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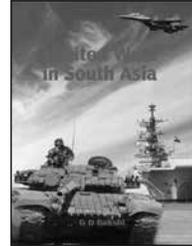
# BOOK REVIEWS

## Limited Wars in South Asia

G D Bakshi

(New Delhi: KW Publishers Pvt Ltd, 2010)

Rs 780/-



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An appropriate military war-fighting doctrine is an essential constituent of combat in the modern age. The formulation of doctrine perforce must be relevant to perceived threats and challenges which a nation is likely to face and accordingly must lead to the creation of capability to address those concerns. This book delves deeply into the subject in the Indian context in a quest to formulate the contours of an Indian Doctrine for Limited Wars.

The author traces the evolution of the limited war theory in the backdrop of the unprecedented destruction caused in the two World Wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the sheer destructive potential of nuclear weapons which has forced a sharp limitation in conflict to avoid total war. But the definition of limited war by itself is so vast that it includes within its ambit all types of conflict below the scale experienced in World War II. Thus, limited war would entail any conflict which is limited in space/ area coverage or in the time dimension and duration of the conflict or in its aims, scope or objectives or in limitations of weapon usage to include nuclear weapons. Consequently, all conflict which has taken place in the world besides the two World Wars would fall into the definitional confines of limited war. A single doctrine for limited war may not meet the requirements of the multi-dimensional challenges being faced by India, but the need to be prepared for facing challenges at the upper end of the conflict continuum must encompass within it all doctrinal aspects to respond to threats of a lower magnitude.

While analysing the evolution of the limited war theory, the author opines that India's conventional military credibility has eroded since the nuclearisation of the subcontinent. While this view is shared by most strategic thinkers within the country, his assertion that military force is no longer deemed a viable response

option by the Indian political elite is highly debatable. In the context of India's response to the proxy war being waged on its soil by Pakistan, while the option to use force has thus far not been exercised, it would be a mistake to assume that such an option has been excised from the response options available to the country.

The author has also drawn some interesting conclusions based on the onset of some major conflicts in the immediate aftermath of some of these states gaining nuclear capability. Thus, the Korean War breaking out in 1950, a year after the Soviet Union became a nuclear power or Kargil taking place a year after both India and Pakistan had demonstrated their nuclear capability is attributed to the fact that the nuclear balance was unclear and tolerance thresholds and red lines were not defined. This, perhaps, is an oversimplification of the causative factors of these and other conflicts. The author's assertion that Pakistan's proxy war being waged on Indian soil is fuelled by perceived conventional parity is also debatable.

In the context of limiting conflict, the author has given an excellent insight into the dimensions of escalation and to the concept of coercion through deterrence and compellence as viable strategy options. But again, it is rather simplistic to presume that the failure of India's conventional deterrence is its possible lack of credibility due to both nations having conventional forces which are matched or nearly matched. That both forces are equally matched is highly debatable. Pakistan has simply kept the terror threshold at a low ebb in keeping with its philosophy of 'bleeding India with a thousand cuts' and conventional deterrence may not be the answer to Pakistan's overt and covert support to terrorist activity within India for which a new response matrix has to be found.

While discussing appropriate response strategies, the author has rightly stated that force modernisation is no longer merely a threat assessment based process but must be capability driven. On India's 'cold start' doctrine, while the term 'cold start' may by itself be a misnomer, it actually signifies a proactive stance to the earlier doctrinal approach which was reactive and left the initiative in the hands of the opposing force. Despite claims to the contrary, the new doctrinal approach of the army has created in Pakistan deep concerns on how to deal with a proactive Indian stance. The author's view that the Indian response in the 1962 and 1965 conflicts was akin to a 'cold start', would, however, have few takers. In both these conflicts, India had ample time and opportunity to prepare for war. That she failed to do so signifies a lack of political and military strategy rather than an analogy to a doctrine which did not exist at that time.

The book gives out the proposed contours of a military doctrine for limited war under a nuclear umbrella which is both viable and doable. While giving his recommendations, the author has examined in detail the Indian experience thus far as also the Israeli and Chinese doctrines and experiences to come out with a compellingly readable book. His conclusions and recommendations are bound to initiate a debate in the military and strategic community which can only add to the promotion of a strategic culture within the armed forces. This book is a must read for all officers desirous of gaining insight into and awareness of, strategic issues and would be a useful addition to all unit and formation libraries.

