

23

Reforming Defence Services

They are an organ of the main system and greatly influenced by it. In many ways even they are victims of it.

23.1 Its strengths and weaknesses

- We have 39 ordnance factories. The output of all these factories was less than Rs 4000 cr during 1998-99. Besides these, there are a number of defence undertakings under PSUs that are supporting these ordnance factories by way of technology input, components and parts required for the weapons or ammunitions produced by them. There are eight such PSUs with huge investments, HAL, BEL, BEML, Mazagaon Dock, GRSE, Goa Shipyard, Bharat Dynamics and Misra Dhatu Nigam. Their turnover was about Rs 7000 cr during 1998-99. Since most of their production is not for public sale and is only for inter-governmental supplies, there is little check over their productivity, quality or pricing. We understand, their price structure is designed such that it can meet their overheads. In most cases, the cost of components and products developed and supplied is paid through defence budget. There is therefore little surprise why any amount of allocation for defence services (\cong Rs 89,000 cr for 2006-2007) falls grossly short of their needs and our soldiers have to fight on foot, with guns that are more than 12 years old.

While the Rs 11,000 cr turnover of these 47 very large and extremely prestigious industries looks like chicken feed, the actual value of the goods produced may be much less. All these prestigious government factories and pride of the nation present an image of total lethargy and waste of public wealth. There is no application or purpose of their existence. They were established without any aim. No wonder even after 60 years of our Independence, for every need of defence, we have to depend on the outside world. Many of these 47 factories have many more subsidiary units also, like HAL has 12, which are a sheer waste of wealth, manpower and a source of massive swindling.

Like other things, they too were meant to protect the sovereignty of the nation but are now a liability for the nation. We witnessed their utility during the recent Kargil war (**imagine a small infiltration taking the shape of a war**). One may wonder what will happen if there is an actual war! Thanks to Bofors 1987 guns, some of which still worked in 1999 (no one knows what happened to the guns we may have bought during 1987-1999), otherwise our soldiers may not have had enough arms to fight the battle. Still, as we saw it, it was a battle fought largely on foot, we lacked latest weapons like guided missiles (laser bombs) or gun sensing radars to fire from remote locations, though Bofors guns, as far as we know, were capable of performing such shellings. US fought in Iraq and Cosovo (Yugoslavia) with accurate targeting and without much casualties. Our *jawans* did not have proper kits (clothing, shoes, hand and head gears) to cheat the cold or trek the jagged icy cold peaks of the rough Kargil mountains. They caught frostbite before taking positions to fire and many got killed without doing much. Radio aired patriotic songs, TV showed people building up army in their localities and practising fighting techniques. If US had not intervened and asked the then PM of Pakistan Nawaz Shariff to stop the war, the war could have escalated and caused us heavy losses and casualties. It is a different matter that our polity and bureaucracy denied this fact but Bill Clinton, the then President of US, himself confirmed this on BBC.

- When we were forced to fight the China war in 1961-62, then also we were caught unawares and unprepared. At that time we did not have so much back-up of ordnance factories that we have now. But in 1999 we had the support of 47 ordnance factories and their innumerable subsidiaries and still were caught unawares. We can only waste public money. **On top of it our defence spendings are on the rise and the alarmingly rising defence budgets are always short to meet its needs. What we are doing with all these factories, forces and money is indeed mind-boggling?**
- Arms, aircrafts and ammunitions have been our regular and ever-proliferating needs in the last 60 years to protect our sovereignty. It is amazing that we have failed to produce commensurate artillery that could meet our bare minimum war needs despite our gigantic manufacturing back-up. To talk of aircrafts and fighter planes is surely asking for the moon from these set-ups, although we did produce some Advanced Light Helicopters (Dhruv) and small fighter planes Jaguars from HAL, they both were grounded in 2006 to remove some serious technical snags responsible for their frequent crashes.

Similar is the story of MIG-21 fighter planes. Moreover the number of aircrafts produced so far is just insignificant in the light of massive factories and manufacturing facilities that we possess. What we have produced is a nuclear bomb (not from these factories) and that we may never use. It has become more of a deterrent to ourselves than to our enemies. Sixty years was an enormously long-drawn period in which everything that we needed could have been invented from scratch and produced commercially with the backing of the set-ups that we have. We could even have supplied such artillery to other countries rather than looking desperately at them. But our defence forces are always short of everything – from arms to aircrafts and fighter planes. Necessity is the mother of all inventions. Even in primitive days people would devise ways and means to meet their needs and do new inventions. It was a natural process. But we failed to design our own or even copy guns or aircrafts that we have been buying regularly in such large numbers.

