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Monitoring of high-altitude drones in uprooted areas

By Abigale Lormen

On the discover of the uproar in Uparkot and Babri Mandi, Municipal Commissioner Satya Prakash Patel reached DRDO with high-tech drone digicam ready at DRDO expertise and from there as much as Kot, Jama Masjid, Babri Mandi to Dehli Gate. By late night time the drone staff is frozen within the metropolis workplace of the municipal company. The night time motion can be being monitored by the drone.

The Hi-Tech three drone cameras launched below the Smart City challenge have been examined on the Integrated Control and Command Center on the Municipal Corporation Service Building on Saturday. On discipline coaching was happening on Sunday. In the night, uproar was reported in CA and Babri Mandi relating to CAA. The Municipal Commissioner instantly after speaking to the Mandalayukta and the District Magistrate, took the drone and reached with the City Office staff of the Municipal Corporation situated at Barhodwari. Mandalayukta, DIG, District Magistrate, SSP to Mandal and all the massive officers of the district have been already struggling to create regulation and order within the uprooted space. From night until late night time, the Municipal Commissioner together with the staff stayed within the metropolis workplace of the Municipal Corporation. With the assistance of drones, the views of the realm from Top Kot, Jama Masjid, Babri Mandi to Dehli Gate have been clearly seen. The energy of the digicam will be gauged from this that scenes as much as two kilometers have been clearly seen. Up to the face will be recognized. One of its specialties is that one can use it even at night time. It is tough to determine the face within the night time image however the motion is seen. Municipal Commissioner Satya Prakash Patel mentioned that the drone digicam was taken at an altitude of 200 to 250 meters and the encircling areas have been monitored. He mentioned that good units will also be used for peace and regulation and order. He mentioned that today's experiment was very profitable. In the close to future, all the scene shall be seen on the 15 ft display of the Integrated Control and Command Center.



Aligarh Municipal staff cleaned the stones thrown through the uproar. Municipal Commissioner Satya Prakash Patel mentioned that the management room of the Municipal Corporation will stay open in a single day. Under the management of zonal officer Ajit Kumar Rai, the responsibility of 100 staff together with Sanitation Inspector Bishan Singh, Anil Singh, Dharamvir Singh, Ehsan Rab has been put in the direction of Upkot Kotwali.

<https://ourbitcoinnews.com/monitoring-of-high-altitude-drones-in-uprooted-areas/>

India, US to sign USD 3 billion defence deal: Trump promises high-tech military equipment to Indian Army

Ahmedabad: Amid uncertainty over a trade deal, US President Donald Trump on Monday promised to settle a USD 3 billion defence deal with India, which will include high-tech military helicopters and other equipment for the Indian Armed forces. He also said that the United States will become "India's premier defence partner."

"As we continue to build our defence cooperation, the US looks forward to providing India with some of the best and most feared military equipment on the planet. We make the greatest weapons ever made. We make the best and we are dealing now with India," said Trump while addressing a large gathering of over 1 lakh people at the 'Namaste Trump' event at Ahmedabad's Motera Stadium.

"I'm pleased to announce that tomorrow our representatives will sign deals to sell over USD 3 Billion, in the absolute finest state of the art military helicopters and other equipment to the Indian armed forces," he added.

Speaking about the much talked about trade deal between the two countries, Trump said that it will be inked soon as PM Modi was a "tough negotiator".

"We will go for fantastic trade deal; PM Modi is tough negotiator," he said.

Speaking on the issue of cross-border terrorism, the US President said that America was working with Pakistan to crack down on terror groups.

"India, US committed to fight terrorists and their ideology; that is why my government is working with Pakistan to crack down on terror groups. Our relationship with Pakistan is a very good one. Thanks to these efforts we are beginning to see signs of big progress with Pakistan and we are hopeful for reduced tensions, greater stability and the future of harmony for all of the nations of South Asia," said Trump.

He said that both India and the US were making joint efforts in fighting the threat of Islamic terrorism, adding that the ISIS was completely destroyed with the killing of caliphate chief Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi.

"Both countries are united in defending citizens from threat of radical Islamic terrorism. Under my administration we unleashed full power of American military on bloodthirsty killers of ISIS. Today ISIS territorial caliphate is 100 per cent destroyed. Monster Al Baghdadi is dead," he said.

