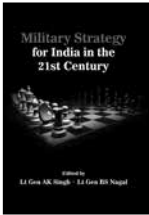


Book Reviews



Military Strategy for India in the 21st Century

Edited by Lt Gen A K Singh and Lt Gen BS Nagal

KW Publishers, New Delhi, 2018, pp. 352, INR 1,280

Strategy is the art of planning and directing overall military operations and movements in a war or battle. A nation, to correctly govern itself needs, a grand strategy out of which is carved the national security strategy. The military component of the national security strategy is known as the military strategy. The book has 16 chapters excluding the Introduction and Conclusion. The facets are covered comprehensively and have experts dealing with each chapter. The book makes interesting reading and lucidly brings out the need for the nation to have a national security strategy and the armed forces to have a military strategy. Details are covered in the subsequent paragraphs.

Chapter 2 which follows the brief Introduction deals with India's Grand Strategy, National Security Strategy and Military Strategy. The grand strategy is spelt out lucidly which would result in India transforming into a leader in the Asian region and a rule shaper on the global stage. Thereafter, taking into consideration the threats and challenges to India's national security, the national security objectives and national security strategy have been evolved. India's military strategy flows from the military components of the national security strategy. The focus is on defending territory, changing nature of war, disaster relief, protection of the global commons and need to participate in UN peace-keeping missions. The military strategy would lead to a number of subordinate strategies to deal effectively with India's security.

These would comprise: deterrence strategy, war-fighting strategy, counter-sub-conventional strategy, counter-encirclement strategy, contribution to regional security, employment of space assets, cyber defence, military diplomacy and aid to civil authority.

The next chapter deals with the Changing Nature of Conflict in the 21st century. The characteristics of future conflict are as stated under:

- The spectrum of conflict will range from conflicts between states to conflict with non-state actors and proxies.
- The boundaries between regular and irregular warfare are blurring. Even non-state actors are acquiring limited conventional capabilities.
- Technology has empowered the individual, and today, a single terrorist/guerrilla can cause severe damage to adversaries through cyber, financial and kinetic attacks.
- The non-contact/non-kinetic aspects of warfare are coming to the fore, especially between well-armed and nuclear capable adversaries.
- Cyber and space are the emerging frontiers, as is a combination of data mining and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to influence the human mind.
- Nuclear sabre rattling by irresponsible states like North Korea and Pakistan is beginning to upset the nuclear deterrence which has prevailed so far.

The chapter briefly touches on aspects pertaining to the role of air power, the maritime domain and the nuclear dimension. The summary of the chapter suggests that diplomatically it would be possible to manage the rise of China. However, this would be extremely difficult. China's intentions are very clear and India would have to be militarily prepared to deal with that country. Chapter 4 deals with Military Strategy. It brings out the importance of operational art which is a link between military strategy and tactics. Military strategy must aim to win battles without combat. The chapter lays down key premises which merit importance:

- Military strategy should be proactive and even when reactive, should be anticipatory in nature.
- The planner should be very clear as to the desired end state to be achieved.
- The environment scan should clearly highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the adversaries. It should also balance the ends, ways and means.
- Military strategy must draw guidance from the politico-military aims and objectives.
- Risk management is essential.

- In asymmetric threats and hybrid warfare, the desired end state should be clearly defined and the exit strategy must be planned.
- The consolidation phase, post conflict termination, should form part of the military strategy.

Apart from this, the chapter covers the aspects of the northern front and the need for the government to evolve a national security strategy. In its absence, we need to form a military strategy based on the Raksha Mantri's Operational Directive and have it refined through regular interaction with the government. As a matter of fact, the military strategy should be prepared by Headquarters Integrated Defence Service in conjunction with the three Services and forwarded to the Defence Planning Committee formed in April 2018. Further, the military strategy must be reviewed every two years to take changes into account.

Chapter 5 deals with India's Response to Internal Conflicts. The chapter comprehensively deals with the internal conflicts which our country has faced and the response of the nation. It feels that the Maoist movement is not a military challenge and does not deal with it. This is true but the Maoists continue to be a threat and the Central Armed Police Forces need the guidance of the military to tackle this problem. The following chapter deals with Maritime Strategy. The chapter comprehensively covers our maritime responsibility and the need for maritime domain awareness. The chapter covers the strategy to the West, and the strategy to the South. The chapter correctly states that the maritime strategy involves more than five ministries and a host of ancillary organisations. There is, undoubtedly, a need for a strong Indian Navy.