23.2 Fire in arm depots

- Can we become strong militarily if we burn our weapons in our own arm depots? April 2000 in Bharatpur, May 2000 in Kanpur and April, 2001 in Pathankot depots besides at least 10 other major fires in different depots in the past 10 years. From whatever angle we view these incidents, they are deliberate and indicative of connivance, callousness and incompetence of our people. If it is sabotage, then it is failure and failure on every occasion of our security and intelligence. Otherwise these are all deliberate attempts possibly at the behest of those involved in purchases and stores to destroy evidences of theft or quantity of arms in stocks, or their poor quality. **It is also indicative of how our arms and ammunitions reach out in the hands of terrorists and criminals.** If these accidents were because of short-circuit or environmental heat (as they claim) then it is a question of our safety measures. And then, if it happened once, how can it happen again and again and under similar circumstances? These events are enough evidences to suggest that we are not in safe hands. Cruel killings of our soldiers by Bangladesh in April 2001 should also not surprise us.
- In the same context, we also refer to the numerous scams that have come to light in recruitment of security, police and defence personnel where large underhand money transacts. **And we expect those who are so recruited shall protect the sovereignty and integrity of our**

nation or provide protection to the people! Similar to the recruitment of crooked teachers in Haryana later raping their own pupils (Section 8.5(vi)). The incidents of terrorists sneaking deep into cities is surely a consequence of this. Blasts in Delhi in October, 2005 killing about 80 and wounding about 200 is also a consequence of it besides unabated terrorism in J&K and other parts of the country. They also indulge in acts of violence, hooliganism, rapes and looting in trains and elsewhere and that is on the rise - a blemish and a question mark on the propriety of this kind of defence services that we have built for ourselves as our saviours and to protect our nation.

23.3 Propriety of going nuclear

Should one conquer his opponent by force and might or by love and affection is purely a matter of concept. Ideas and philosophies of individuals may differ on such issues. History of mankind has seen many wars having been fought, in which one loses and the other wins. But it is a loss for both. **Lasting peace is possible not by hatred, not by ill-will, not even by winning wars but by spreading love and affection.** Same is true even for the present crusade for annihilation of terrorism from the world scenario (also see Section 7.6). Differences may exist. They exist even in small families, between husband and wife, between siblings of the same family. To have differences with people of the same land or with the neighbours is not unusual. Sorting out such differences is an art, an attitude. In my childhood I was taught: *Conquer anger by pardon and conquer a bad man by good deeds.* It is indeed the gist of life. For every action there is a reaction somewhere, equal and opposite. If we show someone our strength, even a weak person would like to display his strength. It is a simple psychological eruption and normal human behaviour. If we spread out love there is no reason why others will not reciprocate. It is a simple analysis, decision is ours what we would like to display strength or love.

- Nuclear arsenals are to display one's strength, but they are seldom used (except during the Second World War by the US on Japan and most of us condemn it even today irrespective of events that provoked it). Are these unusable arsenals of any worth, particularly in today's world scenario of cold war. Can't we find better tools? Our going nuclear may lead to a South Asian arms race, followed by a needless Sino-Indian arms race. North Korea, Iran and Libya are now trying to go nuclear. All this must have been avoided at all costs.

NUCLEAR TESTS

(12th and 15th May, 1998)

The quick turn of events with five explosions in two days came as a rude shock to the whole world and as a surprise to the Indian people.

Reasons for explosion:

- Security measures against the neighbours (Pakistan and China).
- *Gauri* missile by Pakistan a few days before was the main reason.

Note

Earlier we thought that North Korea had extended technical support to Pakistan but later it was known to be China (now proved with the exposure of Abdul Qadeer Khan, the nuclear scientist of Pakistan (Jan-Feb, 2004)). It was for this reason that our then Defence Minister George Fernandes had called China our biggest enemy and caused a big furore. This statement of his awakened the world and stunned China with sharp reactions.

Indian people in general rejoiced and celebrated, oblivious of other problems the nation was reeling under. It was a good diversion for the people from the burning issues.

