

MILITARY DIPLOMACY: THE ROLE OF THE SOLDIER DIPLOMAT: AMERICAN CASE STUDY AND INDIA'S OPTIONS

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INTRODUCTION

Armed Forces all over the world are trained to kill and destroy, this being their *raison d'être* since time immemorial. Their efficacy, efficiency and worth have been measured by the degree of success they have enjoyed in defeating and decimating their enemies. A soldier is incomplete without a weapon. In addition, ironic though it may seem, money has always been made from war in one way or another, a fact that holds true even till today. From the industrial age through the world wars till today, defence and ancillary industries have not only fuelled intense competition but also forged alliances between nation states, at times manipulating and propelling them to go to war. Most leaders responsible for the security, peace and prosperity of their people have used the Armed Forces as but one tool to ensure the same, and have reasoned that if peaceful means and persuasion do not succeed in resolving conflict and competition against an adversary who might engage in aggression, then the use of

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force as an important tool of statecraft is justified. The modern period has witnessed profound changes in technology and communication, a globalised interdependent economy, growing influence of non-state actors, growth of civil society, increasing inequality, etc., which have challenged modern statecraft and international diplomacy.

The word Military Diplomacy comes across as an oxymoron. 'Military' are trained and equipped to wage war while 'Diplomacy' utilises everything other than force to achieve national policy objectives. According to Kautilya, who was a realist in his approach, every state acted in order to maximise power and self-interest. Moral principles or obligations therefore had little say in their actions against other nations. While it would be prudent to have an ally, the alliance would last only as long as it was in mutual self-interest, because "an ally looks to the securing of his own interests in the event of the simultaneity of calamities and in the event of the growth of the enemy's power."¹ Why do we need diplomacy, and why Military Diplomacy? While Carl von Clausewitz had argued that war was just an extension of domestic politics,² Kautilya had prophesied that diplomacy was actually subterfuge that involved taking actions that would lead to weakening the enemy, while gaining advantages for your own self, all done with the aim of an eventual victory. A nation's foreign policy should therefore always consist of preliminary movements toward war: "In this way, the conqueror should establish in the rear and in front, a circle (of kings) in their own interest. ... And in the entire circle, he should station envoys and secret agents, becoming a friend of the rivals, maintaining secrecy when striking again and again. The affairs of one, who cannot maintain secrecy ... undoubtedly, perish, like a broken boat in the ocean."³ As the foreign policy of a nation is geared towards national interest, it should not be to end conflicts, but to preclude defeat and to ensure victory in subsequent conflicts. As far as Kautilya was concerned, all ambassadors were potential spies, cloaked with diplomatic immunity.

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1. Boesche Roger. "Kautilya's Arthashastra on War and Diplomacy in Ancient India" *The Journal of Military History*, vol. 67 no. 1, 2003, pp. 9-37. Project MUSE, at <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/40432#authbio>. Accessed on August 15, 2021.
 2. John Keegan, *A History of Warfare* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), pp. 3-24.
 3. Boesche Roger, *The First Great Political Realist: Kautilya and his Arthashastra* (United States: Lexington Books, 2003), p. 80.

The military capabilities of nations across the world are increasing either by force accretion or by making existing forces more potent and agile. This takes place despite reducing defence budgets in the western world which in some cases are accompanied by force reductions. What remains a *sine qua non* is the fact that the Armed Forces are here to stay and would continue to play an important and leading role, not only in nation building but in the ability of nations to further their interests in an increasingly integrated world which paradoxically is fraught with increasing inter and intra-regional conflicts. The aim of this paper is to assess how Military Diplomacy could be effectively utilised as a tool of statecraft to further national interests in international diplomacy. During the research a case study has been carried out of the use of the military by the USA towards furthering national interests, what are the challenges faced by India and how could they be addressed.