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**Aftermath of a Nuclear Attack:  
A Case Study on Post-strike Operations**

**Anil Chauhan**

(New Delhi: Pentagon Press, 2010)

Rs 595/-

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Having overtly demonstrated its nuclear weapons capability in May 1998, India has spent the last 12 years operationalising its nuclear deterrent. Activity on various fronts such as official directives (as issued by the Cabinet Committee on Security in January 2003) for operationalising India's nuclear doctrine, steps towards fleshing out of the nuclear command and control structures, testing and induction of nuclear delivery vectors, etc has been evident. However, moves towards development of plans, procedures and organisations necessary for the *conduct of effective nuclear operations* have been less visible. In fact, India has been particularly hesitant in making any show of procedural and organisational details on how it plans to conduct military operations in the case of nuclear use.

This is primarily the result of a long held belief that nuclear weapons are essentially tools of deterrence and not military instruments of war-fighting. Hence, there has been a tendency in the political establishment to play down the requirement of making plans for possible use of the weapon in military conflict

as well as national preparedness to carry out conventional or nuclear military operations even after the country has suffered a nuclear strike. The emphasis instead has been on taking steps and creating circumstances in order to ensure that deterrence does not break down, rather than on planning operations in case of the unthinkable eventuality of a nuclear strike or deterrence breakdown. However, this kind of thinking has overlooked the inherent paradox of credible nuclear deterrence, which lies in the fact that to avert the possibility of nuclear war, a certain display of readiness and redundancy of systems to enable the use of the weapon in military operations is necessary. The more this preparedness of the nation to handle breakdown and successfully conduct military conflict even in a situation of nuclear use is evident to the adversary, the more credible, stable and sustainable deterrence is likely to be.

The book under review seeks to fill this lacuna. It is one of the rare publications by an Indian author that boldly undertakes an analysis of the aftermath of a nuclear attack. It actually begins where most other books dealing with India's nuclear strategy have left off. It draws scenarios on the possible actual use of the weapon against India, identifies the possible military and civilian assets that the adversary might target, the yields of the weapons that might be used, and consequently the estimated damage. This is done with a view to provide an idea to the civil and military planners about the scale and magnitude of the disaster likely to follow a nuclear attack and the post-attack disaster management that will, therefore, be necessary.

Such preparations, and, indeed, indications about planning for such preparations enhance the credibility of nuclear deterrence in two ways. On the one hand, informed calculations about estimated damage to life and property help the leadership, at home as well as that of the adversary, to undertake a rational cost benefit analysis of nuclear use; and, the evidence of preparedness to handle the eventuality of nuclear attack by continuing military operations as well as taking the necessary steps for disaster management at the civil-societal level also reduces the possibility of the adversary's nuclear use. By signalling such a capability, India can deter the adversary since the original objective of his nuclear use to either stall a conventional military onslaught, or disrupt the functioning of the government, or obviate the possibility of nuclear retaliation by causing large scale demoralisation, mayhem and chaos in society and the economy, would be defeated.

As the author points out, a premeditated deliberate use of the nuclear weapon, especially in a counter-value mode, on a large metropolis, with a high density of population, would result in destruction equivalent to more than one large scale natural calamity. Even more importantly, the post strike response

would have to be undertaken by psychologically specially trained and materially specially equipped personnel. A requirement to this effect had been listed in the draft of the nuclear doctrine placed before the government in 1999, "India shall develop an appropriate disaster control system capable of handling the unique requirements of potential incidents involving nuclear weapons and material" ; and the Indian defence forces are to "be in a position to execute operations in an NBC environment". Accordingly, the government had created the National Disaster Management Authority in 2005 to articulate an integrated approach to all kinds of disasters, including of the nuclear kind. With the involvement of the Department of Atomic Energy, other relevant ministries and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), disaster mitigation strategies have been worked out.

The author goes about dealing with the highly complex issues in a very systematic and coherent manner. The book, which is largely free of the printer's devil, is broadly divided into three sections. Part 1 deals briefly with the general effects of nuclear strike such as blast, thermal radiation, initial nuclear radiation, nuclear fallout, and also flags the existing studies and models for yield and damage estimation. Well prepared tables allow for easy comprehension and comparison at a glance. One small point for consideration here, however, would be the need for different tables depicting the same parameter to use the same units for calculations. For instance, in Tables 3 and 4 where the mortality rates of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are compared, one table calculates the distance from Ground Zero in kilometres while the other provides the distance in feet. However, this is a minor point in view of the larger contribution that the book makes to existing literature on the subject. Five appendices at the end of the book further explain the calculations and modelling for the effects of nuclear explosions.