<https://english.jagran.com/india/india-us-to-sign-usd-3-billion-defence-deal-trump-promises-hightech-military-equipment-to-indian-army-10009150>



Tue, 25 Feb 2020

Final contract for AK-203 Assault Rifle set to be finalised shortly – Top Indian defence official

By Rishikesh Kumar

New Delhi: Russian assault rifles will replace the country's home-made and outdated INSAS rifle. The Indian Army has previously made several attempts to replace the rifle but failed.

India and Russia are set to sign the final commercial contract for the purchase of the AK-203 assault rifle soon with all price issues now finalised, according to an Indian Army official.

“Most of the contentious issues are resolved. We will decide on price bid very shortly,” the official who wished to remain unidentified told Sputnik on Thursday.

Indo-Russia Rifles Limited, established between the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB), the Kalashnikov Concern and Rosoboronexport — the Russian state agency for military exports — will manufacture the 7.62×39 mm Russian weapon at the Korwa Ordnance Factory in Uttar Pradesh. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the facility last March.

The official said the infantry division has identified a total requirement of 670,000 AK-203 rifles for the army including 100,000 imports while the rest will be manufactured at the Indian facility.

“There will be certain numbers which will come as semi knocked down kits and subsequently we will be looking at developing weapons here in India both for the indigenous requirement within India as also with the capability to export them subsequently,” Major General J.S. Sandhu, chief of Infantry, Indian Army, said.

Sandhu said there is a transfer of technology incorporated in the deal and it is expected that a large part of the requirement will be fulfilled by manufacturing rifles in India.

Each rifle is expected to cost around \$1,100 which includes the cost of technology transfer and of setting up the manufacturing unit.

Last March, Modi said the AK-203 rifles will help the country's security forces fight militants in counter-terror operations.

The AK-203 is the latest and most advanced version of the AK-47 rifle which will replace INSAS. Indian security personnel had often complained in the past of jamming, magazine cracking etc. at higher altitudes in the Himalayas.

<https://sputniknews.com/india/202002211078366089-final-contract-for-ak-203-assault-rifle-set-to-be-finalised-shortly---top-indian-defence-official/>



Long wait over! Indian Armed forces to get high-tech US Armed Drones equipped with missiles

These drones are going to help the Indian Navy to expand its monitoring of the Indian Ocean and to further strengthen its surveillance of its coastal boundaries

By Huma Siddiqui

Preparations are going on to ensure that the deal for procuring for 30 Drones from the US-based General Atomics worth \$ 3 billion be inked before the close of this financial year. The three services are expected to get 10+10+10 the MQ-9 Reaper or Predator-B High Altitude Long Endurance (HALE) drones, which have already been approved by the US President Donald Trump's administration. The US administration's approval includes the sale of armed drones to India and will come equipped with missiles and other systems. The drones are for the Indian Army, Air Force and the Indian Navy and the qualitative requirements for the Indian Army and the Indian Air Force are in the process of being finalised.

As has been reported by the Financial Express Online that all the drones will have different configurations as the payloads required by each service is going to be different. According to sources, "The Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) is likely to be issued soon, once all the procedures are followed and completed in a time-bound manner."

These drones are going to help the Indian Navy to expand its monitoring of the Indian Ocean and to further strengthen its surveillance of its coastal boundaries.

While the Indian Navy is already using the P-8i for the carrying out anti-submarine warfare, the Sea Guardian drones which will be armed with missiles and radars will be used for the maritime reconnaissance.

These drones will come through the Foreign Military sales route and agreement will be between the governments of India and the US and the San Diego based General Atomics. The drones for the Indian Navy will easily work in sync with the P-8i which is already in service. Since in 2018, the two governments had inked the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA), the American platforms in the Indian armed forces will get encrypted systems and these will help in improving their capabilities.

Each fully armed drone with sensors and weapons is expected to cost \$ 200 million, making it more expansive than a fighter plane.

More about Sea Guardian Drone

As reported earlier, the naval variant of Predator –B drones from the General, Atomics has the capability to carry an external payload of 2.1 tonnes.

It can fly at an altitude of over 40,000 feet, with endurance of around 35 hours.

