
CENTRE FOR ADVANCED STRATEGIC STUDIES



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**INDIA'S DEFENCE PREPAREDNESS :
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C O N T E N T S

CHALLENGES TO INDIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY

(Seminar held on 20 Apr. 96 under Joint Collaboration between Centre for Advanced Strategic Studies and Department of Defence & Strategic Studies, Pune University.)

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SEMINAR**CHALLENGES TO INDIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY****20th April, 1996****(Venue : Shivaji Sabhagruha, Pune University)****BACKGROUND PAPER**

Currently, in most parts of the world national security is considered synonymous with national defence. The reality is that the former covers a much broader spectrum of challenges and responses as compared to the latter, which is mainly a subset of national security from external threats to territorial integrity. At the same time, it has to be noted that military capability constitutes the ultimate instrument of a nation in the pursuit of national security.

If asked, a layman would probably explain national security as the protection of territorial integrity which, for that purpose would require the adequate building up of the armed forces alongwith the appropriate acquisition of military hardware. This view, however, is simplistic and does not address the challenges and complexities faced by nation-states today. After all, in addition to securing territorial integrity the peoples of a country would neither like its political or constitutional system to be challenged nor want its economic, technological, or scientific progress and interests to be in any manner of jeopardy.

A nation would like to safeguard and promote its core values which could be termed the nation's "Way of Life." These may be those such as democracy, federalism, secularism or human rights. The term national security would, therefore, have to encompass all these

factors. If that be so, then it cannot be assumed that challenges to a country's national security emanate only from the external environment.

A useful definition which is relevant to present times states "Security is not military hardware though it may include it, security is not military force though it may encompass it, security is development and without development there is no security." Another analyst theorises "national security does not merely mean safeguarding territorial integrity. It means also ensuring that the country is industrialised rapidly and has a cohesive, egalitarian and technological society. Anything that comes in the way of this development internally or externally is a threat to national security."

Views on exact definitions will no doubt differ, but we may adopt a broad concept of national security as "the preservation of the core values critical to the nation-state from external and internal threats." The framework of strategy therefore, must first seek to identify the core values. At the same time it is necessary to note that although external and internal security issues are substantially different in nature they often interact or are inter-related. Many issues affecting internal security may stem from external political, economic or military pressures. Similarly domestic vulnerabilities may create incentives for external pressures. Objective and reasonably accurate assessments of security challenges are not easily achieved, and the balancing of priorities between the external and internal dimensions of security often pose a dilemma.

At this stage it has to be noted that challenges to national security have to be combated by one or more or a combination of the instrumentalities available to the State, viz domestic capability, diplomatic avenues and military strength. Similarly, these tools of the state are used, not only in a defensive posture, but also to further national interests. These three state capabilities draw

their ability or strength or the lack of it from the elements of national power which is a mix of strategic, military, economic and political strengths and weaknesses. It is determined in part by military forces but even more by the size and location of territory, the nature of its frontiers, population, economic structure, natural resources, technological developments, social cohesiveness, institutions, stability of its political process and finally the national character and spirit.

The Ingredients of National Security

The foregoing, in a sense, has already generated the need for deeper analysis of the theoretical and empirical factors which determine security for a nation within itself, in the external environment and in relation to all other nations. Thus it may be suggested that basically there exists in the very core of national security three levels, or three separate constituents. These are in ascending order the individual, the state, and the international order or system in its entirety. The relevance of these three levels of national security lies in their intrinsic security values and equally in the obvious connections between individual or personal security, that of the state, and the security of the international system. While there is no doubt that some sense can be made of security at each of these levels in its own rights, a full understanding of each can be gained only when it is related to the other two.

Individual Security

While a vast array of dangers, doubts, opportunities and challenges loom over an individual, ranging from criminal violence to incurable disease to natural disaster, the aspect that is germane to the topic is that of social challenges. These are those arising from the fact that an individual forms part of a larger human environment with its unavoidable socio-cultural economic and political consequences.

In order to secure oneself against socio-cultural threats the individual is prepared to submit to a government. Thus the state becomes the mechanism by which one seeks to achieve an adequate level of security. Herein lies the rub, because the state itself can become a major source of insecurity to the individual citizen depending upon its composition. If the state is 'benign', clashes of interest between the individual and the state are minimal. On the other extreme is the "dominant" state where the pursuit of state interest supersedes the interests of its citizens and is unresponsive to individual security needs as exemplified by the "midnight knock on the door" in a police state. Insecurity from the state, however, whether benign or dominant, can arise from a variety of factors as part of an explicit state policy against certain groups of people; from political disorder; from state terrorism; from inadequate processes of law enforcement, etc. Finally, the inability of the state is the last dimension in which the linkage can be seen.

Security of the State

What constitutes a state and what constitutes a challenge to a state are the two central concerns. A state consists of population and its associated geographical territory as its physical base, and at a higher plane it comprises an idea held in common by the people - a deeply rooted loyalty to the idea of the state existing as a metaphysical entity. This logically leads to the concept of sovereignty which, simply put, means nothing other than total and complete self rule and provides the crucial element which divides states from other forms of large units, and also from other states. It is at this stage that the concept of national security introduces, by the use of the term "national", the implication that the object of security is the nation, thus widening the scope of examination to a quest for an understanding of what is a nation, and raises the question about links between nation and state. A nation can be defined as a large group of people with

the same cultural, and possibly the same racial heritage, and normally living in a given area.

Is a nation a state and are all nations also states and vice versa ? In its pure, pristine form, the nation preceded the state and gives rise to it as in the case of Japan and China. At the other end of the spectrum, some nations have no state like the Palestinians, the Armenians, the Kurds and the Jews before the inception of the Jewish state in 1947. Between these two extremes lie all forms of nationhood and statehood, and suffice it to say that a clear understanding of what constitutes a nation and what constitutes a state, though inextricably interwoven, is central to the study of national security and a deeper examination is worth the pursuit. Based on this, challenges to the state can be identified which, broken down to their component parts, are threats to idea of the state, the physical basis of the state and to the institutions of the state. These cover a wide variety of stimuli, ranging from manipulation of ideas to wielding of military power, which can be applied at any of the three components of the state separately or in combination. Another factor which underpins the range and intensity of vulnerabilities of a state is the strength or weakness of the state itself. Internal peace means the existence of law and order and a state of tranquility. It signifies the state of security and protection of the state from internal violence, public disorder and internal disturbances and includes the steps taken against all possible internal challenges such as political agitations, strikes, riots, sabotage, espionage, armed insurgencies and separatist movements. After all, the state has to be secure for the protection, preservation, maintenance, growth, enhancement, development of values and interests.

State Institutions : Institutions in a state such as the judiciary, the legislature, the bureaucracy, media and the military provide to a state an organisational structure, strength when strong and vice versa, as

also checks and balances over each other. Where the state is strong, national security may be viewed primarily in terms of protecting the components of the state from external and internal interference and challenges. Where the state is weak the very idea of the state and its institutions are objects of internal conflict and confrontation to the point of violence even attracting, on occasions, heightened levels of threat to its territory and people from external sources.

The International System

The two major components which make up the security environment of a state in its external milieu are the international political system and the international economic system. Various aspects of these two facets are discussed in the succeeding paragraphs.

The International Political System

The mechanism for security and an understanding of it in the international political system could be based on the examination of the opposite ends of a broad spectrum. At one end, is a situation of continuous struggle for dominance generating the use of force, where insecurity is endemic and the all-pervading ethic "survival of the fittest" is paramount. At the opposite end, would be an utopian relationship in which states would recognise and accept each others legitimacy and, on the basis of mutual recognition and acceptance, a strong international society respecting sovereignty and stable territorial boundaries could be founded. A highly ordered and stable international system could also include non-interference in internal affairs, respect for different ideologies, eschewing force in settlement of disputes and adherence to international institutions to deal with multinational problems. Between these two extremes lies an entire range of possibilities with the present international order lying somewhere in

the middle. It is obviously far removed from the unbridled chaos of survival of the fittest, just as obviously, it is equally removed from the calm and stable realms of a truly mature world order of peace and security. The end of the Cold War, one thought had placed the present world system closer to the stable model. However, the rise of sub-nationalist and ethnic aspirations has been to the contrary.

The close of the 20th century is witnessing a new phenomenon in international relations which could not have been foreseen some years ago. Whilst earlier empires were a powerful force for obliterating natural and demographic barriers and forging connections among far-flung parts of the world, which eventually led to the formation of nation-states, in today's world of instant communications and mass media, the planet has become smaller than ever before. Its commercial life and its nations are more interdependent and its conflicts bloodier. The price of settling disputes by force is becoming too high for the victors, not to mention the vanquished. Thus nations, which are basically social arrangements accommodating to changing circumstances, which no matter how permanent and sacred they appear to be, are as per some thinkers, artificial and temporary and it is likely that in the future, nationhood as we know now, could change. The boundaries between some partitioned nations may disappear and some countries which have formed economic groups may progress to common security arrangements.

Change also seems to be overtaking the UN. The world body, enhancing its role to peace keeping and peace making is likely to undergo some changes to make it more responsive to evolving situations and realities.

Globalisation has also contributed to the spread of terrorism, drug trafficking, AIDS and environmental degradation and since these transgress international borders, they are beyond the capability

of individual nations and constitute an important element for international cooperation. Protection of the environment and sustainable development have become important issues.

There has been considerable discussion amongst analysts in regard to the world order as has emerged after the collapse of the USSR. One view is that, with the rising economic strength of some countries along with associated political power, the world is now multi-polar. Another opinion is that bi-polarity has been replaced by uni-polarity with the USA being the only super power left, which is using its uncounterbalanced clout to relentlessly pursue its short term political and economic interests. There is an impression that this unbridled power is gradually subverting the UN, using the countries of Western Europe and Japan for its own ends, and having conferred upon itself the role of "global policeman" is selectively applying international means such as NPT, CTBT, MTCR, IPR, human rights and the threat of the use of economic or military force against nations that, in the pursuance of their own national interests are not fully pliant to US policy. There is therefore an apprehension particularly amongst third world countries, that the new trend in American pronouncements and actions may lead to instability and insecurity.

International Economic System

The international economic system is characterised by a propensity for binding states together, in contrast to the international political system which so far has tended towards some fragmentation. International economy is tied together by patterns of trade, production, capital and technology, all creating in their own spheres an interdependence among competing and co-operating nations. The system has identifiable characteristics fed by man's yearning to increase wealth which in turn, generates large conglomerates of economic activity. The distinguishing features of this are population

growth, technological innovation, class struggle, improved political organisation and the development of specific economic theories and models. This has led to the progressive expansion of national economies, increasing exchange between them and to a global economic system which in more recent times has been referred to as "the global village." The second link is between the international economic and political systems and it is the relevance of this link which also demands closer study. Identification of elements of national economies which are objects of insecurity centre around class structures and economic cooperation, both private and public. The clash between class and state interests forms the basis of insecurity and, when either or both extend beyond national boundaries, it intrudes into the international sphere. Thus the structure and functioning of the international economic system becomes a central factor in the security concerns of many states which basically are the insecurities of interdependence and the vulnerabilities of differing economic systems to threats from each other leading to the propensity for the use or threat of use of force and erosion of the ability to function as a sovereign state. The economies of the world are becoming more inter-dependent with most countries shifting to free market economic development. Forming of regional economic groups is the order of the day and the examples set by the European Community and ASEAN are being emulated by most regional blocks. In this context we need to analyse the large scale and radical changes effected in the Indian economic structure since Jul 91 and examine its needs and its linkages with the international economic system. We should also examine the long term implications these changes may have on our national security.

