



# ISSUE BRIEF

No. 174

March 2019

## Pulwama 2019: Introspection and Way Ahead



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### Introduction

History repeats itself if we do not learn, unlearn and re-learn its lessons well. Our CRPF took a devastating hit on **April 6, 2010**, at **Dantewada** and bounced back to redeem their honour and operational efficacy, in the concerned AOR, only to be surprised (with equal pain and grief) by a Fedayeen attack nine years later, on **February 14, 2019**, at **Pulwama**. We will **Not Forget nor Forgive** was the resolve that the CRPF hierarchy expressed with an **equally resolute pledge by the entire Nation supporting them with one voice**. Apart from our given response to the incident what is required urgently (as a whole of the Nation approach), is that repeat of such an incident is **denied to our adversaries**.

### Why Does India Suffer from Such Incidents

The reasons are perceived by each one of us perhaps individually and hence, let me lay down my parts of the jigsaw puzzle as under:

- Proverbial lack of strategic culture or feinting ignorance of the same.
- Historical baggage manifesting in inimical neighbourhood presently emboldened due to the current global geopolitics.
- Non-maintenance of domain knowledge (most of us in the concerned agencies want to reinvent the wheel once at the helm)

### Key Points

1. India suffers from such incidents, due to little or no professional analysis of past incidents coupled with shyness to put down our strategic thought on paper and laying down time-bound capability/capacity building goals with dedicated fund allocation.
2. While the threat of an all-out conventional war has receded in the present times, it unfortunately remains **HIGH** in our part of the world wherein **border issues are still outstanding between two hostile and adversarial neighbours**.
3. Future conflicts will blur the line between Army's Primary and Secondary Roles, especially in the context of battling insurgencies in States sharing borders with inimical neighbours, wherein efforts to militarise the Police will be detrimental to National Security/Interests.
4. There should be Seamlessness in Uniformed Forces. There is a strong case to synergise every wing of the uniformed forces and to bring them up under one umbrella, that is, from a beat constable to a surgical strike commando.
5. Compulsory National Service will provide India depth in its defence against hybrid nature of future war, lower down revenue budgets in favour of capital outlay and will strengthen the core values of our Nation in every **domain of Nation building**, namely, sense of accountability, responsibility, responsiveness, timeliness and nationhood.
6. Insurgencies are solved more by **Political Resolve** than any other effort of the Nation.
7. Engagement with our adversaries requires the Nation to practise the lessons from **Arthashastra**.

The Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS), New Delhi, is an independent think-tank dealing with national security and conceptual aspects of land warfare, including conventional and sub-conventional conflict and terrorism. CLAWS conducts research that is futuristic in outlook and policy-oriented in approach.

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manifesting in little or no professional analysis of the same, leading to chinks in our armour.

- Shyness to put down our strategic thought on paper and laying down **time bound capability / capacity building goals** and **dedicated fund allocation** towards the same, in black and white (manifesting out of the lack of sense of accountability and responsibility towards the nation by the colonial masters unconsciously adopted by our administrative structures which largely remained unchanged post-independence).
- Lack of optimal level of synergy between various Security Agencies. A state relatively better than them fighting turf wars.
- Our spiritual threshold, as a nation, **enables us to absorb body bags**, as a matter of Karma without a sense of revenge or retribution.

### Conflicts of Future

While the threat of an all-out conventional war has receded in the present times, the chances of it erupting are unfortunately HIGH in our part of the world wherein, **border issues are still outstanding between two hostile and adversarial neighbours**. Coupled with that, the very nature of humans, namely, competitiveness and individual sense of **survival, perception** and **justice** will ensure that the **world is plagued by warfare** in its evolving forms like un-conventional, sub-conventional, hybrid, cyber, asymmetric, trade, etc., with proportional chances of escalation into the conventional domain, **without much warning or preparation time**.

