

## Defence outsourced

By Ajay Banerjee

Buying weapons to protect over 1.34 billion people and secure borders with seven nations — with a land frontier of over 15,000 km and a coastline extending to over 7,500 km — is a good idea. But the thought to be dependent on foreign defence supplies (India imports some 70 per cent of its equipment) is unsettling, self-defeating even.

Accessing national data as to how we acquire the high-tech weapons and meet our defence needs could be a daunting task, given veils of secrecy. Yet an international resource on global security, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), regularly comes out with general figures indicating, among others, the scale to which our defence import has risen. On March 12, SIPRI released its data, reconfirming that India, yet again emerged as the biggest importer of weapons in the world.

Clearly, there is a lack of ‘strategic autonomy’ ideally desired by a nuclear armed nation with the third largest armed forces. The SIPRI’s annual report ‘Trends in international arms transfers’ makes an assessment for a five-year block (2013-2017). It said: “India was the largest importer of major arms and accounted for 12 per cent of the global total.”

SIPRI has been studying the conflict and arms sales for over 50 years. It compared this five-year block with the previous 2008-2012’s to conclude: “India’s imports increased by 24 per cent”.

That means New Delhi was importing 24 per cent more military equipment, pointing at the sluggish ‘Make in India’ besides the failure to make its own cutting-edge weapons, equipment and war-fighting arsenal.

For defence experts, that foreign component accretion over the decade is ‘inglorious.’ Amit Cowshish, former financial advisor, Ministry of Defence, says “It will keep on happening till India can have its own capacity to produce equipment.”

### **Ambitious plans & realities**

On March 22, the Ministry of Defence laid out a draft defence production policy. It is ambitious at its best as it talks about making India among the top five countries in aerospace and defence industry.

It also talks about self-reliance in key technologies by 2025, and puts India on the exporter-track. It sets a target of Rs 1,70,000-crore (\$26 billion approx) turnover in defence goods and services involving additional investment of nearly Rs 70,000 crore (US \$10 billion approx).

It looks at achieving exports of Rs 35,000 crore (US \$5 billion approx) by 2025. Commodore C Uday Bhaskar (retd), now director, Society for Policy Studies, terms this plan as “incongruous,” saying “India is living in a make-believe world.”

Domestic defence production for 2016-17 stands at Rs 55, 894 crore, up from the Rs 43,746 crore in 2013-14. Efforts, so far, to make a military-industrial base have remained sluggish, hampered by budgets and a lack of cutting-edge technology. Lt Gen KJ Singh (retd), a former Western Army Commander avers: “It appears everyone has good intentions, sadly, that is not translating into action.”

### **Successes & ironies**

There are a few, take a look:

- Nuclear submarines of the Arihant class, made from scratch, in India; or the Scorpene class submarines made at Mazagon Docks Limited Mumbai.
- Supersonic BrahMos, Agni, Akash or the Prithvi missiles.
- Strangely, the country is struggling to produce a good rifle. Some 11 lakh of various types are needed for which Indian private companies have been allowed to have a tie-up with foreign partners and put up

their proposals. Light combat aircraft Tejas faces delays and slow production rates (Only 6-8 planes are produced per annum, the need is for 16-20).

- Artillery guns produced jointly by the Defence Research and Development Organization and private companies — Tata Power SED and Bharat Forge — have been a success.
- The next version of the Arjun tank needs modifications, but the delay is due to the Army frequently changing the requirements.
- The Dhruv helicopter and its variants have finally been accepted as ‘superb’ machines.

### **Budget pains**

In a report on March 13, a parliamentary panel said the defence budget for the year 2018-2019 was ‘inadequate’ and ‘barely enough’ to cater for inflation. Maj Gen BC Khanduri (retd), a BJP MP from Uttarakhand, heads the panel.

“Capital budget allocation for the Army had dashed hopes as it was barely enough to cater to the rise in expenses on account of inflation, and did not even cater for the taxes,” the Vice Chief of the Army told the panel.

For 2018-19, the Army projected a need for Rs 44,572 crore, it got Rs 26,815 crore. The Navy wanted Rs 35,695 crore, but got only Rs 20,003 crore. The IAF is managing with Rs 35,770 crore against its need for Rs 77,694 crore.