The man behind the \$ 3 billion deal negotiations

Dr Vivek Lall who was then Chief Executive for Strategic Development with General Atomics and a renowned US aerospace leader had spearheaded the efforts. Following which the US administration in an unprecedented move had announced its decision to release the Category 1 UAVs when Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the US in June 2017 and met President Trump.

The first request was made by the Indian side in 2016 for 22 Sea Guardians to the American company. The Financial Express was the first to report that the Indian Army had made its request to buy these drones when the then US Secretary of Defense James Mattis had a meeting with the former

Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in New Delhi. The Indian Navy had initially requested for 22 Sea Guardian drones built by General Atomics Aeronautical Systems and this was followed by a request by the Indian Air Force for 100 Predator C drones.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/defence/long-wait-over-indian-armed-forces-to-get-high-tech-us-armed-drones-equipped-with-missiles/1877652/>



Tue, 25 Feb 2020

Most feared military equipment' on offer

Defence deals worth around \$3 billion to be signed today

Defence sales and cooperation featured prominently in the speeches of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and U.S. President Donald Trump at the 'Namaste Trump' event in Ahmedabad on Monday. While announcing that defence deals worth around \$3 billion would be signed during his visit, Mr. Trump offered a range of high-tech defence equipment to India.

"As we continue to build our defence cooperation, the U.S. looks forward to providing India with some of the best and most feared military equipment on the planet. We make the greatest weapons ever made. Airplanes, missiles, rockets, ships ... we make the best and we're dealing now with India. But this includes advanced air-defence systems and armed and unarmed aerial vehicles," Mr. Trump said as Mr. Modi looked on.

"Tomorrow our representatives will sign deals to sell over \$3 billion in the absolute finest state-of-the-art military helicopters and other equipment to the Indian armed forces," he said.

The deals are for 24 MH-60R Multi-Role Helicopters for the Navy worth \$2.2 billion and six AH-64E Apache attack helicopters for the Army worth \$800 million. The other big ticket deals in the pipeline are for armed drones, an air defence system, MK-45 127mm naval guns and six more P-8I long-range maritime patrol aircraft among others. While these are at various stages of procurement, the U.S. State Department has recently notified the sale of an air defence system to Delhi in a deal worth \$1.8 billion. As reported by



the long-pending proposal to procure armed Predator drones from the U.S. for the three services is back on the table and the Qualitative Requirements are currently being finalised.

Expressing his belief that the U.S. should be India's "premier defence partner," Mr. Trump said, "Together, we will defend our sovereignty, security and protect a free and open Indo-Pacific region for our children and for the generations to come."

Tue, 25 Feb 2020

US offers India weapons ‘Feared across world’

America loves India. America respects India. US will always be faithful and loyal friend Will always remember this remarkable hospitality. India will always hold a very special place in our hearts

New Delhi: The US has strongly pitched for becoming India’s “premier defence partner” by providing it with the most advanced weapon systems like armed drones that are “feared” across the globe, ahead of the inking of two more military helicopter deals worth \$3 billion on Tuesday, which will take the total value of Indian arms deals bagged by Washington since 2007 over the \$20 billion mark.

“I’m pleased to announce that tomorrow, our representatives will sign defence deals worth over \$3 billion to sell the absolute, finest state-of-the-art military helicopters and other equipment to the Indian armed forces,” President Donald Trump said at the ‘Namaste Trump’ event in Ahmedabad on Monday.

TOI was the first to report that the two deals to acquire 24 MH-60 ‘Romeo’ naval multimission helicopters for Rs 15,157 crore (\$2.12 billion) and six additional AH-64E Apache attack choppers for Rs 5,691 crore (\$796 million) from the US had been cleared by the Cabinet Committee on Security led by PM Narendra Modi. The heavy-duty Romeos and Apaches are packed with sensors and weapons, including missiles and rockets

“I believe the US should be India’s premier defence part

What the US president said on India-US ties

I say to every Indian, north and south, Hindus and Muslims, Jews and Christians, rich and poor, young and old; take pride in the glories of your past and unite for even brighter future and let our two nations always stand together as powerful defenders of peace, liberty and hope for a better world

ner and that is the way it is working out. Together, we will defend our sovereignty, security and protect a free and open Indo-Pacific region for our children and for many, many generations to come,” Trump said.