Ever since the advent of Naval power the term 'Gunboat Diplomacy' was coined to further the interests of colonial powers in pursuit of their foreign policy objectives through the conspicuous display of force. There have been numerous occasions wherein military force has been used peacefully in international diplomatic relations leading to the term 'Military Diplomacy' which can be defined as "all diplomatic activities relating to national security and military diplomatic activities." The distinction between diplomacy and military diplomacy essentially arises from the practitioners and the departments/ministries to which they belong even though their objectives remain the same. The goal of diplomacy as defined by Britannica Concise Encyclopaedia is to further the state's interests as dictated by geography, history and economics. Safeguarding the state from external aggression and protecting its sovereignty is equally important. Diplomacy seeks to achieve maximum national advantage without using force and without causing resentment. Viewed in isolation, diplomacy would not be able to achieve what it seeks to do without a strong and powerful military. UK's defence diplomacy is defined by Anton du Plessis, in a narrow sense, as the "use of military personnel, including service attaches, in support of conflict prevention and resolution. Among a great variety of activities, it includes providing assistance in the development of

democratically accountable armed forces". Du Plessis goes on to give a broader definition of military diplomacy as "the use of armed forces in operations other than war, building on their trained expertise and discipline to achieve national and foreign objectives abroad". He also gives Cottey and Foster's inclusive definition of defence diplomacy (alternatively, international defence diplomacy) as "the peacetime use of armed forces and related infrastructure (primarily defence ministries) as a tool of foreign and security policy" and more specifically the use of military cooperation and assistance.⁴ The usage of the words 'military' and 'defence' can be freely interchanged.

THE CASE FOR MILITARY DIPLOMATS

The importance of diplomacy in the domain of security and military relations in the nuclear age, with increasing disaffection of the civil society (with the ruling elite) and increasing radicalisation and extremism cannot be overemphasised. The ability to mediate, manage and resolve conflict through communication and negotiation has been instrumental to the survival of polities since the dawn of civilisation, but what changed after the nuclear strikes on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 was the relative significance of the consequences of failure to achieve the needed diplomatic mediation.⁵ Diplomacy with the intention to prevent future conflict has been the response to successive outbreaks of multilateral conflict with increasing severity since the eighteenth century. What has made the last two centuries different from the preceding period is that diplomats have sought to institutionalise the diplomatic mechanisms for representation and communication in a new and more formal way in order to facilitate regular consultation, mediation and, when required, negotiation to avoid or resolve conflict.⁶

The successful mediation during conflicts of interest at the broader level requires more than just an effective mechanism through which diplomats can communicate with one another in the event of

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4. Anton du Plessis, "Defence Diplomacy: Conceptual and Practical Dimensions with Specific Reference to South Africa", *Strategic Review for Southern Africa*, November 2008.
 5. Geoffrey Allen Pigman, *Contemporary Diplomacy* (Cambridge UK, Polity Press, 2011), p. 161.
 6. Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), pp. 1-34.

a prospective or actual crisis. The ability to communicate effectively requires that diplomats have a familiarity with one another and with each other's governments and their positions, even in advance of the need to address a particular bilateral or multilateral issue.⁷ It is here that military officers of different nations who have had joint training in the past, conducted bilateral and multilateral exercises/exchange visits, would be able to communicate effectively on the basis of mutual trust that has been developed over the years. Hence regular bilateral and multilateral meetings for the purpose of getting to know one another, and formal confidence-building measures can be just as important in avoiding conflict as institutional structures for communication themselves.⁸ Modes of communication in bilateral security diplomacy have also evolved through establishment of dedicated channels such as 'hotlines' between the Military HQ of traditional adversaries, India and Pakistan, to ensure that unintended actions do not inadvertently signal the intention to initiate a conflict that could result in a nuclear Armageddon in South Asia. In addition, senior foreign policymakers also need to be able to communicate effectively with their own senior military officers, who are responsible for creating and implementing military strategy about other states, about their capabilities and their interests. It is in this aspect that India lacks a dedicated framework to facilitate dialogue to further national interests.

AMERICAN CASE STUDY

In the case of the USA, which functions through its geographic combatant commanders, military diplomacy synergises and brings all instruments of national power to bear on nations and partnerships across the world. The purpose being to develop relationships and form alliances. While reflecting on his command, General Zinni remarked: "As my experiences throughout the region in general and with [Pakistan's President] Musharraf in particular illustrate, I did not intend to sit back and say, 'Hey, my job is purely military. When you're ready to send me in, coach, that's when I go in.' When I assumed

7. Lars G. Lose, "Communicative Action and the World of Diplomacy", in Karin M. Fierke and Knud Erik Jorgensen (eds.), *Constructing International Relations: The Next Generation* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2001), pp. 179-200.