The whole purpose of national security policy is to make the state secure or, relatively secure from challenges to its core values and vital national interests from internal or external sources. Security can be pursued and obtained by two methods. Firstly, by taking

action to reduce vulnerability to these challenges and, secondly, by eliminating or neutralising them. However, before proceeding to this step which, by definition, requires the identification and recognition of threats, the much more difficult and complex problem has to be addressed which is for a state to authoritatively establish for itself its own position in the world, and where it desires to be placed in a given time frame. The one single most significant factor which creates actual inequality between states and determines position in the world order is national power. Thus, having determined its relative position in the international order and having defined a clearly visible aim for advancement of this position, it is necessary to evolve a national security concept.

The formulation of a national security policy is a matter of means and ends. The making of policy demands a clear, unequivocal and unambiguous statement regarding the objective of policy (ends) and involves choices to be made about the techniques, resources, instruments and actions which will be used to implement it (means). By this token, the first prerequisite is the requirement for a state to determine the objective of its national security policy. It is here that the basic complexity of the problem arises, because national security is not absolute but relative, and it is in the realm of relativity, that the extremely complicated and difficult question arises. How much security is enough? To this can be added the constantly changing internal and external scenario and how to adjust to the ceaseless changes in the various criteria by which relative security is defined.

CONCLUSION

South Asia is a security complex in its own right by virtue of its geo-strategic location, and at the the same time is a sub-system of the larger regional security complex with significant linkages to the international system. India has since independence inherited and been

drawn into mutual relationships by geographic proximity, common concerns and mutual hostility. Its high level of vulnerability has been endemic because of internal compulsions, rivalries and a power struggle between India and Pakistan. The gloomy prediction is a projection that current trends are unlikely to change considering that since 1947, the two major players in the South Asian Security Complex have been driven by a series of wars, internal upsets and external involvement.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE SEMINAR

The Seminar on "Challenges to India's National Security" was conducted in joint collaboration between the Department of Defence and Strategic Studies, Pune University and the Centre for Advanced Strategic Studies. The first session was chaired by Shri R.D. Pradhan, President of the Governing Council, Centre for Advanced Strategic Studies. Dr. Pravin Sheth, former Head of the Department of Political Science, Gujarat University and currently an Honorary Professor at Gujarat Vidyapeeth, Ahmedabad, as the main speaker made his presentation on "Socio-Political Challenges to National Security." Lt Gen (Retd) Ashok Joshi, Shivaji Professor, Pune University chaired the second session, wherein Air Cmde (Retd) Jasjit Singh, Director, IDSA, New Delhi as the main speaker made his presentation on "International Dimensions of India's Security."

After presentation by the main speakers, the subject was thrown open for general discussion. A general consensus agreeing with the views expressed by the main speakers emerged.

SESSION I**SOCIO - POLITICAL CHALLENGES TO NATIONAL SECURITY****Chairman : Shri R.D. Pradhan****Main Speaker : Dr. Pravin Sheth****PAPER PRESENTED BY DR. PRAVIN SHETH**

National security along with integrity of Indian nation is no longer an abstruse word. Its meaning has to go home from the sophisticated to the unlettered, the urbane as well as the rustic. Almost every component of the Indian polity and society is in a state of flux - a flaccid, aging, directionless and senescent party for long in the centre-stage of government as well as the opposition which could not stay put in its position, when catapulted to power as in 1967 in states and at the Centre in 1977 and 1989. And now, a 13 - party coalition continuously exposed to incompatible policy positions and a Prime Minister ever called to manage its contradictions from within and pressures from outside. No party can enjoy legitimacy if it does not have authenticity, sense of purpose and a commitment to goals of a truly egalitarian society, democratic polity with an assuring security environment from within and outside. No party can enjoy authority when it has lost its credentials which confer legitimacy on it. No system can be enduring and kicking without earning popular legitimacy from time to time. No nation can become and remain strong, powerful and sustainable if it ignores the internal and international dimensions of its security.

National security is composed of national and internal strategies. Internal strategies include the complete spectrum of

socio-political and socio-economic policies and internal security strategy. External strategies would include defence and diplomatic strategies. United Nations strategy, economic-trade and aid strategies, special interest group strategy for coping with external military threats and coercive diplomacy. A state which neither has the care or capacity of meeting the basic needs like providing drinking water to the villager or slum dweller is surely a divided state. A country which has its two faces, India Vs. Bharat in Sharad Joshi's framework or as Two Indias in the framework of Rajni Kothari cannot remain a viable nation.

During the past one and a half decades, dormant primordial affinities and identities along linguistic, caste, ethnic and communal lines have been growing into formidable socio-political challenges. Increasingly conflicts around such identities have thrown Indian democracy off the balance, weakened its social fabric and affected its mental fibre and the care of our national security. In the process, the Indian state has to resolve a series of vexed contradictions, dilemmas and paradoxes. Not that such political conflicts had not risen in the first two decades of Independent India. But they generally took place around a single issue of caste, religion or the social issues. Of late, there seems to be a simultaneity of such conflicts, and that too at many levels. And that too when our political structures and leadership in fact, the whole institutional frame work, is in a state of decline to manage these conflicts which, cumulatively have grown into formidable socio-political challenges to our nation's security and integrity. Unfortunately, the power of the Indian State today does not derive from the minds of men and the institutional fabric of Indian politics and society, said Ashis Nady. "The State now derives power only from itself and is hollow from within".¹ He is concerned not with false security but with the political culture that shapes national security and priorities. In the name of democracy, the political process is distorted and corrupted, reducing most politicians and

workers to sychophants and senitors of money, muscle and ministerial powers.

Social Cleavages

(i) Caste Conflicts

The caste conflicts in UP, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh etc. have been characterised by class overtones on one side and subaltern assertions on the other. One of the major causes of the recent caste conflicts during the last decade is the assertiveness of the other backward castes-OBCs, after mandalisation of the polity. Again, the current disturbances reflect the increasing resolve of the Dalits not to meekly accept any longer the lowly social position in the Hindu social order or the treatment meted out to them. Atrocities on the Dalits by the upper castes, and since the one and a half decades by the newly emerged OBCs (economically well off, numerically crucial and politically ambitious) like the Yadavs, Kurmis, Koeris and Thevars have brought out the socio-political contradictions of our political economy in the wake of three decades of development process informed by land reforms, minimum wage legislation, the Green Revolution and the governmental inputs to the farmers. The Dalit challenge has been met by a backlash from the hitherto privileged (Bhumiters, Thakurs, etc.) as well as the new emergent agricultural castes like the Yadavs, Kurmis and the Thevars which, in turn, has further prompted the comparatively well-placed Dalit subcastes like the Jatavs and Chamars (UP.), Mahatos (Bihar), Mahars (Maharashtra), Vankars (Gujarat) and Vanniars (Tamil Nadu) to take on the forces of status quo. This makes the rural conflicts in India assuming a claste (class + caste) character, a complex socio-economic phenomenon.² Both in Bihar since the post - Emergency regime and in UP during the Mulayam - Mayavati regimes, the castiest policies in administration and governmental

schemes, have deepened such a divisive process. The populist decompression through the politicisation process has brought out long - simmering issues to the boiling point and agrarian conflicts in U.P., Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat have taken the caste form, but disguised by the class content like demands of the Dalit landless or marginal farmers for more wages or a share in the surplus land under the land reforms, now so tardily implemented. The Dalit landless have antagonistic relationship with the intermediate castes.

Again fragmentation of the Dalits and the scheduled castes and at least two stratas of the OBCs is noted by perceptive observers. As senior bureaucrat and Ambedkarite S.R. Darapuri observed,"³ It is an irony that the various subcastes among the Dalits have failed to come together on one platform. The Chamars and Jatavs are not ready to share their joys and sorrows with other subcastes, like Pasi, Balmiki, Khatik and others".⁴ Again, they have differential political party affiliations. In Maharashtra some of the worst atrocities committed on Dalits during the 1978 anti-renaming riots were by backward castes like the Malis and the Telis.

Contradictions of the SP-BSP alliance in UP and entrenched OBC peasantry and assertive Dalits in Maharashtra have made it clear that the social order remains resistant to the increased pressure from the subalterns.⁵ Nor the entrenched upper castes and ruling class will allow the socio-political pyramid to be inverted. The spectre of violence can never be too far away in such a context.

The policy of reservation as a measure of protective discrimination or preferential treatment of the SCs and STs as the underclass or historically marginalised social categories of castes have been consensually well taken. But when it has been adopted

and applied in the case of all OBCs/SEBCs as a single caste group, without relating it with the relative advancement of some of such castes in political and economic terms, it has created the impression that the policy of reservation has become the instrument of competitive populism in states such as Gujarat, Bihar, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. So also the way Prime Minister V.P. Singh foisted the Mandal recommendations on India's fragile polity. The way the already advanced castes among the OBCs like the Lingayats and Vokkaligas in Karnataka and Yadavs, Kurmis in North India have managed to monopolise the benefits of reservation policy and with their political clout managed to avoid to get "dereserved" in conformity with the Chinappa Backward Class Commission Report in Karnataka and "creamy layer" conditionality of the Supreme Court verdict in Bihar speaks of the inner contradictions within the OBCs and their explosive potential when the most backward castes begin to be aware and demand their legitimate share in the reserved cake.⁶ After reviewing the issue of reservation, one thing becomes clear that those who have political and economic power among the OBCs, get away with the chunks of benefits of reservation. Those among the backwards who are organisationally weak remain deprived of the same.⁷

The growing political and opportunity benefits through policy of reservation with increased quota and promotions has led to "desanskritisation" process in the Indian society.⁸ Such a process, which is a reversal of the four decade long "sanskritisation" process as perceptively conceptualised earlier by Professor M.N. Srinivas may also be termed as "prakritisation" as Dr. Goldman has proposed.⁹ The upper caste members have begun to be considered as backward for the benefits of governmental and educational seats reserved for the BCs and OBCs. Such a phenomenon is significant for an entrenched social order of India. In overall perspective, politics of backwardness and backwardness of politics both seem to be mutually reinforcing .

(ii) Communal Divide

The course of confrontation adopted by communalists from either side of our society is destroying the secular moorings of our political philosophy and democratic system.¹⁰ In a secular democratic system, confrontational approach challenges the integrity of our nation and in border areas it creates psycho-dynamics among a significant section of the Muslims that creates a hostile national security environment because of the nexus between a section of them and anti-Indian forces within and across the border states like Kashmir.¹¹

The fact that some of the political parties use the majority or minority communities and bring them under attack in order to harness the phenomenon of a mass Hindutva movement or a minority voting at party or constituency levels for political ends make the societal stability and security perceptions rather fragile and hostile.¹² Such a phenomenon creates challenges to India's national security in the context of our polity and society. The war cry like *Halla Bol* by Mulayam Singh even as the Chief Minister of U.P. - which literally means, attack - against the five percent community of exploiters, the BJP determined to neutralise it by equally organising aggressive programmes of mass mobilisation and the Congress programme of mass mobilisation dubbed as *hunkar abhiyan*, and Mayavati's aggressive call to confront the Manuvadi forces in UP are cases in politics of confrontation. The society in the context is getting fragmented on caste lines leading to social and political polarisation.