The US President said his country looked forward to providing India with “some of the best and most feared military equipment” on the planet. “We make the greatest weapons ever made. Airplanes, missiles, rockets, ships. We make the best and we’re dealing now with India.

This includes advanced airdefence systems and armed and unarmed aerial vehicles,” he said.

The reference to armed drones comes at a time when India is looking to acquire 30 weaponised Sea Guardian or Predator-B armed drones, with advanced ground control stations, launch and recovery elements, air-to-ground missiles, smart bombs and the like, from the US, as was earlier reported by TOI.

The proposed deals in the pipeline include Sea Guardian armed drones (over \$2.5 billion), six more P-8I longrange maritime patrol aircraft (\$1.8 billion), the National Advanced Surface to Air Missile System-II for the missile shield over Delhi (\$1.8 billion) and 13 big MK-45 naval gun systems for warships (\$1.02 billion).

Trump, on his part, said, “As two great countries, both of us understand that when leaders put interests of their citizens first, we forge strong and fair partnerships to build a more prosperous world. Just months ago, this critical partnership took a major step forward when the US military and your brave Indian armed forces conducted the first-ever land, air and sea military exercises between our two countries... It was something to behold. We called it Tiger Triumph.”

Time to reform the armed forces

The media has widely reported on the battle won for women Army officers; they will now be able to get permanent commission and hold command posts. Though it is not part of the reforms announced by the government, it is a welcome development, especially for a writer of French origin who in his youth often heard of the prowess of Joan of Arc, the Maid of Orleans, who led Charles de Valois' troops to defeat the British in 1429.

Similarly, famed for her slow movements, India seems to have started moving at a faster pace to bring reforms into the armed forces and prepare for tomorrow's conflicts. On August 15, 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced: "To further sharpen coordination between the forces... India will have a chief of defence staff (CDS). This is going to make the forces even more effective."

On December 31, 2019, the outgoing chief of Army staff General Bipin Rawat was appointed the first CDS. Since then, things have progressed relatively fast. One of the compelling reasons to bring in changes is that China has already started moving its pawns: In January 2016, Beijing undertook a series of in-depth reforms of the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

While reiterating the Communist Party of China's absolute leadership over the military, the PLA was asked to win the 'battle of military reforms'. A joint operational command structure for the land forces was established and the seven Military Areas Commands (MACs) were reduced to five more flexible combat Theatre Commands. "The restructure is part of Xi's massive military overhaul, which aims to shift the PLA from an Army-centric system towards a Western-style joint command, in which the Army, Navy and Air Force are equally represented," The South China Morning Post commented.

President Xi asserted: "Under the leadership of the Communist Party, our military has gone from small to big, from weak to strong, from victory to victory." Today the question is: Can India follow suit? Apparently, the train is finally moving: The restructuring of the Indian Army Headquarters has started. There is a proposal to create a new post of Deputy Chief of Army Staff (DCOAS) for Strategic Planning, apart from the DCOAS information system and training, and DCOAS Planning and System. A DCOAS (Strategic Planning) should head the Directorate of Military Intelligence, the Directorate of Military Operation and a newly created Information Warfare branch. It is indeed high time that India thinks about the war of tomorrow, ie Cyber War. Interestingly, two new posts of additional director general (ADG) for vigilance and human rights violations are being created, giving the Army more moral credibility.

The CDS' agenda

Perhaps, more radical in the long run is the creation of a fifth department under the Ministry of Defence, a Department of Military Affairs (DMA) with the CDS as secretary. The DMA has already been allocated clear responsibilities. But the real revolution is the entry of senior Army officers in chairs previously occupied by babus. Three two-star rank officers will soon be joint secretaries in the DMA. "From internal studies led by senior ranking officers on working out the establishment of theatre and joint commands; these are part of the first 100-days agenda of the CDS," a business daily reported.

There is definitely a need to ensure better jointness and integration between the Army, Air Force and Navy. Remember the 1962 War with China, when the Air Force was not even called to participate? The outcome of the conflict could have been entirely different with 'jointness'. One of the first objectives of CDS Gen Bipin Rawat is to set up the first integrated tri-services command for India's air defence headed by an Indian Air Force (IAF) officer by June 2020. Later, a joint peninsula command and a logistics command will follow. Today, each service has its individual air defence set-

up while the new command would integrate assets of the three services and jointly provide air defence cover for India.