Part 2 of the book undertakes a vulnerability analysis of several possible targets ranging from the counter-force to the counter-value spectrum. This is done on the basis of geographical locations, possible meteorological conditions as well demography. Such analysis would not only help estimate possible consequences but also assist the armed forces and civil defence planners to better plan location of specialised units for mitigation efforts after a nuclear attack. Chauhan devotes a fair amount of study to the possible nuclear targeting strategies that both Pakistan and China might adopt against India based on the capabilities of their nuclear arsenal, the purpose of their nuclear attack, as also the peculiarities of geographical, demographic and weather aspects.

Part 3 of the book uses the data generated through the analysis of the first two sections to identify the immediate actions that the military and civil

defence organisations will have to take to redeem the post-strike situation. The author discusses a range of operations that may be necessary such as large scale population evacuation before the arrival of a nuclear fallout, search and rescue operations, disposal of the deceased and contaminated waste, refugee control or even fighting in a contaminated environment. The book thoughtfully undertakes a separate and equally detailed examination of the operations that the military would have to undertake to survive, fight and win in a nuclear scenario as well as the civil disaster management requirements for a counter-value strike.

Each section of the book is divided into neat and short chapters that make for easy readability and retention; 54 tables spread across the chapters help in simple representation of a myriad facts and complex calculations. The author has taken pains to consider several yields and effects on several different types of targets, thereby making the book a must read for the national authorities who are tasked with these responsibilities and can draw useful lessons for planning the necessary preparations.

The author, as also the Centre for Land Warfare Studies, New Delhi, where this project was conducted, deserves congratulations for this excellent publication. More such studies are required not only to highlight the high level of insensible destruction and damage that a nuclear strike would cause but also to signal military and civil preparedness to survive and operate in a nuclear scenario and thereby raise the credibility of nuclear deterrence.

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**Cities Under Siege: The New Military Urbanism**

**Stephen Graham**

(London: Verso, 2010)

£ 20



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*Cities Under Siege* has its framework, an observation of conflict, both modern and post-modern, within the sub-scope of urban (specifically, city) living, and how the coalescence of the 'global village' and people and cultures drawing closer, is also

resulting in frictions, which are affecting not just people, but also the cities they inhabit, transforming them into battlefields, much like those vaunted of yore. This 'new military urbanism', as described by the author, and indeed, borne out in his work, saturates the urban existence as a whole, starting from the transportation systems which surround us and are intertwined in our lives, to the increasingly domestic applications of 'command and control' systems, the permeation of military terminology and discourse in civilian policy and last, but certainly not the strangest, the enhanced (if not alarming) militarisation of popular (urban) culture. It maps the "crossover between urbanism and militarism" and exhibits it, not as a dystopian future, but a current reality.

Much of his work deconstructs the idea that the historical perception of militarism has become illusory in the perhaps alarmingly heightened sense of security that pervades Westernised cities, both in the global North and South. It traces a narrative, through both time and space, but particularly in the spatial dimension, of conflict and the transformation of the city as an archive (albeit unconventional) of the political violence it has witnessed and absorbed through the years. This is particularly useful because the histories of both cities and of political violence date back to the very existence of cities. A sense of security, after all, was one of the primary reasons that our ancestors moved towards the concept of the "urban" or urbanisation in general. The author endeavours to make the reader understand that this new, almost 'defensive' urbanism, that pervades cities, in a manner leading to skyscrapers being bomb-proofed and enclaves being walled off, both in conflict-ridden cities like Baghdad, as also other cities afflicted by violence in the global South, is not an echo of the concept of fortification of days past. On the contrary, while these may be superficially similar to the historical archetype of defensive urbanism, they reflect contemporary realities without a shade of doubt. He puts forward for consideration, the transmission of media (video, audio, and text) and the seamlessness among security, surveillance and entertainment industries, which generate and profile data from the urban sphere; a range of actors, both public and private, empowered to act with violence in the stead of the state, and even otherwise; mass participation of communities in war-like activities via video games culturally oriented; the increasingly vulnerable capital cities, both of the North and South, to technical manipulation leading to complete stasis and above all, the continuing collapse of physical and corporeal boundaries, in the face of technology.

The orientation of the work is towards revealing and opening up the intertwined routes and political machinations, within which military doctrine,

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is concerned with the characteristics, architecture and cultural framework of cities as urban locations. It is, in a sense, a further exploration of the themes of a critical analysis of geo-politics in the urban dimension, which the author first engaged with, in his edited volume *Cities, War, and Terrorism: Towards an Urban Geopolitics* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2004). This work, however, stands independent of it.