The local police in some localities in Jabalpur (1961), Ahmedabad, (1969 and 1985), Bhivandi (1970), Baroda (1983), PAC in UP (Meerut riots, 1987), the BMP in Bihar (Bhagalpur, 1989), and Govanti (1992) has negated the secular structure of the state.

In Ahmedabad during the caste-riots provoked during the two anti-reservation stirs (1981 and 1985), most of the Dalit victims alleged that the SRP and the police looted their houses and beat their women folk.

During the December 1992 - January 1993 riots, post mortem reports showed that out of 250 deaths 192 persons died in police firing and out of these, more than 95 per cent persons had sustained injuries above abdomen which showed that the police had fired to kill, and not to maim or injure. Many judicial and citizens reports from Justice Reddy Commission to Madan Commission and Justice H. Suresh and S.M. Daud confirm these findings. The minorities have faith only in the army as many Muslims in riot areas like Mumbai, Bhivandi and Ahmedabad had pleaded for retention of the army in order to protect their lives.¹³ The same applies to the communal role played by some Muslim officers in such riotic situations.

It would require a well - thought out package of training the police and para-military forces to secular role and extraordinary political will to fight communal challenges. The Hindus and Muslims clash out of misunderstanding, stereotypes and ignorance. Inter-faith dialogues could be quite helpful in the long run.

The majority communalism is dangerous because once activated, it has an awful striking power and has the potentiality to become hegemonic and authoritarian. But as an ideological proposition, "such a statement is biased as the mindset behind both majority and minority communalisms are exactly the same". Therefore, those who tend to tolerate minority communalism understandably get labelled as "pseudo-secularists".¹⁴

We here need new tools of analysis. Why have all the changes brought in by the development process failed to persuade millions to look for their real identities in differences of class (a secular identity)

but to think mainly in terms of caste and creed ?¹⁵ Why do so many people still seek refuge in religion for psychological security ?

There is more scope for clearing misunderstandings about the meanings of both religion and secularism, particularly in the large diverse and modernising society like India's. A multi-religious and multi-cultural society like ours can be meaningful and healthy not in the Western sense of the term but as an instrument for promoting greater understanding between different faiths.¹⁶ In a society committed to political pluralism, the solution of an increasingly disintegrative system is to inculcate a more catholic world-view and an understanding that both religion and secularism should recognise the strength of the one and the necessity for the other to hold the nation together.

(iii) Social Maldevelopment

Like many leaders of the newly independent nations of the Third World; Prime Ministers like Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi and Narsimha Rao have valued national power, security and prestige over the nonmaterial values of equity and liberty. The price of such power and security in the wake of modernization and liberalisation have been paid for with the real sacrifices of the mass of people at the base of the social pyramid. "The pull of the ideas of grand development, perfect national security and spectacular feats in science and technology were particularly strong in Mrs. Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi".

In spite of our having Bangalore as the Silicon Valley or the Route no. 128 of the East on line of Boston which has a high concentration of information and software industry," the fact remains that India is still a biomass society",¹⁷ however hard it may try to reach the information age. Over two - thirds of India's 900 million people depend on cultivation for their livelihood. Every year

they gather more than 150 million tons of wood from shrub and wood - lands to meet their fuel demands. About 50 percent of India's ethnic communities subsist through hunting, fishing, basket and mat weaving and maintaining live stock. In the current system of India's governance, all natural resources are covered by an "iron triangle" of politicians, bureaucrats and contractors/builders/large landholders. The development costs are passed on to the tribals, fisherfolks, small landholders and the dalits. About two-thirds of our population do not get safe, drinking water. Even Delhi with the highest per capita income in the country has also 53 percent of its population living in the slums. About 80 percent of the Indian workers and their families have been left high and dry in the so called development process. India would have the largest number of illiterates and people suffering from some of the serious diseases in the world. In terms of the basic needs of its people, it has still the lowest standards of nutrition, hygiene, and health care ; the largest population in the world of the blind, the deaf and the dumb, and the leprosy-affected, declining standard of education and public morality; one of the top ranking corrupt systems. It has an impressive industrial growth record but it still does not invest much in research and development, depends much on the import of technology and has a large scale parallel economy which aggravates already unacceptable inequalities, and a polity in disarray. And yet we have maintained a "functional democracy" in a continental polity and society with a vast poor population. It is in a way placed in the fourth world, though at macrolevel, it is ranking as having the third ranking technical manpower and fourth largest military establishment, a threshold nuclear power and an emerging big economy" in the world. Such a highly skewed pattern of social development indirectly creates a fragile nation from its security view point. A strong state in technological and managerial terms and a weak, fragmented and uncared for society cannot go together for long. The strength must come from within. This is the internal dimension of our national security.

Ethno - Regional Challenges

(i) Insurgency in the North-East

Sub-regional movements around ethno-nationalist identities have been going on in the north-eastern periphery of India, starting with Nagaland in 1960s and in an incipient form in Tamil Nadu (erstwhile Madras state in 1960s). They also precipitated in different form in Punjab and Assam (1980s) and some Adivasi areas like Jharkhand. The latter has taken the form of "cultural or other more serious ideological" opposition to the Indian state and the ruling elite.

In the north-east, the armed Naga insurgency which rocked that region in the late 50s and throughout 60s was largely contained and accommodated with the creation of the state of Nagaland within the Indian Union.

Ethno-nationalism in this strategic region, however, has been a constant refrain of political development. The neglect of this periphery for long by the Centre, in terms of development and communication, has provided the main cause of anti-Delhi feelings among various tribes or ethnic groups in this region. The lack of policy that could help impressive development (including production in the modern sector) has given it a distinct "socio-economic or class character" with serious political challenges to India's national security.

Even when the Centre resolved this problem of ethno-nationalist, or some time, even secessionist movements by nation-building through consensus, as by accommodating the Naga, Mizo and other tribal aspirations by creating seven separate full-fledged states, in Assam itself, a fresh internal contradiction has taken violent shape. The Assam movement led by the Assom Gana Parishad

supported by both Assamese and non-Assamese communities like the Bodos soon after its fruition got split and militant Bodo movement has become strident and pressing for a still further split to make room for a Bodo state. The absence of a major state in the strategic border region of India creates potential danger for India's national security. Captured leaders of Bodo and Naga militants, when arrested confessed to the BSF they had met in Bangladesh to forge "joint anti-India strategies".

Since the mid-1980s, the Nagas though quite exclusivist in their outlook, have started coordinating the activities of groups operating in this region. Their (undivided) National Socialist Council - NSCN had opened their sanctuary in the adjoining northwest Myanmar to other insurgent groups like the United National Liberation Front - Manipur and the ULFA as a common facility for training and regrouping. In mid-1980s the three insurgent groups had mounted joint operations and extended hostility in their respective areas. After the formation of the Indo-Burma Revolutionary Front towards the end of the last decade, a faction of the NSCN has forged another axis with the Bodo Security Force of Assam and the People's Liberation Front of Manipur. Over and above adopting such a regional approach, the NSCN led by T. Muivah is reported to be exploring the avenues for internationalising the Naga problem.¹⁸ Bangladesh has not only been providing facilities to the North Eastern insurgents but it has also reportedly offered itself as a launching pad for Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence in the sensitive region.¹⁹ This should not surprise one when even political parties like the Asom Gana Parishad are reported to be surreptitiously cultivating some terrorist leaders as stated by two state governors..²⁰ There is a shift in the strategic thinking of such groups like NSCN (M). Giving up the woolly faith in the invincibility of freedom struggles, they now emphasises on straining and weakening the Indian state and its security apparatus.

Terrorism and insurgency also demand that counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency planning must be jointly done by various agencies of the Ministries of Home Affairs and Defence under appropriate political guidance. We must also have institutionalised system for doing this effectively and an on-going basis, and we must create one without further delay in spite of opposition by established bureaucracy²¹.

Inept Response From The Centre

In view of the growing networking of insurgencies in this region and the growing trend towards a co-ordinated struggle abetted by certain church forces and the neighbouring countries around 1990, the Centre needs to revitalise institutions other than the vigilant security forces to meet the challenge to the national integrity. The administration and political party formations in the border states have been found inept and stunted. Institutions and political formations must be energised to promote popular participation and the system, well revamped, should be open enough to get feed back from the estranged communities living on the margin of India's security map.

“The interaction between the North - East and the main-land have been caught in the trap of stereo typed perceptions. If the proponents of secessionism in the North-East have been labouring in ignorance of the power and stability of the Indian state, the Indian state as well as the mainstream opinion have been conditioned to view the marginal societies of the North-East as inconsequential”²²

(ii) **Kashmir** : As in case of the N-E problem, a region-specific phenomenon shaped around Kashmiriyat a religion-infested cultural identity problem ferociously aggravated by the sustained penetration of hostile neighbour from across the border, the inept and uncogent

policy approach of the rulers in New Delhi, the frozen frame of mind of our decision makers and mainstream opinion need to give up their "reactive" approach and install a fresh dose of "radical" rethinking. Only then India will be able to give an effective answer to such ferocious challenge to India's national security. Terrorism is the most destructive phenomenon and a fierce challenge to our security. Kashmir has come to be the most enduring, exhausting and serious region- based religion specific separatist challenge with systematic international inputs (role of Pakistan buttressed by the strategic interest of the U.S.) to the integrity and security of the Indian Nation.

(iii) Punjab : The Punjab problem, apart from a debate on the Centre - state relations, a cooperative federalism or a coalitional politics is endemically rooted in the economic, political and cultural resentment of the Sikh community having a distinctive religious fervour. In the process from period of the "Sikh Homeland" issue of Master Tara Singh (mid-1960s) to the Sant Longowal - Rajiv Gandhi Agreement (1986), the democratic and consensual politics had suffered a serious setback owing to inept and unimaginative handling of such a sensitive question. The operation Blue Star in Punjab and the Nelli communal massacre of Assam are telling reminders of the Indian state's faulty response to the political-cultural challenges to India's national security.

It is commendable that the Indian ruling elites at the Centre have, by and large, addressed themselves to the ethnocentric and geo-strategic challenges from India's North-East and the North-West (except in the case of Kashmir) with remarkably innovative approach to the challenges of national integrity, integration and nation building. They have imaginatively cultivated the sensitivity of such subnational communities like the Nagas, Mizos, Sikhs, Gurkhas, etc. by accommodating in the expanded framework of federalism or by offering its modified version of autonomous district set-up or councils.

However, over and above such political problem-solving approach, the Centre still requires to effectively realise the development approach to these regions on the margin (in geographic, communicational and development terms) of India's political - developmental spectrum at the same time, maintaining the defence preparedness of its ever modernising security forces against the intrasigent sections of the insurgents.

From the Kashmiris in the valley on our North-West to the Nagas on our North-East nurse a sense of alienation. They, and even some in Sikkim define themselves in terms of "Us" (Kashmiris and Nagas) and "You" (the Indians). Violence, the aggressive form of alienation has become banal in the nation's socio-political milieu. So much so that it has lost its quality to disturb us ! Even the national press (except published from Calcutta) have ceased or de-emphasised reporting on ethnic-cleansing events, or a pogrom against illegal Muslim immigrants in Barpeta district, or the bloodshed between the Nagas and the Kukis in Manipur, or the recent massacre of the Bihari Santhals by the Bodos in Khokrajara. Even events of heavy toll of our security forces in the North-East are either ignored or they get a sidelined space in the media. The events around the Kashmiri militancy are increasingly put on the backburner by the media and informed citizens alike.