Materialising plans

Another piece of good news is that the Indian Defence University (IDU) may finally take off. After years of delays and cost revisions, the IDU is on the CDS' agenda. Let us not forget that the IDU was first mooted 53 years ago and a foundation stone laid in 2013, but here too, the bureaucracy was not interested. The authorities are now aware that a modern Army needs not only officers well-trained on the field, but also intellectually ready to face the challenges of India's security environment and able to formulate policies to take on the new strategic challenges; in other words 'thinking officers'.

Since long, the PLA has been aware of this. One could add another unit to make the armed forces yet more responsive: A historical cell which would be the repository of records of the different directorates and services, which could be supplied to officers posted on the borders or in strategic locations the necessary background to fully grasp the historical aspects of their respective tasks. This may seem insignificant, but the conflict of tomorrow will be multifaceted, and this could be a crucial factor, particularly to tackle China, if required. One can only hope that the political establishment will remain firmly fixed on the reforms; India needs them.

<https://www.defencenews.in/article/Time-to-reform-the-armed-forces-809414>



Tue, 25 Feb 2020

Sukhoi 30 may get AI in new cockpit design

The Sukhoi Su-30 MKI may be the tip of the Indian military's spear but with the aircraft's systems rapidly showing their age, scientists and engineers are working on improvements.

Among developments is a new Artificial Intelligence-infused cockpit being built by the state-owned Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) on its own initiative which can execute commands based on the spoken word.

Speaking to DH, project scientists from HAL Nashik, where the "proof of concept" prototype was made, said that the project had begun in November 2019 to show how the existing analogue cockpit of the Russian-made fighter aircraft could be upgraded.

The new cockpit dispenses with a number of analogue gauges and switches populating the cockpit's front panel, in favour of customisable digital screens, a project scientist said.

"The heart of the cockpit upgrade, however, is a new Artificial Intelligence system which can carry out commands said by the crew," he added.

Pressing a thumb button located on the left-hand side of the cockpit activates the Voice Activated Controller System (VACS), a 2.7-kg unit which uses AI to understand verbal commands. "For example, if the crew pressed the button and said 'altitude and position', the AI system would verbally inform the crew about their current altitude and position. The system has a set of pre-built commands, including weapons selection," an engineer involved in the project said.

The AI is also instrumental in understanding the various accents spoken in India, he added, clarifying that the system had 98% speech recognition accuracy.

HAL said it had not yet attached a cost estimate to the upgrade. It said the glass cockpit came with a weight reduction. Although the prototype made use of some overseas components, the company said that the cockpit would be 100% indigenised in the subsequent iterations.

The combat viability of Su-30 was thrown into sharp relief at the Electronic Warfare Asia symposium in Singapore when retired Air Marshal Daljit Singh commented that several components of the aircraft were becoming obsolete.

Singh's comments were limited to the aircraft's electronic warfare suite and the NIIP N011M Bars radar, a passive electronically scanned array system that offers the crew inferior situational awareness compared to an active scanned array. Singh expressed concern that the aircraft's large radar cross-section would require augmentation of its wingtip.

<https://www.defencenews.in/article/Sukhoi-30-may-get-AI-in-new-cockpit-design-809413>



Tue, 25 Feb 2020

‘Make in India’: Defence Minister Rajnath tells OFB, HAL, BEL, BEML & BDL; Reviews performance

New Delhi: Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh reviewed the performance of the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) and Defence Public Sector Undertakings – Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), Bharat Earth Movers Limited (BEML) and Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) here today. The officials of OFB, HAL, BEL, BEML and BDL gave presentations on their ongoing and future projects to Defence Minister Singh and senior officials of Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence.

While expressing satisfaction at the overall achievements of OFB and these DPSUs, Rajnath Singh urged them to strive further to increase their competitiveness in the global market. Lauding the indigenisation efforts, he called upon the officials to identify more ‘Make in India’ avenues and help in making India self-reliant in defence production. The Defence Minister also urged officials to explore new modes of business models, focusing on increased defence exports. He expressed hope that the DPSUs will play a pivotal role in making India a global manufacturing hub as well as net exporter.