Chapter 7 deals with the Aerospace Domain. The Air Force is involved with the land forces and the maritime forces. The aerospace strategy would be within the realms of the overall military strategy to transform the armed forces into multi-spectrum strategic forces. Aerospace assets are technology intensive and have a limited shelf life. The need for a maintenance philosophy to increase the longevity of equipment is most important. Apart from these, the chapter points to the need for joint operations which would not be optimised without the appointment of the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS). The next chapter pertains to Optimising the Special Forces. The chapter is comprehensive and covers two aspects: the Outline Organisation of the National Operations Division and the Special Operations Division. Chapter 9 covers Out Of Area Operations and lists the likely contingencies for these operations. The conduct of operations is also covered and the need for joint operations emphasized. The next chapter covers

the Cyber and Space Strategy. While the strategy is well covered, the need for weaponising space at the earliest needs to be emphasized.

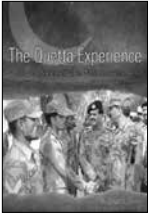
Chapter 11 analyses India's Nuclear Doctrine and Strategy. The chapter lucidly states that India should be proactive rather than react to adversaries. Further, the doctrine needs to be reviewed and the No First Use (NFU) policy needs to be debated and, if required, modified. It would be prudent to be ambiguous rather than commit to a policy which does not cater for all contingencies. As per this chapter, China will be the main threat and Pakistan would be persuaded to keep India in turbulence. The ensuing chapter deals with Shifting the Nuclear Focus to China. The chapter deals with the likelihood of Pakistan's first use of nuclear weapons. Further, it emphasizes the need for India to undertake thermonuclear tests to improve its current capability. The book suggests this should have been done when North Korea was undertaking the tests. Even if live tests can't be done, computer simulation must be perfected to create thermonuclear warheads. The 13th chapter deals with Higher Defence Management. As per the chapter, India's higher defence management is frozen in time. The situation has resulted in less than optimal use of our armed forces, with an emphasis on strategic restraint. This would be obviated by appointing a CDS and posting of uniformed personnel in bureaucratic positions in the Ministry of Defence (MoD). They would bridge the chasm and enable the political class to take strategic decisions.

Chapter 14 deals with the Civil-Military Dynamic: Making of Military Strategy. This is linked to the preceding chapter and lucidly brings out the need for synergy between the civil and military in operational and perspective planning. Currently, the entire issue is treated in a style which is passive and lacks dynamism. Constant interaction will lead to better planning and execution by both the civilians and the military. The next chapter deals with Resource Management to Complement Military Strategy. The chapter deals with material and human resource management. These aspects merit importance in the formation of military strategy. Chapter 16 deals with Defence Cooperation as an emerging tool to complement military strategy. The focus is on the need for cooperation to make India a great Asian power and a global player. The ensuing chapter deals with Military Leadership. This is vital to the nation and there is no scope for complacency. The concluding chapter reinforces the need for a Grand Strategy and National Security Strategy for India. Military strategy will be formed out of these documents.

The book has comprehensively tackled all aspects but three issues which needed separate chapters are Technology, Jointness and the Need for

Indigenisation of Defence Products. Overall, the editors and the authors have done an outstanding job and the book is a must read for officials in the Prime Minister's Office, the National Security Council Secretariat, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of External Affairs, Defence Planning Committee and officers of the Army, Navy and Air Force.

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The Quetta Experience: A Study of Attitudes and Values Within the Pakistan Army

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Woodrow Wilson Centre, Asia Program, 2018

ISBN-978-1-938027-82-6

Timely, revealing and fascinating, with many firsts to its credit, this book by David O. Smith is the first comprehensive research conducted over a long period of 37 years (1977-2014). It throws light on the thinking, attitudes and values of the Pakistan Army officers who served at the Pakistan Army Command and Staff College in the city of Quetta. The study is based on the experiences and observations of the American military officers who had attended the course, including the author himself. Currently, he is a Distinguished Fellow at the Stimson Centre and also a consultant on South Asian issues at the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory. Smith retired from government service in 2012 after holding a senior executive position in the Defence Intelligence Agency. He was in active service in the US Army for 31 years and also served as a Foreign Area Officer (FAO) for more than 20 years, dealing with political and military issues in the Near East and South Asia. The book is primarily based on primary sources and field experience of over four decades, lending credence to its value—a must read for those who study South Asia and Pakistan, in particular.