Many schools of thought have taken roots around the **concept of the relevance or not of a conventional war, in the backdrop of a continuing sub-conventional/proxy war** being faced by India:

- **Army's Primary Role**. Some authors advocate that the Army **must go back to barracks** (as if it came out of its own choice), and prepare for conventional capabilities to defeat our western rogue neighbour in the conventional realm, and leave the **curse of insurgency and terrorism** to Police forces. This may not be a prudent course of action, **especially in the states sharing borders with inimical powers**:
  - It will lead to **militarisation of the Police force** which has a very different role, charter and functional ethos **across most nations in our World**. No wonder one of the biggest worries of President Obama was military grade weapons

being issued to Police. Also, there are high chances of Police force getting **sabotaged** in insurgency effected areas manifesting from them being **locals** (their families being at risk), as also, possible **identification** with the anti-national narrative being propagated from within and outside.

- Militarisation of Police (a State subject), may have undesirable consequences especially for India in context of its **fractured Centre-State relations and increasing pressure of state-oriented politics**. No country would like to witness a **state level maverick politician** (especially of a State sharing borders with hostile neighbours), realising his/her State or National level dreams with bullets instead of ballots.
- Police structuring and rationale especially in India is rooted in the **aftermath of the first fight for our freedom in 1857** and thus it needs a serious introspection and self-evolution, to **reorient itself to policing functions of Independent India**.
- Policing ethos and functioning does not warrant involvement of IPS cadre for its day-to-day running. Not one of them were causality either in Dantewada or Pulwama. Their laws may not be as stringent as the Mil Laws and hence, **revolt by lower cadre of Police** (without timely check and guidance by presence of IPS Officer Cadre) has much higher probability than any other uniformed services. **India has witnessed such revolts in its history** with the Army being called once out of control of the IPS hierarchy, namely, 1973 Provincial Armed Constabulary Revolt in UP or Kashmir Police Revolt of April 1993.
- **Seamlessness in Uniformed Forces**
  - The fact that there are **blurring lines between War and Peace in today's world**, coupled with the chances of quick transition of a local level issue to become a rally point for the nation to go to war (much like Israel), there thus is a strong case to **synergise every wing of the uniformed forces and to bring them up under one umbrella**. And the only organisation at the national level that can absorb such an exercise is the **Armed Forces, particularly the Army**. The Unified Comd HQ is perhaps an archaic answer to modern day insurgency/terrorism (powered by cyber platforms) and it needs to be dealt with **one force from the beat constable to surgical**

**strike commando**, if we want to build capabilities to prevent even the lone wolf attacks.

- Even if a country is not facing any internal disturbances, it will always have a competitor/ threat to its interests in our world. And countries will increasingly be dealing with adversaries in hybrid domain in future, with a risk of escalation into conventional realm. Hence, the need of complete integration of uniformed forces to measure up to the spectrum of threats facing a nation.
- **Compulsory National Service**
  - The points discussed above may appear to be a utopian idea to be practised in an idealistic society. While ibid ideas may not be put into practice due to every other consideration but their merit, yet the need of a **security conscious society networked and interwoven with its beat constable, as also, the surgical strike commando cannot be overemphasized**. So the next best means to build Ethos and inculcate a sense of Security and Discipline in our Society is **Compulsory National Service**. From the US to Israel and Singapore this concept has served these nations well. And to assuage the valid apprehensions of a few, let me quote the famous Israeli belief that “**National Service Does Not Militarise the Society but Socialises the Military.**”
  - A well-trained reservist manpower will allow us to **reduce the Standing Armed Forces** with corresponding benefits with respect to the **Revenue and Capital Budget heads enabling more funds for modernisation**. As also, to provide **ready and trained manpower for other uniformed services** which may at best require a **reorientation cadre** instead of a fresh recruitment exercise for individual service and thus **save the exchequer some more resources** for capability enhancement of respective services. It will also instil the aspect of **common ethos and training values** amidst the uniformed services, as highlighted earlier.

### Way Ahead

Our leadership at every level need to take certain obvious but tough decisions and in a time-bound manner:

- **Make a Resolve**. Insurgencies are solved not with better militaries or police-oriented intelligence-based operations (**these capabilities at best can contain it**),

but by **Resolve at every level of governance starting with the Political one**. Sri Lanka being the latest example. Only then will India be able to resolve its internal disturbances and make every buck count towards the growth and prosperity of our Nation.