Headquartered in Kolkata, OFB produces state-of-the-art battlefield equipment, ammunitions, and other military hardware for the armed forces and strives to modernise the production facilities, besides training the personnel. With a focus on indigenisation, the OFB has filed 246 Intellectual Property Rights applications. 42 R&D centres with specific technological domains have been set up with project-based collaborations with IITs, NITs and IISc. Development of futuristic technologies with Indian private industries through iDex platform is one of the focus areas of OFB.

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) stated in a Press communication that HAL has consistently performed well in the last five years on several fronts including operations and finance. The company has achieved operational clearance on seven platform: Light Combat Aircraft (LCA), Light Combat Helicopter (LCH), Light Utility Helicopter (LUH), Advanced Light Helicopter – Weapon System Integrated named as Rudra, 19-seater Do-228 civil Aircraft, Jaguar Darin III and the Mirage Upgrade.

In the last five years, two new platforms commenced on overhauling of Hawk and Su-30 MkI. Till January 2020, the company overhauled 21 Hawk Advanced Jet Trainers and 45 Su-30 MKIs. HAL achieved successful integration of BrahMos and Astra missiles on SU-30 MkI aircraft enabling the successful test firing.

The MoD stated that BEL has successfully implemented projects of strategic importance such as Weapon Locating Radar for the Indian Army, Akash Missile System, Coastal Surveillance System for

the Coast Guard, etc. The company has in the recent past successfully indigenised several products and systems including Akash Missile System (6 Squadrons), Low Level Light Weight Radar (Aslesha), Weapon Locating Radar, Ground Based Mobile Elint System, Central Acquisition Radar (Revathi), Coastal Surveillance System, etc. The company recorded an Export Turnover of \$21.6 million in 2018-19. The major countries to which BEL exported its products were Switzerland, USA, France, Germany, Israel, Sweden, Finland, Seychelles, Mauritius, Vietnam and SEZs.

The Ministry also stated that BDL has grown into a multi-product, multi-customer, multi-located enterprise producing defence equipment meeting international quality standards. BDL is the lead integrator of the Akash Weapon System (AWS). Akash has 96% of material sourced from within the country, making the project an example of the 'Make in India' initiative.

BDL is also the production agency for the Medium Range Surface to Air Missile (MRSAM). BDL signed a contract worth Rs 1,188 crore for supply of Varunastra, or the Heavy Weight Torpedo, to the Indian Navy. Varunastra has been designed and developed by DRDO and manufactured by BDL. Amogha – III, a third generation Anti-Tank Guided Missile designed and developed by the in-house R&D of BDL with the support of DRDO was launched during DefExpo 2020.

The MoD further stated that BEML, through the 'Make in India' initiative, for the first time has designed & developed the biggest eco-friendly electrical excavator of 180 tonne capacity, and biggest electric drive dump trucks of 150 tonne & 190 tonne capacities, which serve as import substitution and help promote the cause of green mining and would save foreign exchange. The 180 tonne Electrical Excavator received the Defence Minister's Excellence Award under Design Effort category. The products designed and developed by BEML include Arjun Armoured Repair & Recovery vehicle (ARRV), biggest-ever 850 HP bulldozer, Stainless Steel Electric Multiple Unit, metro cars for Bangalore & Kolkata Metro Corporations, self-propelled eight-wheeler Diesel Electric Multiple Unit (DETC) and unattended train operation (UTO) metro cars for Mumbai Metro.

BEML gave a major thrust to self-reliance and achieved indigenisation levels of over 90% in the mainline mining and construction products, rail coaches, and EMUs; over 80% in High Mobility Vehicles (HMV); and over 65% in metro cars. BEML is also working towards the 'zero import' policy of the Government to reach higher levels of indigenisation, the MoD concluded.

<https://indusdictum.com/2020/02/24/make-in-india-defence-minister-rajnath-tells-ofb-hal-bel-beml-reviews-performance/>



Tue, 25 Feb 2020

Sino-Indian competition in Myanmar in the spotlight with Indian Navy Chief visit

The naval visit last week again focused attention on the role of India and China in the Southeast Asian state, even though New Delhi's weakness lies more in non-security realms

By Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan

New Delhi: Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh reviewed the performance of the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) and Defence Public Sector Undertakings – Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), Bharat Earth Movers Limited (BEML) and Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) here today. The officials of OFB, HAL, BEL, BEML and BDL gave presentations on their ongoing and future projects to Defence Minister Singh and senior officials of Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence.