The methodology followed in the book is the structured interview technique conducted with the US FAOs and their Pakistani counterparts, who attended the course. For the sake of a detailed study and analysis, the Pakistan Army officers were grouped at three levels; senior officers (Brigadiers and Major Generals); senior mid-level officers (Lieutenant Colonels and Colonels); and junior mid-level officers (Captains and Majors) who had served at the Staff College. The author himself has highlighted some limitations in his research, namely: a three-year time gap in 1979, 1991 and 2005 when no US student attended the Staff College course, and, therefore, no study was conducted during these periods. Further, the student data sample collected was only of 31 students, which was too small to quantify the responses for a meaningful statistical analysis. Moreover, only broad patterns of behaviour and attitudes were studied and, coupled with this was the inhibition of the Pakistan Army

officers to share any information about their unit designations or military schools attended during their tenures (p. 16).

There is a section on the background of the US-Pakistan relationship which highlights the relations at their lowest ebb because of a series of incidents that had occurred in 2011, but the USA is likely to maintain relations with Pakistan because of its vital interests in the region, namely, the defeat of Al Qaeda and affiliated groups operating from the Pakistani soil, ensuring the safety and security of Pakistan's nuclear arsenals, stabilisation of Afghanistan, and preventing a regional conflict with India which can escalate to the nuclear level. The author has focussed on the Pakistan Army because he believes that it is the key to address all these issues.

There is a section on the history and purpose of the Staff College which reflects two primary objectives: one is to impart middle level education for the officers, and an equally if not more, important purpose is to evaluate the students for further promotion into senior general officer ranks. An interesting account reveals how the senior officers of the Pakistan Army are averse to any kind of criticism of the wars they had lost. It took the Pakistan Army 20 years to authorise an official history of the 1965 War with India and another 29 years to publish the results and even then, with circulation restricted only to Army officers (p. 27).

The observations of the book have been conducted under five lines of enquiry: the first, is the Staff College experience of the interactions between American student officers and Pakistani students officers; the second line of enquiry is of the perception of external threats and friendships; the third is of the perception of internal threats and friendships; the fourth line of enquiry is of the attitude towards the state and its institutions and, finally, of the attitude towards nuclear weapons.

Some of the key findings of these enquiries have been the following: the background of the top finishing school officers has remained the same and the top finishers will become general officers; the fear of Islamisation in the Pakistan Army since 9/11 is exaggerated; the US International Military Education and Training Programme (IMET) should continue since it promotes positive military values in the Pakistan Army. A surprise finding of the study was that the recent students believe that Pakistan-focussed militant groups are its most significant military threat, exceeding that posed by India; the Army supports democracy only in theory but is critical of civilian governance in practice. Another interesting opinion was that the military's rule in governance diminishes the Army's professionalism in the long run; and, lastly, no doctrine for nuclear war-

fighting is taught in the Staff College. Surprisingly, in the key findings, the safety and security of these weapons didn't seem to be the priority, given the fact that Pakistan's internal security environment is deteriorating (p. 80).

Another section of the book highlights the implications for the future of the current and next generations of Pakistan Army officers and also on the attainment of US regional goals. The conclusions drawn were positive as well as negative; the growing anti-American sentiment in the Pakistan Army might lessen the perceived value and importance of maintaining this relationship; despite demographic and social changes in the officers corps, the Army will maintain its cohesion and discipline; future generations of senior leaders may be more amenable to resolving contentious issues with India (p. 112); the Army will continue to use Afghanistan-focussed militant groups like the Afghan Taliban and the Haqqani network to shape the government in that country; the Army lacks sufficient capacity and an adequate counter-insurgency doctrine to contain the multiple militancy within the country; the Army's control over foreign policy and national security decisions will continue to create friction in the civil-military relations (p. 115); in the event of a future Indian conventional attack on Pakistan, early escalation to the nuclear level seems inevitable (p. 118). In the light of this statement, the author could have substantiated his claims with more valid arguments knowing that India has pursued a policy of "no first use" and credible deterrence.

In the concluding chapter, the author accepts the limitation that only the top 40-50 percent of the Pakistan Army's officers corps was examined, but the attitudes and values of the remaining 50-60 percent who were not selected to attend the course are unknown, hence, not examined. Moreover, he rightfully states that the Pakistan Army is a kingship group and a vehicle for social mobility. It is the lone custodian of Pakistani nationalism, sovereignty and meant to safeguard the country's national interest (pp. 119-120).

This book is an important contribution to the understanding of the Pakistani military's mindset and a good read for officers of the Indian Army as well. The findings of this book are relevant even today since the Pakistan Army's attitudes and values have changed very little in the past 37 years of this study. Moreover, the author believes that there is no reason to expect that they will change appreciably in the future as well, certainly not in the next decade.

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