The core dilemma, then, that the author seeks to explore is the urban orientation that is currently exhibited in both the theory and practice of military doctrine – specifically, Western military doctrine. It focusses on the idea(s) of cities as sites which experience decay, both physical and psychological, violence of an increasingly ‘hyper’ nature, and the threats they manifest for political establishments. It also connects this larger dilemma, with a more concerted emphasis on how the idea of ‘battlespace’ – considerably distinct from the older military conception of ‘battlefield’ – has taken centre-stage in contemporary military doctrine – as exhibited in the revolution in military affairs (RMA), conceptions of asymmetric warfare such as fourth generation warfare, or the cyclical observations of “long war” vis-à-vis “small wars”: essentially, all these concepts corral every kind of terrain, particularly urban terrain, as sites of ubiquitous military activity.

The military urbanism described by the author deals with two dimensions, one of which is the more familiar, dealing as it does, with walls and fortifications of a traditional nature, which, ironically enough, saw an upswing after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and hasn’t stopped since. The Western world is alive to such fortifications, not just in the gated complexes in Baghdad and Kabul, and the walls separating Israel and Palestine, but also in the new (upcoming) World Trade Centre towers in New York City, which have blast-proof bases and a plethora of elaborate security measures. And while it doesn’t find mention in this work, a relevant example of this nature exists in the subcontinent as well, as witnessed in the fences India shares with its neighbours in Pakistan and Bangladesh. It is neither the author’s, nor the reviewer’s intention, to question the necessity of these fortifications, but to exhibit their existence as a new reality, or more appropriately, the ‘new normal’.

However, it is the second dimension of military urbanism which is more troubling, dealing with the conception of the city/urban space as a space to be organised and policed, and as would follow for efficiency, by artificial intelligence, changing it from being effective and efficient for habitation, to one that is conducive for (urban) contemporary warfare. [In a dystopian

scenario, the author hypothesises a futuristic networked army of nano-tech drones, which is capable of mapping, and hence, policing, cities across the world, leading to a state of permanent 'colonisation', as it were, which, while different in character from its predecessors, would be no less oppressive]. It has been theorised that this 'response' towards the city-space by the military is in reflection to the spatial dimension that the war on terror has shown, as also in the actual manifestation of terrorist attacks; but the troubling nature of this 'response' is that with rising incidences of insurgency, primarily in the global South, and only a very nebulous reality in the North, it has turned the city into a site for such, more than it seeks to make the city more efficient to combat it, now that the enemy is no longer outside, but within, the proverbial gates. Alongside the transformation of the city as such, is also that of the military, into counter-insurgency forces, increasingly of an urban, high-tech nature, and that of the legal system, which manifests in the suspension of normal laws and privileges to civilians more oft than the provision thereof. Urban warfare, far from 'emerging', is being incisively explored in the Western world, which in spite of, and perhaps despite, the Baghdad and Kabul situations, already envisions asymmetric war in urban areas to be the greatest challenge, with the city now as the ultimate strategic high-ground, giving those who hold it, the power to dictate the course of future events of a global nature.

One of the ways in which this situation has been responded to, and is the subject of much ink, not just in this work, but in the debate on this subject in general, is the merging of tracking systems, combining surveillance and targeting into the architecture and geography of cities, on a macro scale, through biometric passport controls, ship and airline navigation systems, and at a micro level (but at the same time, macro as well, given their spread in every city), closed circuit television cameras, initially present predominantly in cities of the global North, but increasingly in the South as well. It is even hypothesised, with perhaps only an aside to conspiracy theorists, that occasions such as the Olympic Games in Beijing, and the recent Commonwealth Games in New Delhi, present an opportunity for the installation of the newest cameras, with facial-recognition technology and the like, in recognition of the all-too-true new urban threats. But these installations, while initially touted to be of a temporary nature, have a way of taking root, and resultantly, transform the very nature of the city they now survey.

One could engage with this work at length, but for the purposes of review, one may limit it thus, save for a final reflection, that even the imprint of the publication is worth consideration, being as it is, published by a non-academic press as

opposed to the author's previous volume [referenced earlier]. The intention, perhaps, is of making the work more accessible and resultantly, more coherent. Yet, the process is not one of dumping-down, but must be understood; of the author's inclination to make the work accessible, given its increasing importance in every facet of urban existence, impacting the military, political, and social spheres of life. It should be required reading for anyone who is interested in wars and conflict, not just in their normative frameworks, but in a spatial schematic as well. Apart from being a product of extensive original research, it is intelligent, incisive, and exhibits erudition, not just in its language, but more importantly, in the ideas it professes.

— Mr **Samarjit Ghosh**

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