Last week, India's Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Karambir Singh visited Myanmar in a trip lasting from February 17 to 20. The trip, which came just weeks after Chinese President Xi Jinping's trip to the country, spotlighted the tussle between China and India for influence in the Southeast Asian state.

Myanmar has long factored into India's strategic calculations: Delhi considers relations with Myanmar to be very important, particularly in the context of evolving Indo-Pacific strategic dynamics, and Myanmar is also a key link in furthering India's 'Act East' Policy. For China, which has a bigger political and economic footprint in Myanmar, its inroads into Myanmar have geostrategic implications because it gives Beijing proximity to the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea, maritime space that is crucial to Indian security.

But India nonetheless continues to compete and consolidate its ties with Myanmar for its own interests. As the statement from the Indian Ministry of Defense said, Admiral Singh's "visit is intended to consolidate and enhance the bilateral maritime relations between India and Myanmar."

That was seen in aspects of the visit itself as well. During his visit, Admiral Singh called on a range of top officials, including Admiral Tin Aung San, commander in chief of the Myanmar Navy, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, the Commander in Chief of Defense Services, and other senior government officials, including Aung San Suu Kyi, the State Counselor and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

During his meeting with Admiral Tin Aung San, Adm. Singh offered increased training assistance for the Myanmar Navy. The Indian Navy chief is reported to have briefed the officials on the state of cooperation between the two navies. The navy chief also held interactions with trainees of the National Defense College in Naypyidaw and visited the Naval Dockyard and Training Command of the Myanmar Navy in Yangon.

These gains were notable but not necessarily surprising. The defense aspect of the relationship has been built on by both sides over the past few years, including not just regular exercises, visits, and training, but also defense equipment, with a case in point being when India handed over a diesel-electric *Kilo*-class submarine, *INS Sindhuvir*, which India refurbished after procuring from Russia in the 1980s.

Furthermore, the challenge for India in competing with China in Myanmar lies less in the naval domain and more in other aspects. In the economic domain, for instance, India's lack of capacity to reach out and address many of Myanmar's requirements is stark, especially when pitted against China and its Belt and Road initiative. Key projects, such as the trilateral India-Myanmar-Thailand highway project and the multi-modal Kaladhan Transit Transport project, are behind schedule.

Myanmar's importance to India cannot be emphasized enough. Given India's push for the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), Myanmar remains a critical pillar for closer engagement with the southeast Asian region. But New Delhi is still to resolve its problem with delivering on its promises.

<https://thediplomat.com/2020/02/sino-indian-competition-in-myanmar-in-the-spotlight-with-indian-navy-chief-visit/>

A year after Balakot

Pakistan's options have reduced, India has more room for manoeuvre

By Syd Ata Hasnain

Pakistan's deep state took a major risk in executing the Pulwama attack. It clearly assessed that unless it could sponsor a spectacular terror-related event in Kashmir by early 2019, the comprehensive Indian approach towards conflict management initiated since 2017 could effectively prevent it from further calibration of the situation in Kashmir. An element of irrationality continued to remain a part of Pakistan's policy. It is important to revisit Pakistan's 30-year-old strategy to determine why it suddenly felt insecure and hesitant from 2016 onwards.

The chain of events in Kashmir and part of the Indian counter-strategy, which appeared to unnerve Pakistan's deep state, need to be reviewed to get the right perspective.

From 1989 onwards, Pakistan pursued hybrid war as the core of its strategy. Its then ambiguous nuclear status was exploited in the post-Cold War period, when nuclear strategies were in a state of flux. Pakistan's intent was the long-term emasculation of New Delhi's policy on J&K and attempt to embarrass India by internationalising the issue — the Simla Agreement's provision of bilateralism was never respected by Islamabad and Rawalpindi. From 1998 onwards, when both nations became overtly nuclear-armed, Pakistan became bolder — Kargil 1999 and the attack on Parliament in 2001 seemed to be based on the assumption that the nuclear overhang had closed the window for an effective conventional Indian response. Perhaps the decision not to cross the LoC in 1999, taken for completely different reasons by the Vajpayee government, and the long standoff of 2002 (Operation Parakram) appeared to substantiate India's reluctance. Seven years later, the Mumbai terror attack, too, made Indian reluctance to execute hot pursuit more evident.