Almost every social category is in a state of flux. So many solvents are at work that it is impossible to control the process of erosion - social divisions along caste, communal and ethnic lines, political fragmentation, education, agricultural modernisation, industrial growth, communication, values such as liberty, equality and justice. The solvents of change like education, politicisation, and modernisation, however, cannot be given up, for even then the process already set in cannot be reversed. And if given up, it would mean much more than giving up the hope of ever becoming a secure, strong, modern

and prosperous nation. In such a context, when there is a dearth of a visionary or statesman - like leadership, only the common sense of civil society, based on an inclination to accept social change and the values of equality that can bring sanity, order and stability can help the nation to stem such a process of erosion of the Indian state.

Positive Potentials of Cleavages

Such expressions of social identities and their political expressions as in elections and rallies on caste lines or through the symbols of Mulayam Singh Yadav, Laloo Prasad Yadav, Kanshi Ram and with their political structures like Samajwadi Party, Janata Dal or Bahujan Samaj Party are essentially aggressive. But socio-political mobilisation from the base of the social pyramid has also provided the subaltern communities opportunities for upward mobility. Politics of social mobilisation has given the hitherto submerged, subaltern and deprived castes/ communities new channels of empowerment. If they are enabled to get their rightful place in the system instead of causing hypertension in the body politic through high blood pressure of mobilisation and conflict, it would restore the system to homeostatis which can give stimulus to democracy and stamina to our fragile national political system.

Consociational Politics

It will be simplistic to impose a carpet ban on such cleavages from the above. It can only be counter-productive. In fact, it is likely to become an instrument to block the expression of the legitimate interests of minorities and backward castes in the political arena".²³ The resultant problems can be handled effectively only by politics of social coalition approach adopted through a discourse of integration. Merely "competitive populism", political populism, and economic populism will prove to be cosmetic palliatives and will widen the gap

between the curves of expectations of the masses and low capacity of the system to meet them. Such a gap will generate the psyche of dissonance that will accentuate the social and political challenges as profiled earlier.

The coalition made through a discourse of integration of the ruling class should be to establish wavelengths with such large massive groups and forge linkage with social cleavages leading to their integration in the system and stake in national security.

If the dominant elite and emerging castes/classes can genuinely relate to the larger process of people's participation in policy process affecting their lives and in developmental dynamics and to the marginalised segments of Indian society²⁴ (Dalits, the most backward, tribals, poor peasantry, parts of minorities and women) they in cumulative form, can cut across differences of castes, communities and ethnicity and such socio-cultural identities and act as a catalyst in the maturation of (pro-people) democracy. If a large mass of the people at the base of the social pyramid and political system gets its basic needs, and self-esteem in a just society, such a social development will create the durable internal security environment indeed.

Overview

Viewed as a whole, India's society and polity is called upon to manage the momentous crisis of identity and integration in the wake of simultaneity of violent political expressions of social conflicts. Cumulation of such conflictual interests and identities have made such challenges all the more daunting and formidable. In fact, some of them have assumed the form of militant warring groups along caste lines like Lachit Sena, Lohit Sena, Bhumi Sena, Kisan Sena and CPI

(ML) and People's War Group and the like. This has resulted in parallel Senas (illegal para - army), and parallel administration in certain regions of Bihar and UP. Political formations along Dalit backwards, Advanced backwards and the most backward lines etc. have polarised in the political process.

All this has also contributed to the process of criminalisation of politics. It also must be not yet that narco-crime and narco-terrorism have assumed much larger proportions leading to debilitation of our young generation physically and in moral fibre and corrupting and criminalising our society.

A Strong-Weak State : On the other hand, the Indian State has become weaker and its operators disoriented to manage such a process of transformative politics and socio - political challenges. It is rather ironical, that seemingly the Indian State has become stronger and stronger by equipping itself with more coercive powers like the anti-violence legislation (from MISA, PASA, NSA, TADA, anti-Disturbances Area Act, etc.) and significant increase in its coercive forces like the Police, SRP, CRP and the BSP and burgeoning Intelligence services and crores of rupees spent for providing them infrastructure modernising them. Even then, seemingly stronger the Indian State has become, with more legislative and coercive power and resources, weaker in terms of containing conflicts and controlling socio-political violence. Statistics of social-political violence²⁵ are a telling document of this syndrome and the graphic story of Purulia (December 1995) has shocked the nation by exposing the insecurity of Indian skies and our defence arrangement.

Parallel System

Actually what we see is the existence of parallel administration, parallel judicial structure, parallel policing, parallel education, parallel

economy - in fact, the parallel Government.²⁶ In fact, all this constitutes the telling experience of a degenerating political culture and an Athetoid State.

The role of the state is to strengthen our national security - internally and externally. It should ensure law, order and security to its citizens. It should be able to reconcile conflicting social and economic interests and ideologies and help the operation of an open system by promoting political pluralism. As an ideal, it should take up the great project of the system's renewal, catalyse the process of social transformation and build a strong society within the consensual framework of equity, justice and decentralisation.

The institutional structure of Indian politics is shattered. Populist politics has substituted the democratic process and managerial and technocratic economics have replaced political economy of distributive justice. We have a fractured democracy, but a democracy any way. Unlike most of the Third World nations who fell to authoritarian syndrome, India stays as an open polity allowing most forms of dissent and reasonably open to new experiments in building an equitable and humane society. And that too having continental dimension with its cultural diversity, ethnic differences, linguistic differentiation, and economic disparities.

More significantly, while rulers in the neighbour states opted intermittently for authoritarian regime on the grounds of national security, India has tried to become more secure militarily without abandoning its democracy.

What is imperative is to make the border of our country militarily secure. What is also imperative is to make our country strong and secure from within by formulating a well-thought out

imaginative response to the socio-political challenges. National security in its two twin facets of defence capability and a healthy, development-oriented civil society is a "threatened species" today; and we should feel genuine concern and ecological responsibility to nurse and nurture these twins.

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XVI World Congress at Berlin organised by International Political Science Association, Aug. 94.

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10. The currently popular Hindu politics that has emerged in the recent years to reinvent the past suits the demands of political expediency. So also the Muslim politics. Both make forceful use of obscurantism and the mindset cultivated by the Maulvis, Maulas, the Mathadhipatis and the Sadhus. See L.K. Sharma from London citing Professor Amartya Sen, The Times of India, 14 Mar. 93.
11. Top IB officer in Gujarat who is responsible for nabbing the five anti-national culprits and revealing their relations with Yakub Menon in Dubai, and the fact of their training by the Pak ISI in Pakistan-occupird Kashmir. These culprits belonging to the minority community had a plan to set up a centre in Ahmedabad for training select youth for carrying out terrorist activities in Western India. (Unpublished).
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25. One powerful coercive structure is the network of Intelligence wing of the Central Govt. But over years, since Indira Gandhi, political masters have made deliberate efforts to undercut the role of Home Ministry. Since 1970 the CBI and the external Intelligence Agency (RAW) which were a part of the Home Ministry under Y.B.Chavan were transferred to the PMO. There is a problem of coordination between various security - intelligence Agencies such as IB, CBI, RAW, Revenue Intelligence and Enforcement Directorate. The coordination between IB, and the state intelligence agencies leaves much to be desired."Even while dealing with the extremely serious threat of terrorism and secessionism, these agencies have not put their best forward. These turf issues need to be addressed in a forthright manner." Madhav Godbole; "National Security Council - No Answer to Purulia", Indian Express, 21 Mar. 96.
26. Evacuation of the tenant by the houseowner not through the ordinary, normal but ineffective process of law but through a goonda for a consideration; forced mass evacuation off the jhopadpattis from the private or public land in a metropolis; "protection money" extracted from the shopkeepers and residents in Bombay during the communal riots situations. Even Chief Ministers relying on the dons like Latif, Dawood Ibrahim, Raju Risaldar for maintaining peace and order during festival occasions; getting loans promptly from government agencies or banks, etc. illustrate this perception.

SESSION II**NATIONAL SECURITY INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL
CHALLENGES****Chairman : Lt. Gen. Ashok Joshi****Main Speaker : Air Cmde Jasjit Singh****PAPER PRESENTED BY AIR CMDE JASJIT SINGH**

A fairly widespread consensus has recently emerged on the need for a more comprehensive and "over-arching" national security management structure. The challenges to national security are increasingly more complex. Its management, therefore, requires much higher levels of co-ordination (and even integration) among different departments and ministries of governments. Even armed conflicts generally described as internal have an external dimension in terms of ideological, political or diplomatic support. The information revolution alone is changing the parameters of assessments and decision-making for national security. This is increasingly leading to the need for improved crisis management, besides long-term planning and the formulation of strategy.

Our own experience of the armed militancy and transnational terrorism in Punjab earlier, and Jammu and Kashmir more recently, clearly demonstrates the complexities involved in the management of national security. We have had to deal with not only the internal security aspects of the situation involving various dimensions, but concurrently cope with diplomatic challenges of internationalisation of the situation by a determined adversary which received support in the process from many quarters. During the same period we had to cope with economic challenges in the shape of the effects of the fourth oil shock, a substantive deterioration in the balance of

payment situation, and collapse of the rupee trade with the "former" Soviet Union.

Tough Task

Geopolitically, the international order underwent fundamental changes with the end of the Cold War. The task of assessment for national security in the increasingly complex dimension is not easy. After all, even countries like the United States, which have had far more sophisticated and well-oiled national security machines, had totally failed to forecast the collapse of their primary adversary, and they have yet to reconcile to the altered scenario.

While judgment on our success or otherwise in dealing with the challenges of recent periods will vary, the dominant view within the executive establishment seems to be that we have successfully managed our affairs and the existing system has worked well. The need for change, therefore, is underplayed or outright resisted. On the other hand, many people have argued for such management structures with an eye on the turf, or to manage nuclear policies. The setting up of such structures or creation of posts like that of Chief of Defence Staff (for "single point advice") in many countries occurred when they acquired weapons or became part of the nuclear strategy implementation of weapon states. But our concept of national security management must transcend these limited objectives.

The government had set up a National Security Council in 1990 which did not grow roots. Another National Security Council was set up by the previous government. But these steps did not bring about a change in the method or process of managing national security policy. In any case, in a parliamentary democracy like ours, a "national security council" has to be a

committee of the council of ministers chaired by the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister will always have (and is likely to exercise) discretion in the composition of such a committee although ministers of defence, home, external affairs and finance are obvious, almost inevitable, members. The crux of the issue, therefore, is not the council, but the supporting system and processes for it to take appropriate decision. This is apparently the basis for the recommendation of the Standing Committee on Defence (1995-96) in its Sixth Report that the "government should urgently come up with formal institutional mechanism with adequate support structures to monitor the state of our defence preparedness..".

Staff Structure

A centralised staff structure to serve the cabinet committee would be necessary. Logically and procedurally, this will need to be placed under the cabinet secretary. It may be recalled that the defence committee of the cabinet used to be serviced by the military wing of the cabinet secretariat. But for proper co-ordination and integration, much more would be required. This is why there is little advantage in nominating a secretary (like the chairman, Joint Intelligence Committee) to the national security council without an adequate support base even where the functions of the Joint Intelligence Committee appear to be conterminous with the staff structure required.