8. Dana Priest, *The Mission: Waging War and Keeping Peace with America's Military* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004), pp. 11-57.

command of CENTCOM and had the ability to choose between fighting fires or preventing them, I chose prevention. If there was any possible approach to making this a less crisis-prone, more secure and stable region, I wanted to try it through shaping operations.”⁹ With all the instruments facilitating security cooperation, General Zinni segued the entire Near East and Central Asian region through strong security relationships and capabilities by having regional conferences and enhancing the professional military education of all the regional military leaders. The other geographic combatant commanders also conducted similar activities. The PACOM Commander, Admiral Blair was apprehensive of collaborating with China after the 2001 air collision between an EP-3 and a Chinese F-8 aircraft. Subsequently many commanders of EUCOM facilitated the entry of nine countries into NATO while ensuring that relations with Russia were not adversely affected over this NATO enlargement. “The current norm of ‘Been there, done that’ visits should be transformed into persistent, personal, and purposeful contacts that yield results.”¹⁰

The involvement of the military in diplomacy cannot be done in isolation; the involvement of the Foreign Service is an essential prerequisite in articulating the national strategy/objectives in the region. Conflicts occur when competing bureaucracies jostle for their share of the pie in the absence of unambiguous and clearly articulated vision and strategy at the national leadership level. The support provided by the Military to Public Diplomacy is an essential component of the American strategy and is defined as “the ability to understand, engage, influence and inform key foreign audiences through words and actions to foster understanding of U.S. policy and advance U.S. interests, and to collaboratively shape the operational environment.” The Department of Defence support to US Government public diplomacy consists of many activities that include open-source international public opinion which aims to foster US foreign policy objectives by making an attempt to have an understanding, thereafter informing and influencing foreign audiences and opinion makers. This support could be furthered by increasing the scope of dialogue

9. Tony Zinni, “Military Diplomacy,” in Derek S. Reveron (ed.), *Shaping the Security Environment*, (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 2007), p. 5.

10. Joint Forces Command and European Command, Draft Military Support to Shaping Operations, Joint Operating Concept, June 2007, p. 13.

between American citizens, its institutions and their compatriots abroad. Even though this is primarily the role of the State Department, the Defence Department is quite active in this area. The US Regional Commands, for example, sponsor professional military education conferences to discuss regional security challenges and the strategic outlook apart from capabilities-based planning. By assembling important leaders from a particular region or country, the Regional Commands facilitate dialogue not only between the United States and other countries, but also among countries across the world, which would only help and facilitate in combating regional conflicts and humanitarian operations. Geographic combatant commands are also represented in US embassies through offices of defence cooperation and military liaison offices.¹¹

LIMITATIONS OF MILITARY INVOLVEMENT

There has been increasing criticism of the Western intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan. It has led to a groundswell of adverse public opinion in the world against the US. While the reasons for American intervention are not being debated, the manner in which the countries have been attempted to be changed and the military nature of the intervention is what has caused the adverse public opinion. By their own admission, erstwhile US Deputy Secretary of Defence, Gordon England had remarked, "The US Military is not sufficiently organised, trained, or equipped to analyse, plan, integrate and coordinate the full spectrum of capabilities available to promote America's interests."¹² Subsequently the US embarked on a policy of Security Cooperation defined as "the ability for DoD to interact with foreign defence establishments to build defence relationships that promote specific U.S. security interests, develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defence and coalition operations, including allied transformation, improve information exchange, and intelligence sharing to help harmonize views on security challenges, and provide U.S. forces with peacetime and contingency access and en route infrastructure."¹³ The main objectives for doing this spanned