The Army today has 68 per cent of equipment in the ‘vintage category.’ Around 25 projects identified under Make in India may be foreclosed due to inadequate budget, the report said.

“For a country that seeks strategic autonomy, the tag for being the largest importer of weapons and equipment is a contradiction,” says Commodore Bhaskar.

The government has lined up a mix of private-public sectors. The hint lies in the numbers and the expansion of the nine defence public sector undertakings (DPSUs). In the financial year ending March 31, 2017 these companies collectively made a profit of Rs 5,482 crore.

A report of the parliamentary panel says “no budgetary support is being given to the DPSUs.” These nine companies are being modernized.

“The best way to break the mould is to move away from the existing procedures of acquisition,” says Lt Gen KJ Singh

### **Private sector potential**

To give a hint at the potential, the hull of the nuclear submarines series is being made by L&T. Amit Cowshish, former financial advisor, Ministry of Defence, has a word of caution: “The new draft production policy merely talks about private and public participation. In reality it could take years for it to get rolling.”

The Modi government has liberalized FDI and touted it as a major policy-shift to okay up to 49 per cent stake for foreign companies when partnering Indian companies. Now another tweak to the FDI is coming up. The Draft DPP-2018 says: “FDI regime in defence will be further liberalized. The FDI up to 74% under automatic route will be allowed in niche technology areas.”

### **US rises in India as Russia looks at Pak**

In 2013-17, Russia accounted for 62 per cent of India's arms imports. India zeroed in on Sukhoi-30 MKI fighter jets, a sea-borne aircraft carrier, the INS Vikramaditya, and a few dozen Mi-17 V5 helicopters. Based on existing orders and weapons, Russia will remain, by far, the main supplier of major arms to India for the foreseeable future. The volume of Russian equipment was almost the same as it was in 2008-12.

With India diversifying its sources to include the US since 2008, things have changed dramatically. The SIPRI report said: "Between 2008-12 and 2013-17 arms imports from the US increased by 557 per cent, making it India's second largest arms supplier." The US now accounts for 15 per cent of Indian supplies.

This development is the aftermath of the India-US strategic partnership first signed in 2005 and renewed in 2015. In 2013-17 such supplies included the Boeing P8-I long-range maritime patrol aircraft, the C-130 strategic transport aircraft, C-17 heavy lift transporter and the Apache-64 combat helicopters.

India's arms imports from Israel also increased (by 285 per cent) between 2008-12 and 2013-17, making Israel the third largest supplier to India with 11 per cent share in the Indian market.

### **China's course**

Since 2013 India replaced China as the top arms importer in the world. China, on the other hand, is now the fifth largest exporter selling its manufactured equipment to Pakistan and Bangladesh, among other countries. It now accounts for 5.7 per cent of all arms sold globally.

China also remains an importer and is fourth on the global import list. Some 4 percent of all global sales go to China. Russia is its biggest supplier and has a share of 65 per cent in this.

### **Russian supplies to Pak**

The US is the biggest exporter and has a 34 percent share of all global exports while Russia has a 22 per cent share. A total of 35 per cent of all Russian exports go to India and 12 per cent to China. Another 10 per cent go to Vietnam. India and Vietnam are locked in separate boundary disputes with China.

Interestingly, Russia has a new friend in Pakistan and supplied 5.6 per cent of weapons and equipment to India's western neighbour. Russia is the third largest supplier to Pakistan, after China and US. This has happened in the past three years when Russia provided the Mi-series attack copters.

Earlier Russia did not supply anything to Pakistan which is now an importer of 2.8 percent of all weapons sold globally. "Despite its continuing tensions with India and ongoing internal conflicts, Pakistan's arms imports dipped by 36 per cent between 2008-12 and 2013-17," said the report.