To start with, a culture of shared information and evaluation of alternatives has to be strengthened. Similarly, greater emphasis will be needed in scenario-building and crisis management techniques and processes. A future-oriented assessment and policy-evolving process is required. If we are really serious about the end-product which offers to the council of ministers choices of policies and their implications in a final condensed form, we will have to make sure that all possible alternatives and their collateral implications have been

appropriately analysed and assessed. The national security staff must not get involved in day-to-day current policy-making or other functional executive tasks which appropriately belong to the domain of the existing structures. If these structures require modification, this should be reviewed on its own merits. The greater the complexities and nonlinear nature of national security management, the greater will be the task of the staff structures.

Strengthening staff structures would logically require the establishment of departmental groups or staff for future oriented policy planning functions. This, in fact, is a more fundamental requirement than even the setting up of an overarching staff. To be effective, they need to have direct access to their ministers. To avoid overlapping of functions and roles, they must address issues strictly in the context of future policies rather than current management. This would involve preparing papers for discussions and policy formulation for which the existing system has little time or orientation.

Policy Planning

What this means in practice is the setting up of strategic and policy planning staff in the key ministries of defence, home and finance, besides strengthening the existing policy planning division in the ministry of external affairs. The existing defence planning staff under the Chiefs of Staff Committee would better serve overall needs if it is manned to its original composite structure and transferred to the ministry of defence and preferably brought directly under the defence minister as the futuristic strategic "think tank" and perspective planning staff. If necessary, its head may be made rotational between defence and civil service officers. Such policy planning staff would be able to provide the necessary co-ordination within the ministry as well as among the ministries. The "over-arching" national security

staff that is necessary to provide the necessary inputs for the political executive will require such nodal staff for inter-agency and inter-departmental co-ordination.

At the same time each ministry would need formally established committees under the minister where other key ministries would be represented at the secretary level. The defence minister's committee established after independence fell into disuse by the end of the 50s. This needs to be set up once again so that continuity and institutional mechanisms sustain the higher direction of defence. Similar committees in other ministries would be necessary to provide the functioning and co-ordination necessary to make the cabinet committee on national security a success. Merely setting up a high-level staff will not achieve the purpose of meeting the challenges of national security management for the future.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

The subject was thrown open for discussion after the presentation by the main speakers. Many searching questions and pertinent comments were offered. At the end, a general consensus emerged agreeing with the views expressed by the distinguished main speakers.

CLOSING REMARKS

On behalf of the Centre for Advanced Strategic Studies as well as the Department of Defence & Strategic Studies, Pune University, Shri R.D. Pradhan, President, CASS thanked the distinguished speakers for their well researched presentations. He said that the subject was engaging the attention of all thinking persons and was causing some concern. He thanked all the participants for their searching questions and lively discussions, and declared the seminar closed.

CHALLENGES TO INDIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY

SEMINAR : 20th April, 1996

(Venue : Shivaji Sabhagruha, Pune University)

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| 6. | Shri VL Date | - CASS |
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| 22. | VG Dixit | - CASS / NDA |
| 23. | Brig SS Sharma | - CASS / R&D E (Engrs) |
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| 35. | Dr. Col (Retd) YG Tambay | - | |
| 36. | Mrs. Arundhati Joshi | - | |
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| 71. Abhijit Atre | - Reporter, Indian Express |
| 72. Shri Shailendra Paranjpe | - Loksatta |

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE SEMINAR
ON
INDIA'S DEFENCE PREPAREDNESS**

21st April, 1996

(Venue : Auditorium, National Film Archives, India)

Air Marshal (Retd) S. Kulkarni, Director, CASS opened the Seminar, and welcomed and introduced Air Commodore Jasjit Singh, Director, IDSA, New Delhi the main speaker, who is also a member of the Governing Council of the CASS. He welcomed all the participants of the Seminar. He requested Shri N.K. Firodia to release the following three recent publications of the Centre.

i) Proceedings of the Seminar on " The Emerging Security Environment in South East Asia with Special Reference to Myanmar : Political, Economic and Military Implication for India."

ii) "India 2020 : An Agenda for the Nation" by Maj Gen (Retd) K.S. Pendse.

iii) "India : The Nuclear Challenge" by Lt Gen (Retd) E.A. Vas, Maj Gen (Retd) K.S. Pendse, Dr. Col (Retd) A.A. Athale.

After the release of the publications Air Mshl S. Kulkarni requested Dr. N.A. Kalyani, Chairman of the Seminar to take over and start the proceedings.

OPENING REMARKS BY CHAIRMAN

Dr. N.A. Kalyani, Chairman and Managing Director, Bharat Forge and a member of CASS, chaired the Seminar. He said that the country remembers defence services only at times of crises. Defence preparedness depends upon the Political will, state of technology and efficiency of defence forces. We have an enviable tradition of gallant warriors and their sacrifices, who have proved their mettle. The country can ill afford to neglect defence forces and its defence preparedness.

We are fortunate to have Air Commodore Jasjit Singh an expert in this field to talk to us on the vital subject of India's Defence Preparedness.

SESSION I**INDIA'S DEFENCE PREPAREDNESS****Chairman : Dr. N.A. Kalyani****Main Speaker : Air Cmde Jasjit Singh****PAPER PRESENTED BY
AIR COMMODORE JASJIT SINGH**

Dr. Kalyani, Air Marshal Kulkarni, and respected audience, it is a tremendous privilege to stand here and share my thoughts with you on a very very important subject, "India's Defence Preparedness". One thought comes to me first. It is that if I look back to our country's history, the fighting class which is considered to be defence establishment was always an accepted segment of society. The rest of the society had tremendous faith in the Kshatriyas, that they will defend them but they really never bothered about how the fighting class will get their weapons, and where they will do what, what tactics they used and what process they will find. I think this is what is happening right now. In this hall, there is a sign of change in outlook, that the nation, society, and the defence forces need to be working and thinking together for the simple reason that the defence is far too important. Some say that it should not be left to the Generals, the Air Marshals and Admirals. Some want to dispense with defence in favour of diplomacy. Let me get on quickly to the topic which I am afraid is very very difficult.

Some would like to simplify the issue and pose a question as to whether India's Defence Preparedness is adequate or inadequate. Pardon me, if I don't give a categorical clear answer to such a question, as it could convey wrong impressions. Adequacy/inadequacy of defence has to be seen in relation to the threat

perceptions, capabilities of the “adversaries” in terms of weapons, equipments, manpower and brain power combining these factors.

Let me look at the subject first from the short term perspective, and then from the long term perspective. From the short term perspective, I have absolutely no hesitation that India’s defence preparedness, is more than adequate. Past historical records prove that it is so. I have been publicly saying that for a number of years. There has been for the last nine years or so, an erosion of defence capability. My concern, having spent three and half decades in the Service through peace and war is what will happen in 2005, 2010, and beyond that. It is mentioned that people are busy with the priorities, other than defence. Whether that is priority set by the Supreme Court or by other authority, I don’t know. For the last few years, all of us normally tend to complain about political leadership. I think Dr. Kalyani very rightly mentioned about the political will as one of the important factors. But I find that in fact it is the political leadership now putting pressure, that we need to do things better in our defence. A look at the Estimates Committee 1992-93 report of the 10th Lok Sabha, and the sixth report of the Parliament’s Standing Committee on Defence, would reveal that the knowledge and understanding is far beyond what normally people ascribe to the Indian politician. I think it is a very healthy sign, that will make sure that the preparedness will continue. It is far more important then to see what they are actually saying. What they are saying is that India after nearly 50 years of independence has no clearly articulated defence policy; there is no coherence in whatever policy gets implemented and that in a variety of other things there are far too many delays, far too much money being wasted, and more important, capability does not get created of the type and of the quality in the time frame that is needed. That is what your political leaders are saying right at the top, may not be those who are immediately holding post in the Government, but in the parliament.

These committees are bipartisan committees. They are not just the opposition saying it. It is in that context I want to put across some thoughts, much more related to the longer term perspective.

For defence capability and defence preparedness we want to talk about, there are three key elements, the three "Ms" if you like to use simple terminology, the Men, the Machine and the Money. Somebody has to put all these three together, and make the best out of it. I will come to that perhaps towards the end. Let us look at the money aspect first. What amount of money should be spent on the defence and what is the picture ? There are three world accepted norms by which money gets expressed. One is money in current currency, current rupees, the other is money that is being spent in constant rupees, the real value, and the third is the money as a proportion of the GDP. These are the accepted norms. Unfortunately in India, throughout what we have been doing essentially is we are only expressing the expenditure in terms of current rupees. So you see compared to the 10,000 crores, that was being spent in 1985 or so, we are now spending 20,000 to 27,000 or more than 27,000 crores. It conveys an impression that perhaps we are spending too much. Well, that is the public perception and therefore also the preception of all the political leadership that look at the amount of the money that is actually being spent. When you look at the other phenomena, that we are now in to the 25th year without a war, Mr. Chairman, the longest period in the history of the sub-continent, when the Indian army did not fight a war, we need to look very carefully, why is it that there has been no war for 25 years ? In fact if you take 1971 as a very peculiar unique event which was not figured out, not by Pakistan, that it was internal conflict that erupted into war, then actually speaking there was no war for 31 years, that nobody has dared to attack India in the last 31 years, why ? My proposition Mr. Chairman is this is because India has maintained what I would call, an adequate level of military

defence capability and preparedness, and therefore no one has tried to start a war.

Here comes a problem, having achieved success so far, it appears, that this amount of money is a bit of waste. We don't see the threat on the borders now. No doubt the defence services will rise to the occasion, when requirements come up. There is a general feeling, and I am expressing a rather subjective impression that in the success of the defence capability lies the seed of future weaknesses, that peace can be maintained and what you spent on this defence is questioned. To be or not to be, could we not do with a little less ? For the last ten years or more this question has been asked again and again, Air Commodore do you really think that we need to spend so much ; surely we could get a few more hospitals, and we could get so many other things, absolutely unavoidable taken up and completed. This is because there is no way by which defence can simply be isolated from the basic objectives that the country is trying to achieve. On the other hand therefore a look at what is that we would be spending in real terms, in constant rupees and not in current rupees. The current rupees are useful for allocations, how much we allocate this year, because we have to spend current rupees.

Let us take the third norm, the expenditure relation to the GDP. From 1947 to 1961, we spent an average of 1.8 percent of the GDP on defence. Those were the days of the great debate between defence and development and because of the preference for development, defence remained slightly under prepared especially in relation to the north, the Chinese frontier, and we all know the end results. From 1967 to 1977, India spent an average of two percent of its GDP on defence, fairly steady, because of the two clear theatres on which India had to defend itself. That period of war also saw a period of peace. But in the eighties the expenditure started to

rise. By 1986, 1987, it was touching near about 3.6 percent for two reasons - one, the cost of the manpower was now growing tremendously. The implementation of the recommendations of the Fourth Pay Commission resulted in 22 percent increase in the defence budget, naturally the large amount of which was taken out of the procurement side, which is again a matter of detail. The second reason is the costs of the weapons were increasing. This was the reality by the mid 1980's. From 1987 to 1996, for nearly ten years, from 3.6 percent we have been steadily declining and have now come down this year to 2.33 percent of the GDP. What should this tell us ? In current rupees we are spending perhaps two and half to three times the money we spent in mid 80's, as the proportion of the GDP, we are spending now about 33 percent less than what we were spending at that time.