11. Derek S. Reveron, "Shaping and Military Diplomacy", US Naval War College, September 2007.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

various themes from combating terrorism, transforming alliances and building coalitions for the future, influencing the direction of major powers, cooperating with parties to regional disputes, deterring and isolating problem states, combating weapons of mass destruction, and realigning the global military posture. While making efforts to wage war against the global terror threat, security cooperation provides training for indigenous forces.¹⁴ The Foreign Military Training Unit was created by the Marine Corps in 2006 to “train, advise, and assist friendly host-nation forces—including naval and maritime military and paramilitary forces—to enable them to support their governments’ internal security and stability, to counter subversion, and to reduce the risk of violence from internal and external threats.”¹⁵

With increasing global challenges and dwindling defence budgetary allocations, the US Navy has incorporated security cooperation as its primary agenda. Senior Navy strategists Vice Admiral Morgan and Rear Admiral Martogolio wrote, “policing the maritime commons will require substantially more capability than the United States or any individual nation can deliver.”¹⁶ To ensure this, the United States has been seeking partnerships with international navies to create the proverbial 1,000-ship navy, which could respond to smuggling, piracy and other nefarious activities, while protecting the global commons or important SLOCs. The Chief of Naval Operations reinforced this message, stating that: “wherever the opportunity exists, we must develop and sustain relationships that will help improve the capacity of our emerging and enduring partners’ maritime forces.”¹⁷ This effort, which has been exemplified by Task Force 150 and NATO’s Operation Active Endeavour, represents an example of a 1,000-ship navy to promote international maritime security. The prerequisite to building a successful maritime partnership globally is to build partners’ capability and capacity.

US Foreign policy had become dangerously dependent on its military. The reliance on the military fed an unfortunate trait: the tendency towards unilateralism. It had become too easy for the military to believe that this superiority would carry over into post-

14. Ibid.

15. USMC, “Foreign Military Training Unit”, at <http://www.marsoc.usmc.mil/FMTUHome.htm>. Accessed on August 24, 2021.

16. Derek S. Reveron, n. 11.

17. Ibid.

conflict operations. After all, the United States had the transportation, communications, and logistics that no other power possessed. The military was the go-to organisation, of course, and its soldiers and leaders responded to an unpredicted situation with all the skills and capabilities in their command. For all their versatility, however, they lacked the knowledge, skills, staying power and scale to really manage a large nation on a continuing basis. They were unable to create deep-rooted political development. They lacked the skills and experience to revise constitutions and work methodically to bore into the deepest aspects of the societies.¹⁸

Whenever diplomatic levers are neglected and military action taken unilaterally it invariably becomes counterproductive, as has been proved time and again. US Ambassador Ryan Crocker's perspective, which was shaped by more than four decades of experience in respect of the actual scope and influence of American power, is realistic and pragmatic. He puts it this way: *"we're a superpower, we don't fight on our territory, but that means you are in somebody else's stadium, playing by somebody else's ground rules and you have to understand the environment, the history, the politics of the country you wish to intervene in."*¹⁹

Clausewitz, in his well-known quote "war is nothing but the continuation of policy with other means" firmly establishes that the military needs to function as both, a tool of warfare, and a tool of policy implementation. Keeping this relationship of the military and policy in mind he identifies the need for the military leader to be a soldier-statesman.²⁰ In other words, the military commander must be able to clearly discern the policy objectives of the nation-state and be able to apply the appropriate resources at his disposal to achieve the ends sought. Clausewitz, in his argument states that true military genius is marked by the ability to understand "exactly how much can be achieved with the means at his disposal" while keeping in mind the "entire political situation."²¹ Elucidating further on war and

18. Wesley K. Clark, *Winning Modern Wars: Iraq, Terrorism and the American Empire* (NY: Public Affairs, 2003), pp. 169-170.

19. Ed Crego, George Munoz and Frank Islam, "Foreign Policy, Diplomacy and Military Force", at www.huffintonpost.com. Accessed on September 10, 2021.

20. Clausewitz Carl von, "On War", ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989) p. 111.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 112.

policy, Clausewitz comments that, "... war springs from political purpose ... Policy, then, will permeate all military operations and ... it will have continuous influence on them."²² It is unequivocally clear that the amalgamation of policy and military activities through the soldier-statesman is not only desirable, but considered as an absolute essential by Clausewitz.