- Nuclear explosions by us remind us of the bombarding of US Naval ships at Pearl Harbour by Japan during the Second World War (December 7, 1941) afflicting heavy casualties on US Naval forces who were caught unawares. The Japanese rejoiced but some mourned, for they were able to foresee the consequences ahead. And so it happened. US bombed Hiroshima (August 6, 1945) and Nagasaki (August 9, 1945), the first ever atomic onslaught by one nation on the other. It stunned the whole world and changed the course of thinking of the world leaders. With this emerged the present UN from the ashes of League of Nations, to bring harmony and peace amongst the nations of the world and discourage any war in future.
- After the Indian nuclear explosions there were sharp condemnations by the world. The whole world was on one side and India was standing alone defending its action. Pakistan followed suit and soon conducted similar tests. Others too may follow suit (like North Korea, Iran and Libya have already initiated against the wishes of world community). Action by one encourages others and more aggressive of them may act. History of the past tells us so. The first reaction came from none else than George Bush, the new President of US, invoking National Missile Defence programme (NMD) known as Star Wars (May 2001) (revoking 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty), presumably in the wake of the resistance shown by a few countries,

India being one, besides Iraq of course, in signing the CTBT or pursuing religiously the policy of nuclear non-proliferation. There may be other reasons also that we may not know, nevertheless we now have no locus-standi to suggest to any nation against such moves. It will bring to naught the initiative of former president, Bill Clinton, in this direction and also the efforts made by many countries. This is not a happy situation for the world peace and shows the lack of wisdom and foresight of our leaders.

- Nuclear disarmament is for the benefit of all and for a human cause. It is not the dictates of an individual or a particular nation. There is a world opinion on this and big powers of the world are working on it, with seriousness and sincerity. It is for the love and peace of mankind and not for the benefit of an individual or a country. People may think so but it is not true. It is prudent to follow such moves in the larger interest of the world peace, and also pressurise US and Russia, who possess large stocks of such nuclear arsenals to gradually disarm themselves too.
- It is said that US is benefiting by propagating CTBT and bullying the whole world. This statement is by a few countries only who do not like to contribute to a common cause and want to maintain their own entity for whatever internal reasons. A few such nations cannot make a majority, neither can they call for a consensus on their views.
- As a good nation, like a good citizen, we must support all such moves that are for a common cause and for the good of mankind.
- In fact we should have taken lead and set an example for others to follow. If not, at least supported others.
- In case of doubt one should better discuss, but not jeopardise the cause and consistent efforts of many nations.
- To say others possess bombs, and therefore we must also do so is no wisdom. That means we refuse to understand the spirit behind making an arms-free society.
- Security of a country is above everything else and must be defended at all costs. But can it be defended by making bombs or fighting with other countries? Is it civilized and should it happen? What then is the difference between today, when we are living in a civilized world and call ourselves cultured and more understanding, tolerant and respectful to others, and in ancient times or medieval period when we used to live in isolation and

think in isolation. In those days anybody considering himself stronger than the other would call for an aggression, kill the innocent people and loot their belongings. We are not barbarians, rogues or invaders today. It happened in our early civilizations. Should we display the same culture now? To be big, one has to think big and act big. Actions of contempt like the nuclear tests can benefit a few or make some happy but at what goals are we aiming to achieve through this? We made a bomb and became the 6th nuclear nation in the world. Is it enough to provide us strength? Are we going to drop it on Pakistan? Well, this may never happen neither shall we be allowed to do so and it may remain just a showpiece. When all our defence forces, massive defence spendings, backing of 47 ordnance factories and dozens of their subsidiaries could do no harm to a tiny nation like Pakistan in the last 60 years, then what shall we do now with the bomb, specially when the other country too now possesses it because of us.

Feel ecstatic as we may, but this bomb too shall fall short in abating or obviating the extremist activities. In fact it shall aggravate these and surely it has. We jotted down these words when it was already more than four years when we conducted the tests and there was a great pile-up of arms and forces at the borders, indeed a very tense situation. We decided to withdraw our 7 lac strong troops in Oct. 2002 (Beijing Times, Oct. 21, 2002). It cost the Indian people Rs 8000 cr in 10 months, more than 6 times we spent on Kargil war, (news item), besides the destruction of crops and agri-land and hardship to thousands of families of poor farmers, whose lands were occupied by our troops. The readers may be aghast to learn that these families are already ruined as they are not compensated or rehabilitated as yet (2006).