### **Future machines**

- Kamov-226T: Russian Kamov-HAL to produce 200 of them for Rs 6,500 cr. These are meant for IAF, Army. The twin-engine Kamov will replace Cheetah/Chetak
- Fighter jets: A fresh global tender coming, inviting military aviation firms to make fighter jets in India. New Delhi is looking for 115-120 jets to add to 36 Rafales from France
- Future (FICV): It is worth about Rs 60,000 cr. Private and PSU firms are in the race to make the 20-tonne tracked, amphibious and air transportable machine
- Naval Utility Helicopters: A Rs 21,738-crore project. 16 copters to come in a flyaway condition. These copters carry radars, sensors and a lightweight anti-sub torpedo and Small arms: The MoD okays separate plans to procure over 11 lakh pieces. These include 6.22 lakh assault rifles, 4.43 lakh carbines, 6,000 sniper files and 41,000 LMGs are used for search, rescue, and communication
- Submarines: Four global players have submitted bids for Rs 70,000-cr order for six subs. Russian, French, German and Swedish firms are in the race

# परमाणु निशस्त्रीकरण के लिए जुटे शांतिवादी संगठन

जनसत्ता संवाददाता  
नई दिल्ली, 24 मार्च।

दुनिया को परमाणु हथियारों से मुक्त करने की कोशिशों को आगे बढ़ाते हुए जनहितकारी व शांतिवादी संगठनों के साझा मंच ने भारत सरकार से परमाणु निशस्त्रीकरण संधि को स्वीकार करने वाले देशों में शामिल होने की अपील की है। धरती के पांच हजार साल के विकास को बचाने के लिए विश्व के सभी परमाणु हथियार संपन्न देशों से संयुक्त राष्ट्र की ओर से टीपीएनडब्लू (ट्रीटी प्रोहेबिटिंग न्यूक्लियर वेपन) के नाम से पारित उस संधि को स्वीकार करने की अपील की गई है जिसे बीते साल सात जुलाई को पास किया गया था।

टीपीएनडब्लू पर अब तक 122 देश दस्तखत कर चुके हैं, लेकिन भारत-चीन सहित कई परमाणु संपन्न राष्ट्रों ने अभी तक इसे तवज्जो नहीं दी है। इस बाबत जागरूकता फैलाने के लिए शनिवार को दिल्ली में दो दिवसीय अंतरराष्ट्रीय सम्मेलन शुरू हुआ। इसके बाद

- वक्ताओं ने परमाणु निशस्त्रीकरण पर संयुक्त राष्ट्र की संधि को बताया ऐतिहासिक
- भारत सरकार से टीपीएनडब्लू को स्वीकार करने की अपील की

आयोजक संगठनों का एक प्रतिनिधिमंडल सरकार तक अपनी बात पहुंचाएगा।

बता दें कि परमाणु निशस्त्रीकरण संधि के लिए आंदोलन चलाने वाले संगठनों और प्रतिनिधियों में डॉ अरुण मित्रा (आइपीपीएनडब्लू), अनिल चौधरी व अचिन विनायक (सीएनडीपी), पल्लव सेन गुप्ता (एआइपीएसओ), एसएस सोदान व डॉ शकील उर रहमान (आइडीपीडी) और विजय पधिलारी (आइएससीयूएफ) आदि शामिल हैं। अभियान के संयोजकों में से एक डॉ गोपाल कृष्ण ने बताया कि विश्व को परमाणु हथियारों से मुक्त करने की इस मुहिम में भारत को भी शामिल करने के लिए सरकार तक अपनी बात

पहुंचाने के लिए आयोजकों का एक प्रतिनिधिमंडल संसद की स्थाई समिति (रक्षा मामले) के अध्यक्ष पीएस खंडूरी से मिलेगा। उन्हें बताया जाएगा कि धरती पर मौजूद परमाणु हथियार कितने घातक हैं। राष्ट्रध्यक्षों की एक गलतफहमी भी पांच हजार साल की सभ्यता और विकास का क्षण भर में विनाश कर सकती है।

आयोजक संगठनों की ओर से इस बाबत जारी साझा बयान के मुताबिक, परमाणु हथियार संपन्न देश एक दिन में 300 मिलियन अमेरिकी डॉलर (2000 करोड़ रुपए) केवल अपने परमाणु हथियारों के रखरखाव पर खर्च कर रहे हैं। दूसरी ओर रोज लाखों लोग भुखमरी व अन्य बीमारियों से मर रहे हैं। भारत-पाकिस्तान जैसे देशों का नाम जो मानव अधिकार के पैमाने पर बनी सूची में निचले हिस्सों में दर्ज हैं, करोड़ों रुपए हथियारों की होड़ पर खर्च कर रहे हैं। इस सूरत को बदलने की जरूरत है। दोबारा हिरोशिमा और नागासाकी न हो, यह भी सुनिश्चित करने की जरूरत है।