violations recur at such frequent intervals. In fact, the frequency has significantly increased in the recent times with the shred of hope surfacing in Pakistan.

Another question that needs answering is who would actually benefit in Pakistan with the disruption of talks or by impeding normalization of relationship with India? The Nawaz Sharif government, even after the ceasefire violation was insistent on the continuation of scheduled dialogue between the two, till the Pakistan's National Assembly passed an anti-India resolution on August 13. The resolution, moved by Science and Technology Minister Zahid Hamid, who is a senior leader of the ruling party, PML(N), accuses Indian troops of "unprovoked aggression" on the LoC and the Minister purportedly wants to extend support to the "struggle" of the Kashmiri people.⁵ The resolution comes after Pakistan's Finance Minister, Ishaq Dar, said that India would not be given the Most Favoured Nation Status (MFN) in the future. There is a clear change in posturing of the civilian regime which initially appeared to not be in sync with the military when the ceasefire violation happened. There has been intermittent firing along the LoC after the killing of the five Indian soldiers.

What has happened now is nothing new in the India-Pakistan relations and should not surprise us. The army in Pakistan has been consistent in its strategy (against India) of maintaining the centrality of covert war (guerilla war through terrorism). We have faced Pakistan's covert war for six decades now and one should expect that this mindset will not go away. Pakistan's reliance on covert war through terrorism is unlikely to change in the coming years, although tactics and intensity may undergo changes. Similarly, its acquisition of nuclear weapons will continue to be rationalised as a

Pakistan military has been most confident of the sub-conventional or covert war dimension of its strategy and has continued its reliance on it. For India, a critical imperative is to evaluate Pakistan's strategy and to probingly ask the question – have we worked out a viable and effective strategy to defeat Pakistan's covert-war strategy?

deterrent to Indian conventional military superiority and to provide an umbrella under which to pursue a proxy war through terrorism. The military and the ISI have conducted the covert war with the direct and indirect support of the civilian regimes in the last six decades and likely will continue to do so.

Pakistan has opted for a three dimensional approach in its strategy towards India:

1. *Conventional level:* Pakistan has tried hard to attain parity with India in terms of the military build up. In this pursuit, it did seek alliance with the United States starting in the 1950s, and with China, which has been Pakistan's most consistent partner in the military and nuclear force build-up. It has fought four wars with India, out of which three wars have been initiated by Pakistan.

2. *Sub-Conventional level:* Pakistan opted for the covert war option in as early as 1947, when it launched its first aggression in the name of tribal revolt. All the three wars initiated by Pakistan have been started in a covert manner. It has relied on the strategy of terrorism for more than six decades.

3. *Nuclear level:* For more than two decades, Pakistan has relied on nuclear weapons to conduct its grand strategy (of indirect approach) against India. Nuclear weapons are perceived as providing a foolproof guarantee of its sovereignty and survivability. After the acquisition of the nuclear weapons Pakistan obviously is more confident of its strategy of "offensive-defense".

Pakistan military has been most confident of the sub-conventional or covert war dimension of its strategy and has continued its reliance on it. Over the past two decades, covert war has been carefully calibrated by the *bleeding through a thousand cuts philosophy*, so as to not to incite a major military response and a punitive action.

Pakistan has continued to adopt a posture of denial for its covert actions conducted along with the anti-India militant groups which the ISI has nurtured for decades now. For India, a critical imperative is to evaluate Pakistan's strategy and to probingly ask the question – have we worked out a viable and

effective strategy to defeat Pakistan's covert-war strategy?

Even though the civilian regime denies such acts, eventually the government of Pakistan has to be accountable for such incidents. India cannot afford a soft stance in response to continued acts of terrorism, even if Pakistan claims these are conducted by non-state factions. Peace talks between the two countries cannot take place parallel to blatant acts of terror and continued breach of the ceasefire agreement. Any steps towards normalization of the relationship between the two necessarily needs to be conditional.

Notes

¹Ahmd Ali Fayyaz, "Five Indian Soldiers killed near LOC", *The Hindu*, August 6, 2013,

²Gurmeet Kanwal, "Provocation on the LoC merits a befitting response", August 12, 2013, <http://www.rediff.com/news/column/provocation-on-the-loc-merits-a-befitting-response/20130812.htm>

³Congress President Sonia Gandhi's statement on five Indians killed by Pakistani troops", August 6, 2013, NDTV.com

⁴"Defense Minister A K Antony's statement on five Indian being killed by Pakistani troops", August 6, 2013, NDTV.com

⁵"Pakistan adopts anti-India resolution", 13, August 2013, <http://www.imesnow.tv/Pakistan-adopts-anti-India-resolution/articleshow/4434400.cms>



Centre for Air Power Studies

The Centre for Air Power Studies (CAPS) is an independent, non-profit think tank that undertakes and promotes policy related research, study and discussion on defence and military issues, trends, and development in air power and space for civil and military purposes, as also related issues of national security. The Centre is headed by Air Cmde Jasjit Singh, AVSM, VrC, VM (Retd)

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