- Under the mounting border tension we were worried about Pakistan's nuclear capability and its disastrous consequences. Some Indian newspapers and magazines even expressed this fear in their issues of May-June, 2002.
- Nuclear explosions of 1974 (then it was Indira Gandhi) had also brought no solace to its people in the face of continued and unabated extremism. Then also people of this country had rejoiced. The common man feels himself as insecured today as much he was before the tests. We did nothing with the bombs then, we shall be doing nothing with the bombs now. Neither did we have a foresight then nor do we have it now, while the poor and helpless people of J&K

are facing the brunt of it more than before.

- Our going nuclear transfused a new energy and vigour in our government and all those holding similar view. Everybody called the explosions a big deterrent. But nothing of this sort happened. Pakistan reciprocated with similar explosions soon after. Cross border terrorism did not abate, neither could we control it. There were infiltrators through our borders who brought arsenals and material of mass destruction (RDX) with them and sneaked into different cities and towns of the country. **We could not stop their infiltration despite our 7 lac strong armed forces along the borders besides patrolling by paramilitary, police and other forces.** The reason being the kind of recruits through underhand dealings as noted before. But in the name of red alert common man was stopped at all police barricades and check-posts in many cities causing them undue harassment and embarrassment. In teasing jobs our boys are incredible. **The police will search the car's trunk and flash torches at the faces, ask for driving licence and identity card. Instead of patrolling at the borders they will check people in cities. And we think in this manner we shall be able to curb infiltration at borders, control killings in J&K or stop bomb blasts in cities?**
 - The threat of violence and internal disorders is always alive, rather on the rise in the wake of regular bomb blasts at Varanasi, North-East regions, J&K, Mumbai and Delhi etc.
 - In no way have the nuclear bombs played any deterrent to others. Kargil happened after this. We may glorify our success to fool the ignorant people; but the fact remains that it was a shame for a country of our stature to have exposed our unpreparedness and incompetence once again. We had inadequate equipment and were caught unawares. We won the war due to the sacrifice of our *jawans* and celebrated it with such a gaiety^a. But we soon realised it was not our win as much as it was the intervention of the then US President as noted before.

^a Note

Similar to our leaders' repeated proud pronouncements at all public forums and through media of having successfully conducted J&K elections (2002), though at the cost of minimum 800 innocent lives (BBC news, Oct. 2002).

PM VISIT TO US IN JULY 2005

US President's remark to extend nuclear cooperation and transfer of civilian nuclear reactors to India without signing NPT may bring rejoice

to Indian government and its people by and large. But it surely negates the effort once made by earlier US President Bill Clinton to make the world a safe place to live. Earlier also UN's soft peddling on such delicate world issues has encouraged nuclear proliferation. Pakistan's following suit immediately after Indian nuclear tests in 1998 and emergence of North Korea, Iran and Libya¹ to pursue nuclear arms race are all result of UN obliviousness and world community paying little heed to such developments. All this instigated the adamant and vociferous countries to follow suit unmindful of its dreadful effects that the world shall be exposed to in times ahead. In our view and in the larger perspective for the world safety, the US President's gesture to appease India for India to align with US policies and philosophies like it did with UK to support its aggression against Iraq is not a healthy sign in the face of Iraq episode. It is surely not healthy for the future world. US gesture is a corollary to Indian politics of convenience and connivance.

F16 Fighter planes

Prior to the above (March 2005) US played monkey to Pakistan and India by selling F16 fighter planes to Pakistan and making an offer to India. Eventually India may succumb. It shall mean shelling out about Rs 2 lac cr hard earned people's money to US for maintaining a balance of military power against each other.

PRESIDENT BUSH RECIPROCAL VISIT TO INDIA IN FEB. 2006

Nuclear fuel (uranium) is our need to keep nuclear "power"² projects operational, as "power" is our necessity. Tranquility for world community and future generations is equally essential. The present deal with US (US extending us expertise and meeting our uranium needs) has sent euphoria amongst the masses oblivious to the commitment a nation owes to the world community. Our earlier move to go nuclear and subsequent adamance not to sign NPT has already raised doubt on our intentions, irrespective of our vociferous pronouncements in the world forums to pursue nuclear tests only for peaceful purposes and to fulfil nation's "power" needs. We have already witnessed its

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1. In 2004 Libya relented its stand in favour of economic regeneration and upliftment of its people as US economic sanctions were unbearable for them.
 2. Because of radiation hazards, we shall give more impetus to hydel generation and other non-conventional energy resources rather than nuclear as discussed in Chapter 17.

repercussions in 1998 when Pakistan followed suit and went nuclear prompting others also to pursue their nuclear quests. In the present deal Pakistan finding itself left out wants to have a similar deal with US. Watching from the brink many others may want to pursue nuclear programmes mustering courage and displaying fearlessness. For instance, Iran has already pronounced that their nuclear quest is only to fulfil their power needs. We are afraid, it may be difficult now to dissuade them from nuclear proliferation and we may be entering into a nuclear world in times ahead. Remorsefully, we have failed to set an example for others.