BILATERAL/REGIONAL/MULTILATERAL SECURITY RELATIONSHIP

This is the most traditional and classical relationship that goes beyond diplomatic relations. However, the context in which such alliances are situated has changed post World War II, being articulated in terms of obligations by both states as members of the United Nations. The shift is significant, in that, by signing the UN charter, member states are committing themselves to a set of norms of diplomatic conduct that would preclude certain types of bilateral alliances, such as secret alliances directed against third countries. Bilateral agreements generally function without the establishment of a secretariat or organisation on a permanent basis and generally take the form of an agreed set of policies and procedures that govern ongoing diplomatic communication. Such agreements almost always provide for the sharing of military intelligence between the two armed forces, and some agreements also call for varying degrees of joint military training, exchange of officers and certain shared defensive missions.²³ Examples of successful bilateral alliances have been the ones in force between the Republic of Korea and the US.

At times bilateral security arrangements morph into regional or multilateral agreements that require a degree of multilateral diplomatic cooperation and military coordination. Regional and multilateral security organisations play a critical and complex role in security diplomacy, in that they serve both as vehicles for coordinating action amongst several states in the security arena and, at the same time, as venues for the diplomatic processes of making, implementing and enforcing security policy. NATO and the Warsaw Pact were the two alliances that endured during the

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid., pp. 165-166.

Cold War period. Amongst other committees in NATO, the Military Committee is the most significant, as it serves as the highest-level military advisory body to NATO's civilian authorities. The realities on the ground of the joint military command structure required much more thoroughgoing, integrative aspects of diplomacy than negotiating treaties and cooperating to undertake strategic defence planning. In this regard, NATO military cooperation is also diplomatic in a way that renders it essentially different from the military command structure and defence planning process within the armed forces of a single state.

For the armed forces of different countries to learn to work together effectively, a huge range of estrangements need to be mediated, protocols of representation established and channels of communication made familiar. These engagements of diplomacy are very different from, but no less important than, the *haute politique* diplomacy that traditional scholars of diplomatic studies usually associate with security diplomacy. The fact that alliance member governments and their armed forces engaged in this hands-on level of security diplomacy changed the relationships between these states significantly in ways that were not planned or anticipated when the alliances were created. The political and military channels of representation and communication that NATO developed during the Cold War facilitated NATO's transformation after the Cold War from a regional security organisation into a collective security organisation with an increasingly global reach. Even as NATO has struggled at times in the post-Cold War period to reimagine and redefine its 'strategic concept' or primary mission, it has proven remarkably adept at the core diplomatic functions of representation and communication, and the objectives at which those functions are targeted: negotiation, and mediation of estrangement between alienated actors in the broadest sense. NATO has successfully taken action to embrace its former adversaries. The joint deployment of troops by NATO and the Russian Federation in Kosovo, whilst not without considerable disagreement between NATO and Russian commanders, can be seen as emblematic of the success of NATO's security diplomacy in mediating the estrangement with what was once its greatest adversary and establishing not only representation

and communication, but an established institutional format for security cooperation on an ongoing basis.²⁴

INDIA'S CHALLENGE

The Indian Defence Establishment faces the gravest challenge in today's environment post-independence. It faces the risk of conventional conflict with two adversaries against a nuclear overhang and the increasing risk of cyber and space-based threats. Apart from this the nation will continue to be committed to dealing with the proxy war imposed on us by our western adversary, insurgencies and separatist movements with the growing phenomenon of Left-Wing Extremism, the latter being acknowledged as the gravest security risk to the nation by the erstwhile Indian PM, Dr Manmohan Singh.

Confronting these conflicts in the twenty-first century would require a comprehensive and coordinated approach utilising all the levers of power. In this regard the Armed Forces of the country are blessed with the junior leadership and rank and file who have acquitted themselves admirably in the past despite the lack of 'state-of-the-art' equipment and resources. Even so, history is replete with examples that even the best equipment and resources does not guarantee victory unless the higher political direction, a sound organisational structure and higher strategic thought are in place.