What does the picture look like in terms of the constant value of the rupee? If you look in constant terms, you find a slight decline, and the decline points out, allot more in the procurement budget rather than in the manpower. What does that mean ? Every one knows that there has been no procurement in the weapons since 1986, there has been hold up on spare parts and therefore many other things have happened in the process. I will revert to that in a minute, but what is the picture by mid 80's. We also know that we maintained the level of the capability, that ensured that even today no one thinks in terms of starting the war against India, partly because we have a substantive access to the Soviet weapon systems. They were low cost, because the Soviet Union put a large friendship price on it. Indian defence forces paid the same price as the Russian defence forces paid for their defence, for their equipment, not a rupee, or a rouble less. The fundamental point was that this was the price structure mechanism of the Soviet Union. The day the Soviet Union started perestroika, it was very clear that the price structure will change, and with the change in the price structure in the Soviet

Union, since nearly 80 percent of our defence equipment is of Soviet origin, our cost of defence will go up. Our estimates in 1986, 87, 88 outside the Government was that compared to the 3.6 percent, if we wish to maintain the same level of defence capability, you may perhaps require 5 percent of the GDP, which in today's terms would not mean 27,000 crores, it would mean double that. Price structure has changed. Soviet Union collapsed, and lot more changes took place, but that is ongoing process. We have to keep that in mind. This was a major factor, that kept the cost of the defence low but gave us tremendous capability which we have used and that has provided that level of preparedness. But then why is it we started this decline in defence spending from 1987 ?

One is a very visible one, the Bofors syndrome, which we have not fully got rid off. We find some talk of a new aircraft being inducted for the Indian Air Force, atleast first agreement getting somewhere and there is a criticism that there must be pay off, there must be some other things and therefore why should we be doing it. I don't know whether there is pay off or not. The question that I need to look at is, does Indian defence require aeroplanes. Then you come to the answer. From 1988, it is fairly clear to anybody outside the Government that in the next 15 years, the Indian Air Force will require 400 fighters. You have the choice, how do you want to buy them which once you wish to buy, ? Without that the Indian Air Force will start winding down. To that syndrome of Bofors, was added the problem of resource crunch, as we moved into the late eighties besides our progressive balance of payment crisis, the Soviet Union getting in the state of crises and the trade collapsing. The collapse of the trade was the major factor in terms of Indian security, not just the money, the trade side of it, but substantially Indian security because now getting weapons became more difficult. There is also the public perception which reacted very strongly to the spending in the eighties and the acquisition of the

weapon systems in the early eighties. The fact that all the bulk of the acquisition was necessitated by the U.S. arms supply to Pakistan, slowly some what was forgotten in the debate. Please look back to any of the debates in the media, in the parliament, amongst knowledgeable people. All say that we are spending far too much. In 1988, a committee of very eminent economists headed by Dr. Sukhamoy Chakravarty, said that if defence spending goes to 3.9 percent of the GDP, then it is cutting deeply not only into the development, but it will also result in economic crisis. Therefore we must cut back the defence spending, It didn't say, to how much. My understanding is that committee never consulted the defence establishment. If defence expenditure is to be reduced, how do you defend yourself ? We must understand that money does not buy itself automatic defence capability. What are the implications ? One is the hidden element.

I took up the reduction in GDP terms and I talked of more or less slight decline in constant terms, but we know that large amount of spares, weapons, equipments, even oil is purchased on hard currency basis. What happened to the currency in 1987 ? You find it dropped by 74 percent, which means that the dollar or the equivalent rupee, that could buy an amount or proportion of dollar at that time, now it only buys about 27 percent of that. So in reality it has given more adverse effect. The size of the Indian Defence Forces has remained unchanged, so far atleast. Even if the money is less, the size is same. What could be happening inside ? My analysis is that the defence services in these ten years, are doing less training and therefore are less prepared. I am sorry if I sound harsh on it, but I think there is much bigger issue at stake. Secondly, there has been less procurement, we know very well. However there are other institutes who tell us that India has the biggest army, etc. You have now the record, UN Arms Register wherein the only important equipment India purchased during 92-95, was three Harriers for the

Indian Navy to replace the aeroplanes lost in accidents earlier and 20 and 30 mm guns. That is the total quantity imported by India over these four years, and my understanding is that even before that there was virtually nothing. If there is no procurement, it has its own implications.

Now the second "M", the Manpower. There is general belief in India that manpower in India is not expensive. Mr. Chairman it is getting much more expensive than it used to be. Therefore, the need for us to pay attention to that manpower. From all accounts known publically, there are extreme shortages. By 1990, the Indian Army was short of 8000 officers, by 1994, short by 12000 officers, and I believe that the shortage is increasing. Rough guess would indicate that represented about 25 to 30 percent shortage, mainly the officers, leaders, I don't even have to spell out what it means for the preparedness.

May I now talk about the other aspects of manpower, the quality, the need to keep people young. Here is the evidence put to the parliamentary committee as early as 1991-92, that now our battalion commanders average age is mid forties. We all know the change in the colour service. We have increased it in the Indian Army and the other two services. Indian Army in this respect is much older. Without taking them to a full career, we send them out half way without adequate ability to manage their own life subsequently. That has a rebound effect on those who want to join and that is why shortfalls. There is a serious thinking whether Madras, OTS can be kept going in future because of the shortage of the entries.

The third "M" Mr. Chairman, is the question of machines that you referred to. The only technology and equipment policy for a country like India was self reliance in defence, in the early years.

They started talking even in terms of self sufficiency, that was obviously a totally unachievable goal. This was tied up with our foreign policy of non-alignment. Both were complementary to each other. There is no other way for a country like India except to seek self reliance to the maximum degree possible. Here once again we see, the progress of the first 15 years fairly coherent, clearcut strategy, that this will be done through process of the diversification, that we will not rely on a single source. Secondly, then within this process there will be a three pronged approach, one - buy some equipment, second licence manufacture of some equipment and third, start design and development internally, some in collaboration, some totally ourselves. Then 1962 came about.

The impact of 1962, Mr. Chairman has been far more than is generally believed. One major impact has been that it altered the pattern of self reliance in defence for the next 20 years and more. We stopped even worrying about design and development except the Navy. I think it kept up a little bit of indigenous programme. But in all other cases, the, "we design and develop" portion of the third leg of self reliance process was jettisoned. There was reason for the overall expansion needs. In 1962 to 1971 nobody could really wait for design and development to take place which does require a lot of time, and that is why many good people left.

The case of the aircraft design is very representative. In 1957, we set about designing a multirole combat aircraft, HF 24 Marut. Many felt that there was no future for the multirole combat aircraft. I think conceptually India was well ahead of most of the countries at that time and it set about designing. We made some mistakes on the line. We did not care for a matching engine. The fact we got to designing this and took it to a certain stage, one would expect that there would be a follow-up programme. But what we see in the 30

years from 1957 to 1987, there was no aircraft that is being designed in India. In thirty years aviation technology jumped, not just miles but hundreds of miles. Our own capability fell backwards. Those are the real issues which should have been tackled. We should have started designing and development atleast in some areas, but what happened thereafter was that the purchase side became more attractive because of urgent operational needs. The licence agreement became also very attractive because the Soviet Union offered licence agreement without political conditions. Although the indigenously manufactured equipment was slightly more expensive than the directly imported one, it gave us a level of self reliance, and that I think grade A level of competence. Amongst us, this is seen as self reliance, but really it is not so.

The critical weakness today still is design and development which again we must not be over optimistic, because after all in the last 250 years this country was systematically de-industrialised. If you look at the figures at the beginning of the 18th century you will find India's industrial output was about 23 to 25 percent of the global output. By 1930 it was zero. We were raw material suppliers by then, what today we will call sunset industry, mostly textiles, and that too because the cost of labour in U.K. had increased too much. We actually started in the years 1947, with zero industrial base. As and when we talk about our expectations, we must remember the starting point. But in this process while some steps have been taken over design and development, what has happened is very substantive loss of confidence between the R & D Establishments and the users, or I should say between the defence industry and the user. The obvious answer is that mutual confidence must be restored as early as possible, and in the society around it. To me therefore, one of the major lessons of the Soviet collapse in 1991 was the lesson of self reliance. Again, that should have woken us up completely to say, let us look at the whole issue.

We all, the public, the media, the intellectuals, the analysts and the Government focus on the problem, as the spares supply problem. There are some other ones. We did not look at the opportunity. Five years have gone by and we are not still looking at the opportunity. What is the opportunity? With the Soviet collapse, their stupendous defence industry is in serious trouble. One area they do not wish to allow to collapse is that of design bureau, the tremendous capability they have built up over hundred years. They are still willing to enter into joint development, joint production, joint export and joint sale, and we need to think slightly big and move on to that.

We have of course 10 years of self reliance initiative, announced in 1994, and if you still spend only 5 percent of already reduced defence budget on R&D, Defence R&D, I can't say how, this country will get to achieve that initiative. You require far more money. In fact my own problem is that while the defence spending cutting back could be still understandable, but from 1986 atleast upto 1992, we kept cutting back defence R&D budget. From 0.16 of the GDP it dropped to 0.11 in 1993. Please remember that a country which is industrially advanced has a tremendous industrial base, where colossal modern design development takes place both in the civil and military sector, the Government spends anywhere from 10 to 25 percent of the defence budget on the defence R&D. So when we say that we will produce your future capability one cannot expect it to be a great fighting machine in future unless you keep buying. Of course, by keeping on buying you are supporting some body else's economy, not your own. If this is the picture Mr. Chairman, I could talk a lot more, but I think we will have shortage of time. There are many aspects emerging out of this scenario, but the crucial question emerges, then how is it all managed? How do those who manipulate these three "Ms" manage? What is the status and co-relation of these three "Ms"? Who manipulates these?

The fourth M is the manipulator, the Manager. I prefer to use the word Manager. How is defence managed in this country ? In that process I think there are very clearly identified functions - current preparedness, fighting operations, current training, ability to deal with immediate threats etc. This basically means, what force you have, the manpower that you have, the equipment that you have and the money that you have, and what is in the shelf.

We shall see the operations side. The operations side has a certain organisation, certain flexibility to change, and has a certain role and functions. In fact till 1954, the head of each of the three services, was also designated, as Commander-in-Chief, that is the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, Commander-in-Chief of the Navy and Commander-in-Chief of the Air Force. For some vague reason, that title was dropped but the function remains. So you have here the Chief of the staff, wearing two hats, one as the Chief of the Staff, and second as the Commander-in-Chief. The function as the Commander-in-Chief, is to fight the war if it breaks out this evening or six months from now. I will leave that preparedness. Pardon me for saying this because I belong to the fraternity called Defence Services. The Indian Armed forces are one of the most professional in the world, acknowledged world wide. By 1987 the Chinese were writing that Indian armed forces were the most professional. In 1989 they in fact sought direct military to military contact. When I go to China, I am required definitely to speak to the National Defence University of China so that they can listen and learn from an Indian. That is the way it happens in other States also. United States, they want military contacts with us, one of the finest military machines in the world. Some regiments, I think are now 272 years old, that much experience cannot be brushed aside. My children's generation is the fifth generation in the Services, and I, we, don't even count in the processes in this country. I know people whose, fifth, seventh generation are in the same regiment. Then, that is not really what I worry so much about.