- **Engaging Pak on Two Diverse Themes**. To run parallel in time domain as under:
  - **People-to-People Connect and Anguish**. The present **sense of agitation notwithstanding**, as a long-term policy framework enabling reconciliation especially between families of those affected by partition, aimed purely to reduce and mitigate the baggage of history. Generations of people in both the countries must let bygones be bygones and move forward towards their individual and collective growth and prosperity.
  - **Diplomatic and Economic Onslaught**. To ensure that Pak walks the path of reconciliation, all attempts to **isolate them** must be undertaken by utilising our **diplomatic, environmental, water (Indus Water treaty) and trade leverages** (utilise our good offices with the US, IMF, Saudi Arabia and UAE in order to deny Pak economic bailouts).
- **Mandalas Around Pakistan**. Even if our troop deployment in Afghanistan is not considered in the current environment, enhanced **security and strategic partnership** with Iran and Afghanistan must remain our foreign policy goals to ensure a **security squeeze along Pakistan’s Western Borders**.
- **Operations Across LOC—Target Pak Army Exclusively**. All our **proverbial actions across the LOC**, with plausible deniability, must target the Pak Army personnel and their bases **as a priority over** terrorist bases and infrastructure. Because no amount of casualties inflicted to the terrorists will actually hurt the Pak Army/establishment, as the former are nothing more than cannon fodder in the larger picture. The aim must be to make both the **Western and Eastern border for the Pak Army as hard field locations with regular counting of body bags as an assured feature**.
- **Operations within own Area**. While we retain the Iron Hand and Velvet Glove approach and continue to fight the terrorists with the same potency of weapon systems that they use against us instead of our entire inventory (and suitably highlight this aspect in all forms), there may be case in point to employ high-precision area weapons like Anti

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Material Rifles, Missiles and Helicopter Gunships, to neutralise terrorists once holed up and avoid unwarranted casualties. We must remember that while there may be a chance of a terrorist to join the mainstream, the security personnel we lose are citizens who have taken that option already and the state has invested considerable time and resources in their training. Hence, losing them in rushed up operations must be avoided at all costs.

- **Compulsory National Service.** Three years for all able-bodied males and two for females, will strengthen the **core values of our Nation not only in the realms of security but every other domain of Nation building**, namely, sense of accountability, responsibility, responsiveness, timeliness and nationhood.
- **Unified Uniformed Forces.** Who look, talk and work alike. And, if we cannot amalgamate all the uniformed services due to various other considerations, there is an urgent requirement to **bring up their level of training and ethos to a common denomination.** This must be enabled by **operational control of all aspects of CI / CT operations with only one single agency / architecture**, at least for the required duration of time in a defined area of operations.
- **Make in India / Def PSUs.** It is ironical that a Nation famous for software development has to import high-end technologies from foreign soil. A determined effort must be made to **identify talent in our IITs and other institutes with adequate research oriented funding** available to enable India harness niche technologies from within. While the groundwork has been laid for the "Make in India" endeavour, it now

needs a determined push to help it gain momentum. **Def PSUs must be held accountable for time delays with financial / interest liabilities and termination of services oriented practices.**

- **Security Architecture.** All security agencies, much like finance, must have only professionals and experts being mustered to man them. No other consideration should merit a favour other than their expertise in the field of security. There is a case to consider **one between the three (i.e. NSA and two Dy NSAs) must be from service background** to enable across the spectrum and holistic inputs being made available to the policymakers.
- **National Security Strategy / White Paper.** Must be laid out exuding our **time-bound capability/capacity building goals and dedicated fund allocation** towards the same, in black and white. Wherein, sub-conventional capability building must be **taken as being inherent to our conventional capabilities** coupled with **increasing ability to reach out to our diaspora worldwide during the time of need.** Broad nuances of our response options towards various **threats must also be outlined to serve as a deterrence to our adversaries.**

### Conclusion

Asian Century will not be realised until India assumes its responsibilities as a Regional Power and takes on the mantle of a Proactive and Just Nation towards its role as a Net Security provider in the region. Many countries in South and SE Asia are looking up to India for the same, and how we mitigate the entire spectrum of threats from Pakistan will be an indicator to them of our resolve towards our responsibilities in the comity of Nations.

*The contents of this Issue Brief are based on the analysis of material accessed from open sources and are the personal views of the author. It may not be quoted as representing the views or policy of the Government of India or Integrated Headquarters of MoD (Army).*



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