We admire the statesmanship of Australia in politely declining request to support our nuclear needs in the absence of our willingness to sign the NPT. It should be an example for others. It is another matter that they too, in the changed world scenario may not stick to this principle for long and surely so. They have now agreed to supply uranium to China (April 2006) for its nuclear power stations without China signing the NPT. While Russia waiting until now for US decision has agreed to supplement our nuclear needs post US agreement. We rejoiced but US resented in the light of their deal, and that is not a good sign.

US retracting from their earlier stance (sanctions against us for nuclear co-operation) seemingly is a conspicuous move of balancing military might in the South-East-Asian region. Their basic aim is to have India as their close ally like UK is, to counter China's arms pile-up and support US in the hour of need. It is oblivious to the fact that instead, it may instigate an avoidable arms pile-up in the Asian region much against our own interest and also give latitude to uranium rich nations to oblige countries seeking this fuel even if it is in the guise of fulfilling their power needs without signing CTBT/NPT. Apparently, the present move may encourage nuclear proliferation rather than containing it in the cold-war era. Australia agreeing to supply uranium to China immediately after US-India accord purports our hunch.

23.4 Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)

- By not signing it we neither become big nor strong militarily that the world shall envy us. But what does it prove when we are not able to abate the cross border terrorism or guarantee peace and tranquillity to the people of J&K. For that matter we are not able to control such activities even elsewhere in the country like in Andhra, Bihar, Maharastra, Delhi and the North Eastern states. How shall

not signing the CTBT improve our strength or capability to address such burning perpetual issues we don't understand? We have failed even to address the very general problems facing the country, such as illiteracy, poverty and backwardness that have cast their gloomy shadows on at least 68% of our people. **Not signing the CTBT shall not solve any of these problems. It can only make an issue with the world community or a topic of debate at a world forum.** It may rather send out a message to the world community of our arrogance and lack of attitude to understand the purpose of CTBT. *We* hope our insistence is not to appease the ignorant masses. But it may surely send out wrong signals, frustrating the move of nuclear non-proliferation (US recent move of NMD at least suggests so). The move of US invoking NMD and subsequent war against Iraq has been extremely shocking and painful besides North Korea, Iran and Libya trying to go nuclear.

- If leaders like the US take a retreat, then what will happen to others? What is right must prevail and one should follow, irrespective of what others think or say. US's stature is very tall, it should not have changed course in the mid-stream after having shown the right path to the world community. Let not the efforts of his predecessor and of many other nations be negated.
- The countries which jeopardized the CTBT in 1996 were India, Israel, Pakistan and North Korea. Of them all, India was more vociferous. But in the face of the five nuclear giants (P5) the US, Russia, China, France and the UK, can we become a nuclear force by not signing the CTBT? The stockpile with them, particularly with US and Russia, is so huge that it may take them 25 years to destroy it. Destruction of Nuclear weapons is more complex than manufacturing them. If the countries who have vetoed the move feel that by doing so they can emerge as nuclear powers and stand by the nuclear giants, it is surely their wishful thinking.

It is therefore, advisable to go ahead in disarming the whole world of its nuclear arsenal and stop its proliferation in future, even if the 5 nuclear powers do not follow suit immediately. Let's try to see the positive side of it. Today the whole world is more aware of the threats of nuclear arsenals and their catastrophic consequences and wants a nuclear-free world. It will be a positive step forward to signing the CTBT and beginning towards a total nuclear disarmament one day.

[US war against Iraq (March, 2003) despite protests by most nations, is a very sad event in a civilized world and has shattered all such hopes at least for the present. **It is unfortunate that UN too has fallen short of its obligations (like the League of Nations) and has failed to display its authority in defusing war-like situations in many parts of the world].**

Note

Different people may have different view point on CTBT. But our first and foremost task is economic reconstruction to alleviate people from their perennial sorrows and sufferings.

In our plans the basic thrust will be on:

- Achieving peaceful coexistence worldwide and sending out message of love and tranquillity to the entire world community
- Doing extensive R&D to become strong and self dependent for all our security and defence needs.
- Making optimum utilisation of our men, machines and defence establishments.