What I worry about is the second aspect, the Chiefs of Staff function, the management function, because that function is that you look into actual preparedness, future preparedness, future, five years from now, then 15, 20, 25 years, because in that future preparedness it is fairly clear when you want to allocate money, you look at the system, even our thinking. The manpower is in for an average period of 17 to 35 years. On an average, the equipment that you buy or manufacture is good for 15 to 30 years, some time for 40 years, 50 years time, if you want to push the aircraft carrier. How is the money allocated, once a year with a half yearly review. Some where, some body needs to sit down and think what is happening here, how can we allocate money today, to make ourselves ready for everything for the next 30 years. It is true, no one can actually forecast these scenarios of 15-20 years from today. So you have to operate on the constant update, constant processes of evaluation, assesemnt of not only of the enemy, what the adversaries may be at, what scenarios might erupt, but most important, what your resources are ? Bulk of our assessments of threats, challenges, deal with the adversary, rarely do we make an assesement of resources. It is the Planning Commission which finally does the planning of financial resources for India's development. Somewhere tucked in is a little money for the defence, and by and large that is what gets allotted, without inputs from defence.

Future preparedness requires commitment of resources, commitment of resources of money, manpower, technology etc. That function can only be performed by the Government of India. Defence is the responsibility only of the Central Government. That is the Governemental function. It is not done by subordinate services. If this is the governmental function, then one would imagine that the military, the professional, would be part of that group that actually plans, decides, and manages it. Mr. Chairman we get back here once again to and I must say on the lighter side, because there

is the risk of offending many people, they get back to this disjunction, again the caste basis, that is, the military kshatriyas, brahmins and there below is the bureaucracy. There is this disjunction in India because the highest military leadership is not part of the Government. This is where all the other problems arise. Bulk of the focus is on the peripheral problems and not on the central core.

We are now towards the end of the 20th century. We are the only democratic country in the world, where the military leadership is not part of the Government, the Ministry of Defence, I mean. The other example, is neither very democratic nor very useful to follow, that is Pakistan. In Pakistan the military is the Government, and I don't think I would like to follow that model. In India, the Chief of the Air Staff, Chief of the Army Staff and Chief of the Naval Staff are not part of the Government, even though they are highly respected and listened to very carefully. Everything else is fine except the structural working management process. That creates a series of problems, which I don't want to get into but I am willing to get into it at the time of the questions. The civilian Ministry of Defence, has no military officer on its staff. The military headquarters, leadership headquarters, certainly have civilian staff at different levels, but integration has to be in the decision making process. That integration does not exist. It was meant to exist when India became independent. We had to alter the basic core of our defence organisation, and it was altered then and promises were made by then Prime Minister to the Indian Parliament that as time goes by these things will be done. Unfortunately, even the mechanism that was set up at that time slowly fell into either disuse, or it was stopped being used, namely the Defence Committee of the Cabinet, the Defence Minister's Committee, and many other processes that existed. So you have here perhaps the least cost effective system. We are in a process where the decision making is by somebody who is treated as secretarial staff and therefore not accountable. Who is accountable for the defence preparedness? Is it

the Defence Minister, whether he happens to be the Prime Minister or the Defence Minister ? Is it the political leadership or the Services who face the bullets ? This must be resolved at the earliest. This is the question that the Parliament, as I am, asking. This is the question the Standing Committee of the Defence is asking, this is the question that Estimates Committee of the Parliament is asking, that is, why don't we have integrated Ministry of Defence? The tragedy, Mr. Chairman is that both the civilian bureaucrats and almost all the senior military people, atleast in the past, have resisted this integration. Pardon me if I am very blunt on this, but that is the only solution. There were many models that we can adopt, That is a matter of details. Do look at the British system from whom we inherited. The British never had an Army Headquarters, Air Headquarters, Naval Headquarters. In whatever form they have, they kept modifying it, but always as a part of the Ministry of Defence. So, it was Ministry of Defence and it is the Ministry of Defence even today.

Now the second M. How do you manage the money in this framework ? Even if you change the set up you can't change the management of finance as such. Certainly we can change, our process of funding, budgeting, accounting which again is derived from the British. In essence, what we have is an expenditure accounting system where you decided what the input should be. It is Rs. 27,000 crores. What capability it buys is not known to anybody. Will this sustain the 42 divisions, will it sustain 35-36 fighter squadrons, we don't know. So also we don't know the training whether they are training well, or not training well ? What we need to do is the costing on per unit of the capability to destroy for a fighter squadron, an infantry division, an armoured division, that this is the cost of the raising of the infantry division, this is the cost of maintaining it, if it has to do its proper training exercise, its proper manning etc., and then you do your budgeting. What does it require to manage it that way, because then you can start thinking of the longer term and the short

term, then you know the impact of increase and decrease in the budgetary allocation on your preparedness. Today nobody can say anything. You can talk only subjectively, otherwise you don't know. I challenge anybody to tell me, do they really know what is the effect of this budget, a drop in budget. That is not the way we maintain our books. Surely you can change it. The British changed in 1964 and took one year to change over. This is the simplest thing, but it tremendously helps decision making because then you are on to the different frame work, when you reduce money which may be necessary, Britishers are cutting the defence budget but at the same time cutting elements of the capability. So many frigates have to be cut. Then either sell them to Pakistan or to somebody else, or just mothball them. We don't know if we should mothball them or keep them, not keep them, sell them, not sell them and what will be the effect. This is where the preparedness starts really, and surely where it has to be addressed. Now the third point in terms of management. Defence is the whole process of defence planning. I have mentioned about the Committees.

There are a large number of books written on Defence being adhoc. First let us understand this. For a country like India, the defence policy, defence procedure, defence procurement will be adhoc. Let us not get away into the idealistic situation and argue whether we should go adhoc or not. It will be adhoc while we do not control the environment. We do not control the environment where the Super Power pushes its weapons overnight. It has happened in 1954, in 1981. It totally altered our planning. I was in the Air Headquarters. We thought that we had been very carefully trying to build up and overnight the situation changed. Do we control technology? Not yet, we can't in 50 years. Our country has made tremendous progress but it has long long way to go before we can actually say that we control the technology. Do we control money? I am not sure of that. There are the other factors operating.

So unfortunately there will be a level of adapting that will continue. What we have to do then is to manage within our limits and to make sure, it doesn't become too negative.

Talking in terms of defence planning, there is an annual defence plan, five years defence plan. But if I go by what is published already and what happened to defence planning, a disquieting picture emerges. The Seventh Plan was sanctioned beyond half way point without financial implications. What is a plan unless you sanction money with it. This is 1996, and the Standing Committee on Defence is complaining about the Eighth Plan (1992-97) and asking where is your defence plan. It is O.K., you don't want to show to us but do you have one. There is of course a big question of the defence doctrine, question of military doctrine, as to what we should do, when issues and other factors have altered, where we need to think very carefully of how we are going to prepare our defences. We all know, we all say this publicly, certainly I did say publicly that Pakistan acquired nuclear weapons in 1987. What is the implication on India's defence ? On this, one is very clear, since they have nuclear weapons, we must have nuclear weapons. Fine, but what does it do to the conventional war fighting process. Some where there we start to fudge. We don't want to go all the way because the answer is fairly clear that we have to restructure our defence capability in this nuclear scenario. Since China is nuclear anyway, your political goals will have to be refined, your military objectives will have to be refined and therefore your force structure, your equipments must be then detailed, have to be changed drastically. It requires to be changed.

Similarly, what was the impact let us say of the oil supply to India, and its security, not directly defence. We all know that Indian Navy started to move and wanted to expand a little bit in the mid seventies. Partly because now the period of peace

started, it did not warrant giving more money to the Navy. It was then getting three percent of the defence budget in the whole of the sixties -- a ridiculous amount. For a time around 1961, the Indian Navy was the most powerful navy in the Indian Ocean. It began to wind down due to lack of budgetary support. Then we started recreating it, but one of the real reasons also was 1974 oil shock, for which we have not looked into in great detail what it did to us. That is not territorial defence but the defence of the larger frame work. In 1991, I have done studies for that myself, the negative impact of the prices in the Persian Gulf was to the tune of little more than the Navy's budget that year, the direct impact. We are still bearing up with the indirect impact.

We all know the 15 to 16 percent inflation rate. You can live through the 15 percent of the inflation rate. If I have the Chairman's permission to digress slightly, I was addressing the National Defence College of Argentina at Buenos Aires in 1990. There were about 200 people, very eminent administrators and generals and other people. Talking about India's concern at the then prevailing 15 percent inflation. I said no, we are not worrying about this, inflation, it is now moving into the double digit. While the Government says it is 12 percent the economists say it is 15 percent. Well, it is a serious question. At the end, one Admiral got up and asked 12 to 15 percent inflation, is that monthly rate of inflation. I said no, it is not, obviously when we talk of inflation it is an annual rate. At this a lot of murmuring took place in the audience in Portuguese language, which I don't understand. So I asked somebody. The Admiral got up again and said sir, you are very lucky, we have 15 percent inflation per day. I hope we don't go to that stage.

What are the real issues and challenges in terms of defence preparedness? We have relations with China, they are improving. We have some methodology by which we hope to keep peace and

tranquility. As the magic word goes and we don't know, atleast I don't know whether this will be there for 10 years from today, what we know is that China is building up in a massive way. It is modernising at a tremendous pace. It's economy is building up at a tremendous pace. When they have power, and capability, the way it might be used, it would be their choice. We cannot repeat the experience of fifties and 1962's. Pakistan, once again I would say, the risk of a war in the near term is very low. I think it is fairly low. But that doesn't mean that this is going to be a permanent feature. Defence capability is never built in a day, but it can be destroyed in a day. You see many having that capability being destroyed in a day or two days. The lesson therefore to me, if we want to talk about the defence preparedness, without getting into the problem of secrecy and classification, the critical criteria has to be knowledge, to look ahead, and see what is the method, what is that we will require and what should be the time frame, 2005, 2010. By this time unless decision making of today becomes prompt, relevant and coherent, Indian capability would probably come down well beyond the irreversible point. I don't think that will happen. I don't think, that anybody that I know in Government or outside Government who wants to wind down the capability to that level. But there was an interim period of winding down.

We also need to remember that in the last five years, the great economy changed, the fiscal, budgetary deficit front has been financed almost entirely by cutting the defence budget. If you want to cut fiscal and budgetary deficit, it needs to be spread on all sectors of the economy, not just on the defence. The issue is, who will do this, and how. I think the first challenge is to level the defence budget off, lift to some level, to 3.2 percent, 3.6 percent that ensured defence capability that gave us peace, and thereafter you could grow. I find an amazing coincidence in the seventies starting from the 1977 onwards, in India's growth rate, 4.7 percent

in 70's, about 5.6 percent in the 80's and now we start touching 6 percent in 90's, when there was peace. There are many other factors for it, I think many other reasons. India is at the threshold of something great and some thing very great, very big which is still a secret from India perhaps, but the rest of the world recognises it. In that process, if you keep cutting severely in the area of defence, every thing will start collapsing. Defence is an insurance that is and should be a must, absolute must, whether the economists call it a waste. But they don't call it a waste.