The nature of the proxy, hybrid conflict started to change from 2013 onwards when a generational transition in local terror content was apparent. Burhan Wani and his cohorts were reluctant to listen to, and were less under the control of, elements from across the LoC. As its big ticket capability waned, Pakistan's deep state panicked. In addition, there was a sudden change in the stance of the Indian government in mid-2015. The deep state has never been comfortable with talks and did not support Nawaz Sharif. In 2016, it conducted the Pathankot attack in India's hinterland and in September that year, the Uri attack close to the LoC. The year ended with the Nagrota terror attack.

The year 2016 turned out to be decisive and saw a change in the nature and dynamics of hybrid conflict in J&K. The Indian government responded in a graduated way — activity at the LoC increased, followed by the surgical strikes in September 2016 post the Uri attack. The strikes were essentially experimental but provided sufficient inputs to strategise beyond just the tactical level. The perception of a lack of Indian response below the nuclear threshold was effectively breached.

In 2016-17, while the deep state succeeded in bringing mobs to the streets, the Indian government was bold about upping the ante in its counter-terrorist strategy. While Operation All Out was launched to neutralise attempts at increasing the terror footprint, the less visible but extremely effective measures were those that targeted the Pakistan-sponsored ecosystem. This ecosystem comprising a combination of human resources such as over ground workers (OGWs), ideologues and separatists, had permeated the very core of Kashmir. Combined with complex financial networks and an effective communication strategy evolved by Pakistan's Inter State Public Relations (ISPR), it had matured over time. It was given space to function by the persistent Indian strategy to primarily count upon physical neutralisation of terror groups, limiting infiltration and preventing fresh local recruitment, which became rife after 2013.

Most countries have followed this model when facing similar problems as India's. However, the new Indian strategy from 2017 surprised Pakistan. It took some time for Pakistan to realise how subtly this change had taken place, even as the Indian Army went on the kinetic offensive re-adopting some of its practices from the Nineties. By the end of 2018, Pakistan was already on the grey list of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). The Indian National Investigation Agency (NIA) was succeeding in dismantling financial networks and the separatists had become increasingly irrelevant. With the Indian general elections then scheduled for March-April 2019, the deep state assessed that a terror-related event could, with some effort, be branded a "false flag" operation. This assumption came on grounds that the Narendra Modi government would seek a return to office on the back of nationalist fervour generated by Pulwama. The Balakot-type response 12 days later was unexpected, but demonstrated political will, military escalation control and a willingness to engage internationally to neutralise Pakistani propaganda.

The international support that Balakot garnered, the run of military success against terrorist cadres post Pulwama-Balakot and the added political stability at the Centre gave the Indian government the confidence to execute long-awaited political initiatives. Pakistan's attempt to gain greater relevance in Afghanistan through the US and President Donald Trump's ill-informed offer to mediate on J&K, acted as triggers for the decisions of August 5, 2019 — to rescind the special constitutional provisions for J&K.

With a communication lockdown, the political community under strictures and the ecosystem under progressive neutralisation, the time since has seen Pakistan relatively ineffective in the conduct of hybrid war. Now with FATF unrelenting on Pakistan to do more to dismantle the terror infrastructure, an economy which is causing major concern, and the focus shifting to the management of the US interests in Afghanistan, Pakistan finds itself in a dilemma. Internal demands to wind up terror networks are increasing.

All this may point towards Pakistan adopting a more rational course in J&K and preventing situations which it will clearly be in no position to handle. Much depends on the nature of the Afghanistan deal and the extent of Pakistan's involvement. The expectation that the summer of 2020 in J&K will yet be stable may be right but predictions about J&K and applying rationality to Pakistan's actions may not always be the correct approach. India must maintain a tight control, prevent the ecosystem's potential for revamp and remain prepared for all eventualities. The summer of 2020 will be a major decider about the future course of the J&K proxy conflict.

(The writer, a former corps commander of the Srinagar-based 15 Corps, is chancellor, Central University of Kashmir)

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