While Military Diplomacy has gained prominence and become overt in the post-Cold War era, some of the activities that they have been performing are no different from what was done in the past, of using the great power practice of using the armed forces for a range of political and humanitarian missions. These have included force projection into conflict situations, nation building, ability to assist other military forces through training, and local capacity support through arms transfer and intelligence capability. These functions hitherto had been largely performed by western powers in the past.

As the military capabilities of India and China grow along with their rising aspirations of great power status, increasing trade, large diasporas abroad, so too will their desire to use the military as an effective tool to protect their interests. While India's attempts at military diplomacy have included signing a large number of military

24. *Ibid.*, pp. 169-171.

cooperation agreements and significant expansion of joint military exercises with major powers and regional actors in the Indian Ocean and East Asia, its attempts to integrate the military within the national decision-making system leave much to be desired. Many of India's military diplomatic activities, because of its inherent reluctance to enter into regional partnerships/alliances, are a consequence of bilateral agreements with individual countries rather than a Grand National Strategy. India's reluctance to actively involve its armed forces internationally has historical reasons post-independence. Independent India's isolationist impulse, in the recent past was in part due to the extensive use of its armed forces during the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century. The Indian nationalist movement rejected the use of the Indian military for imperial purposes. The only exception to this, post-independence, was the use of Indian Armed Forces for UN Peacekeeping Operations.

One of the major shortcomings of the present arrangement of interaction between the Armed Forces and the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) is that the Ministry of Defence (MoD) with its civil bureaucracy is interposed between the two as an adjudicator. A serious limitation in the present arrangement is that it prevents the leveraging of military capacity in Foreign Policy and relations. The best way of achieving synergy is through an interactive mechanism in an organised structure which the present arrangement lacks. The principal interface of the MoD is with the MEA and it needs no emphasis that in all decisions with respect to national security, international relations, use of security forces in overseas deployments/exercises the MEA has to be involved. The MEA, incidentally, is one of the few agencies of the state which has officers of the Armed Forces working alongside in Diplomatic Missions abroad. There is little doubt that since MEA is the component for delivery of foreign policy it should be the lead agency for military diplomacy.

There exists a strong case for posting/lateral absorption of Armed Forces officers of Colonel equivalent rank into the MEA, given the acute shortfall of officers in the MEA. The MEA, which should be crucial to informing the country's strategic vision, is puny compared to India's aspirations and emerging power status. Singapore, with a population of 5 million, has a foreign service about the same size

as India's. China is eight times larger.²⁵ With a little bit of cadre management in both the organisations this process could be mutually complementary. India's role and influence has increased considerably, and in keeping with the increasing demands of defence cooperation, procurement of equipment and training commitments including the conduct of joint exercises, the deployment of defence attachés abroad needs to be reassessed. It is not only a question of numbers; it is as much about posting the right man at the right place. This includes re-examination of the current structure to include selection, the desirability for specialisation—both regional and technical—and scope for maintaining continuity.²⁶ It is possibly appropriate to evolve a more pragmatic long-term policy that envisages the deployment of Indian Armed Forces units and personnel not only in UN-mandated peace operations, but also in multinational expeditionary operations undertaken under the aegis of internationally mandated resolutions. Evolving such a policy is important to enable the formulation of doctrines, concepts and standard operating procedures for conducting joint training, exercises and operations with forces of other countries within a bilateral or multilateral framework.²⁷

Defence cooperation must extend beyond training, even though it is a major component of defence diplomacy, especially in a region where countries are not keen to maintain large standing armed forces and prefer to seek support from countries which are neither threatening nor overbearing for their security needs; for example, security threats like piracy. In this context, India's relationship of professionalism and non-interference, while providing such assistance, needs to be highlighted. This reiterates the fact that India is increasingly being seen as a benign security provider. The expectations from India, in the emerging world order, not only raises the question of military capacities but also structural issues which would enable a response in a manner and time frame that defines India's stature and capability.

MILITARY DIPLOMACY: INDIA'S OPTIONS

If one were to look around India's neighbourhood, the armed forces are key players in national security policies, from China to Indonesia

25. "Briefing: India as a Great Power", *The Economist*, March 30, 2013, p. 55.