My last point Mr. Chairman, is that for any look into the future capability, I think we need to take cognisance of the tremendous growth in the Indian industrial capability. Some notice has been taken in Delhi, the Army-industry partnership discussion programme and such other things. I think there is a great misunderstanding about the role of the private sector in defence. Postulating national strategy, it was said that defence is the sector that must stay with the Government for strategic reasons and many other reasons. Light heavy industry, the defence industry could not have been handled by the private sector in the last 40 years. I am willing to be corrected. Mr. Chairman as it is your area and not mine, industry in India, essentially built up on the basis of small scale industry, and now since the eighties it moved into bigger, heavier, larger cooperative sectors. The time therefore has come for the industry to take greater part in defence production within the existing Government policies. Many defence production areas do not require special sanctions and approvals. There is enough in that for a greater role for the private sector. That is the only way to build, to work. Please look at the country like United states, great market, great private enterprise. The Government, in fact the department of the defence buys the capital equipments, gets it through the private companies. The private companies invest in capital equipment and then they make it more efficiently, and according to the required specifications. There are

models which I think we have not even looked at because the things here have grown in the classically compartmental mode. But we cannot really still move on that only unless we get back to the central thesis, the fourth 'M', the management of the defence, unless we get as early as possible to have the higher level of integration. I don't think we need to get the revolution in the re-organisation overnight. It is going to take time perhaps five years, perhaps ten years even, but the process unless it starts as early as possible, India's defence preparedness will be far less than what it needs, and far less than what we are capable of.

Thank you very much.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

The subject "India's Defence Preparedness" has been lately causing very serious concern to a large number of persons in the country. The seminar was very timely and evoked a very enthusiastic response. Many participants asked very searching and relevant questions and made relevant comments. At the end a general consensus emerged on the following lines :-

- The Indian Armed Forces are one of the most professional in the world. This is acknowledged even by China and the US. They need adequate support to maintain their proficiency.
- Higher level of integration in defence management is lacking at present. This seriously affects India's defence preparedness. Unless there is higher level of integration in the management of defence, India's defence preparedness will be far less than what it needs, and far less than what we are capable of.
- From a short term perspective, India's defence preparedness is adequate. For the last nine years there has been an erosion of defence capability. It is the outlook for the future that causes concern.
- The parliamentary committees - the Estimates Committee, the Standing Committee on Defence- are putting pressure on the government for better defence management, defence planning and defence funding. This is a healthy sign.
- India does not have a clearly articulated defence policy even after 50 years of independence.
- Defence capability of the required type and quality does not get created in the time frame it is needed.

- Building up defence capability takes a great deal of time, technology, money and good management. However it can be destroyed in a very short time.
- A quarter century without a war (not taking into account proxy war) has lulled the country into complacency towards defence matters.
- During the last decade defence budget allocations in constant rupees and also as percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) have been gradually reduced affecting defence capability and defence preparedness.
- Defence without development is puerile, but development without defence is wide open to destruction.
- Indian Army is short by 12000 officers, and about 60,000 men. This has serious repercussions in terms of operational preparedness.
- The Indian Air Force would need 400 aircraft as replacement in the next decade. The Indian Navy too needs to place orders for atleast six ships every year to keep adequate strength. Not much attention has been paid to these crucial areas. This can have serious repercussions.
- India needs to be self reliant in defence to the maximum possible extent. Design and development of weapon systems constitutes the core area, which has been largely ignored.
- The three Service Chiefs, not being a part of the Government have hardly any say in the nation's commitment of resources of money, manpower, technology etc for defence. This is a serious

lacuna. Those who control these resources are not accountable to the nation for its defence. We are the only democratic country in the world where the military leadership is not a part of the Government.

- Unless decision making becomes prompt, relevant and coherent, Indian defence capability would probably come down well beyond the irreversible point within a decade.
- Defence is an insurance that is and should be a must, an absolute must, notwithstanding the economists calling it a waste.

CLOSING REMARKS

On behalf of the Centre and all the participants, Dr. Kalyani, Chairman of the Seminar profusely thanked Air Commodore Jajsit Singh for a very thought provoking and informative talk. He said that all of us agree that defence preparedness of the country has deteriorated due to lack of adequate attention and funding. He expressed that it is urgent and important that we must find out the reasons for this state of affairs. The country has unlimited resources, if you take into account money, gold, mineral resources, forest wealth etc. We have everything but we are not utilising these properly. Their proper utilisation enables a country to develop fast. All advanced countries utilise their national resources for the good of their country.

India is nicknamed the richest poor country in the world. The country's economy needs to be opened up. Defence production instead of being the exclusive prerogative of the Government should be opened up for the private sector. There is an urgent need to liberalise the economy to get the most out of

it. That would substantially solve many problems being faced by the country's defence.

He said that most of the participants raised very vital questions, offered valuable comments and contributed to the success of the seminar. He said that he looked forward to this type of useful dialogue in the future. He once again thanked Air Commodore Jasjit Singh and all the participants and declared the seminar closed.

INDIA'S DEFENCE PREPAREDNESS

SEMINAR : 21st April, 1996

(Venue : Auditorium, National Film Archives, India)

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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|-----|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. | Adm (Retd) JG Nadkarni | - CASS |
| 2. | Shri RD Pradhan | - CASS |
| 3. | Air Mshl (Retd) YV Malse | - CASS |
| 4. | Air Mshl (Retd) S. Kulkarni | - CASS |
| 5. | Gp Capt (Retd) SG Chitnis | - CASS |
| 6. | Maj Gen (Retd) KS Pendse | - CASS |
| 7. | Col (Retd) AK Moghe | - CASS |
| 8. | Lt Gen (Retd) NS Cheema | - CASS |
| 9. | Shri PB Kulkarni | - CASS |
| 10. | Shri Dharmavirsingh Mahida | - CASS |
| 11. | Dr. Col (Retd) AA Athale | - CASS |
| 12. | Gp Capt (Retd) S. Ratnaparkhi | - CASS |
| 13. | Lt Gen (Retd) BT Pandit | - CASS |
| 14. | Capt (Retd) Arvind Tilak | - CASS |
| 15. | Prof. Mrs. KV Menon | - CASS |
| 16. | Shri VL Date | - CASS |
| 17. | Shri VM Champhekar | - CASS |
| 18. | Brig (Retd) AA Wagh | - CASS |
| 19. | Shri RK Seth | - CASS |
| 20. | Dr. NA Kalyani | - CASS |
| 21. | Brig SS Sharma | - CASS / R&D E (Engrs) |
| 22. | Shri SM Wele | - CASS / R&D E (Engrs) |
| 23. | Dr. NK Kumar | - CASS / NDA |
| 24. | Lt SB Kesnur | - CASS / NDA |
| 25. | Shri K. Madhavan | - CASS / NDA |
| 26. | Col R. Velu | - CASS / NDA |
| 27. | Gp Capt PV Naik | - CASS / NDA |
| 28. | Col JS Mann | - CASS / NDA |
| 29. | Capt R. Sharma | - CASS / NDA |
| 30. | Col SK Kapoor | - CASS / CME |

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|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 31. Brig Mahesh Gogai | - CASS / CME |
| 32. Air Cmde CD Chandrasekhar | - CASS / IAF |
| 33. Wg Cdr AG Patil | - CASS / IAF |
| 34. Wg Cdr UP Biswas | - CASS / IAF |
| 35. Flt Lt GS Chauhan | - CASS / IAF |
| 36. Flt Lt G. Srinivas | - CASS / IAF |
| 37. Sqn Ldr P. Moulik | - IAF |
| 38. Flt Lt K. Sudhir | - IAF |
| 39. Flt Lt KV Sand Babu | - IAF |
| 40. Flt Lt SS Rao | - IAF |
| 41. Fg Offr SS Kumar | - IAF |
| 42. Flt Lt Sadanand | - IAF |
| 43. Flt Lt G. Vinod | - IAF |
| 44. Sqn Ldr SK De | - IAF |
| 45. Fg Offr Dukman | - IAF |
| 46. Flt Lt Umesh K. Anand | - IAF |
| 47. Flt Lt TS Chauhan | - IAF |
| 48. Flt Lt RK Shrivastava | - IAF |
| 49. Flt Lt G. Rajendra | - IAF |
| 50. Lt Col (Retd) BK Rajput | - |
| 51. Wg Cdr SU Apte | - AF Int School |
| 52. Wg Cdr S. Ban | - AF Int School |
| 53. Gp Capt Dilip K. Dighe | - AF Int. School |
| 54. Fg Offr V. Kale | - IAF |
| 55. Plt Offr Prashant Pai | - IAF |
| 56. Fg Offr Samir Chabra | - IAF |
| 57. Plt Offr JN Shauspo | - IAF |
| 58. Flt Lt B. Kalra | - IAF |
| 59. Flt Rt B. Bhadra | - IAF |
| 60. Flt Lt Vikas Sharma | - IAF |
| 61. Flt Lt G. Thomas | - IAF |
| 62. Flt Lt PS Nair | - IAF |
| 63. Flt Lt M. Khanna | - IAF |
| 64. Flt Lt RK Khazanchi | - IAF |
| 65. Flt Lt VRS Raju | - IAF |
| 66. Gp Capt BP Das | - IAF |
| 67. Sqn Ldr S. Kumar | - IAF |
| 68. Lt Col M. Vesoikar | - HQ Southern Command |
| 69. Col HK Sil | - HQ Southern Command |
| 70. Cdr (Retd) RN Gulati | - |
| 71. Mrs. Pratibha Malse | - |

- | | | |
|------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| 72. | Mrs. SB Kesnur | |
| 73. | Mrs. KS Pendse | - |
| 74. | Rear Adm (Retd) MK Heble | - |
| 75. | Mrs. Kamala Heble | - |
| 76. | Prof BG Deshpande | - Ex - Pune University |
| 77. | Lt Gen (Retd) DK Chandorkar | - |
| 78. | Dr. MAH Siddiqi | - |
| 79. | Maj Gen (Retd) VK Madhok | - |
| 80. | Rohan Sharma | - |
| 81. | Col (Dr.) YG Tambay | - |
| 82. | Cmde (Retd) BS Karpe | - |
| 83. | Mrs. Amrita Biswas | - |
| 84. | Mrs. Vinodini Rajput | - |
| 85. | Dr. HC Shukul | - |
| 86. | Shri GB Galgali | - |
| 87. | Shri Shrikant Bhojkar | - |
| 88. | Lt Cdr Ravi Joshi | - |
| 89. | Maj Gen (Retd) SV Shrikhande | - |
| 90. | Brig (Retd) KG Pitre | - |
| 91. | Wg Cdr (Retd) Komal Pardeshi | - |
| 92. | Wg Cdr KR Kiran | - IAF |
| 93. | Capt Ashwin Khandke | - |
| 94. | Shri Vagdarikar | - |
| 95. | Vice Adm (Retd) S. Mookerjee | - |
| 96. | Shri SM Ronghe | - |
| 97. | Dr. SB Ray | - |
| 98. | Dr. SS Rathi | - |
| 99. | Shri VR Sonone | - |
| 100. | Shri Sharad Apte | - |
| 101. | Rahul Deopurkar | - |
| 102. | Dr. AV Umrndnikar | - |
| 103. | Shri BS Agrawal | - |
| 104. | Col (Retd) SD Hajarnavis | - |
| 105. | Shri SH Honawar | - |
| 106. | Cdr NN Sathaye | - |
| 107. | Shri SR Tipnis | - |
| 108. | Maj Gen AS Honavar | - |
| 109. | Shri VS Shinde | - |
| 110. | Ms. Anuradha Shah | - Indian Express |
| 111. | Shri Sheilendra Paranjpe | - Loksatta |