26. IDSA, *Deliberations of a Working Group on Military and Diplomacy* (New Delhi: Magnum Books Pvt. Ltd., 2013), p. 23.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

and Pakistan. Given India's firm belief in civilian supremacy over the armed forces (rightly so) the civilian bureaucracy and politicians are uncomfortable with the dubious role played by the military in the domestic politics of some of these countries. This, however, places us in a quandary as we expect that other countries should play by our norms, which is unrealistic, and when we engage with them purely on civilian diplomatic terms, we fail to engage their military establishments. This is further compounded by the fact that we either do not have any military-to-military cooperation arrangements with our neighbours or they are at a fledgling and nascent stage. We therefore fail to engage in military diplomacy in any meaningful form. This is also a part of the reason why the nation finds itself in a bind with respect to Pakistan as we fail to engage with the military which is the real power centre. The US however does this a lot better as its CENTCOM Commander, Secretaries of State and Defence regularly interact with the Pakistan Army Chief. Given the situation that these men in uniform are engaged in diplomatic activities which are of serious importance to India, can we afford to stay out of this military-diplomatic loop?

It is essential that the country takes military diplomacy seriously, making it a part of its foreign policy, creating capacities, structures and processes to put them into action. Military training at the academies must include diplomacy and officers with requisite skills must get deputed to Indian embassies and missions abroad to work not only as defence attachés but also augment the Indian Foreign Service which is woefully inadequate, considering its growing demand. There is an urgent need for policy formulation at the national strategic level for a strong and institutional framework that coordinates the activities of the External Affairs and Defence Ministries to maximise national interests not only regionally, but at the international global level. Increasing defence cooperation with India's neighbours through joint exercises, visits, combating terrorism, piracy, cyber threats, etc., would go a long way in building robust partnerships which would inherently secure national interests and promote peace, security and stability. As soldiers universally more than think alike, their bonding through multilateral exercises/defence engagements is instantaneous and is easier to build upon to secure national interests. The emphasis

needs to shift from organising our forces to defend our territory to using them to secure our people and our way of life and conducting these operations at a distance from our borders. Each nation will arrive properly at slightly different organisations according to its history and circumstances; however, the more these organisations are congruent with those of other nations the better the fit when grouped together in some multinational force.²⁸

CONCLUSION

Modern wars are not won on the battlefield, but in the diplomatic lobbies of international organisations and more importantly in the hearts and minds of civilian populations. In a growing interdependent world, the futility of armed conflict cannot be overemphasised. The probability of a state to take unilateral military action against another sovereign state is decreasing by the day. Modern conflict situations would dictate multilateral intervention wherein military personnel would need to interact with multiple organisations and individuals in order to defuse volatile situations towards peaceful resolution. Civil-Military liaison work has to increase ensuring non-confrontational encounters against the state and between warring factions. The requirement of a soldier to be able to negotiate responsibly and effectively cannot be underestimated. The training imparted to soldiers, if refined to understand the merits of a comprehensive approach would go a long way to the making of a soldier diplomat who would be better armed and prepared for future conflicts of tomorrow.

The 'spectrum of conflict' today erodes any clear demarcation between war and peace. Today's ideas of peace are very ambitious, encompassing more than the absence of war, and including the provision of justice and good government, as well as human security more broadly defined. As a result, conflict is seen as both pervasive and persistent.²⁹ Since the end of the Cold War there has been a continuation of conflict or war at some level or another in the international system. The prevalence of war between states or

28. Smith Rupert, *The Utility of Force* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 2006), p. 399.

29. Hew Strachan and Sibylle Scheipers, *The Changing Character of War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 10.

divergence of interests leading to conflict has meant that the conduct of war, though not literally, remains one of the most important acts of the state. Strategising on the conduct of war can help us to manage and contend with crises by shedding light on the contemporary role and contribution of military force diplomacy in and to a nation's security policy.

While building up the case for Military Diplomacy with the soldier-statesman as its protagonist, the policies followed by the USA and India were explored. Bilateral/Multilateral and regional securities relationships were looked at, which are considered essential in today's globalised interdependent world. Security of a state and its citizens remain the prime responsibility of the armed forces. This, however, cannot be achieved in isolation and increasing synergy between the different levers of the state, is inescapable.