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RETHINKING SELF RELIANCE IN DEFENCE

By Lt Gen N B Singh, Veteran
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The CAG report tabled in the monsoon session of the Parliament raising questions on the offsets as a part of the Rafale acquisition is timely and one hopes it will accelerate the pace of setting up technical capabilities agreed by both sides. It is probably the first time when the supplier has agreed to transfer the complete technology for manufacture of high end engines. A trail blazing initiative, if executed with commitment and ownership it can go a long way in filling up a vital capability gap in the arena of propulsion systems.

In the past the extreme focus on quickly completing the procurement process, ended up in receipt of partial transfer of technology (TOT) with critical gaps, where reliance on the OEM remains till date. Combat vehicles, missiles, guns, aircraft are some areas where such technical capability gaps still exist despite multiple TOTs.

The country cannot graduate to becoming self-reliant till such technology gaps are filled. This calls for a capability centric Defence acquisition policy. Every acquisition should result in not only acquiring an operational capability for the armed forces but also an industrial capability for the nation. This calls for a technology gap analysis alongside every major acquisition.

We should aspire to be self-reliant in areas of military technology deemed essential for mission success. This means possessing minimum capabilities i.e. baseline Defence engineering know how needed to design, develop, manufacture and maintain critical Defence equipment and sensors. It needs to be under stood that today's weapon platforms are capital intensive, complex systems hardwired with multi-disciplinary technologies and are likely to be retained in service for 30-40 years at the least. Replacements are simply unaffordable. Hence, it is extremely important to maintain a long term knowledge cache that allows insertion of new technologies to address operational capability gaps.

Consolidation of Defence industrial capabilities has taken place in the US, Europe and Russia as a response to falling Defence budgets and we too need to reach this end state without any further squandering of public money and trust. Making several Indian companies develop prototypes and offer for competitive evaluation on no cost no commitment as mandated in the DPP is retrograde and reflective of procurement mindset. It is a waste of national resources. Instead, rolling out of three to four collaborative programs for development of complex systems in an atmosphere of trust, transparency and information sharing between the Services, public and private sector, keeping nation first, makes sense. Public sector entities could become the lead integrator having the foundational knowledge and financial muscle, with sub system level work share given to private sector units. Most countries whose complex systems are on offer for manufacture today adopted this route, putting the entire weight of Govt. scientific community and industry behind such projects. A knowledge centric Defence industrial base will get established in the stride. Israel is an example.

Projects like the FICV, wheeled armored personnel carrier, self-propelled gun missile system, utility helicopters and low earth orbit satellites can be initiated using this collaborative approach. A collaborative strategy would any day be more beneficial in setting up an indigenous Defence industrial base than making Indian companies compete and pull down each other. The fate of the FICV programme which has remained on paper for the past 15 years is an example of how industries will kill a project in case of competing interests. In the Indian context, it is important that critical capability development programs are spearheaded by the public sector with vendor participation at sub system level if operational capability gaps are to be plugged timely. The standoff at LAC has reinforced the fact that past practices of procrastination and deferment will no longer secure national borders .The scale of the new threat is monumental by all accounts and will need a long term capability centric modernization, maximizing use of new, multi domain technologies with the aim of transforming the military into a truly agile and aware force, centered around force self-sufficiency.

Force self-sufficiency is important as it provides the sustained capacity to respond to emerging threats, especially if the conflict spreads to other theatres and fronts. A thinking adversary may prolong operations or expand objectives to outstretch our capabilities, denuding mass the controlling principle of war. Self-reliance and self-sufficiency will help prevent such vulnerability. The case for technical assistance for development of indigenous aero engines is a step in the right direction and would fill up a critical technology gap if implemented with due diligence.

Salvage UN for a Better Tomorrow

By Dr Bala Bhaskaran

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Paternalistic structure of the Security Council is outdated and irrelevant; Democratization is the only alternative. Let us use the Covid-crisis to bring about the transition.

UN, earlier known as UNO, has been created, in the post-second-world-war scenario, through the Bretton Woods process, to address international conflicts and crisis through appropriate dialogues and interventions. Its ability to achieve this stated objective has not been all that great, nor even comfortable. There have been many issues that were resolved, but many more have not been resolved despite valiant attempts. The reason is that UN and the comity of member-nations are very much like George Orwell's Animal Farm where all animals are equal but some are a bit more equal. There are nations and nations. For major part of the latter half of the 20th century we had a bipolar world. Many of the international conflicts and crisis were the outcome of the cold-war; many were pulled in opposite directions by these poles. All such situations defied resolution because UN could not overrule or discipline any of the polar-groups. With the collapse of the USSR, many felt that the UN became captive to the whims of the single pole that continued to exist. Now, the world has become multi-polar.

Prime concerns

At present all the member-nations are members of the General Assembly; the Security Council has five permanent members identified at the inception of UN. These members are US, UK, USSR (later Russia), France and China. The first four came into the Security Council as victors of the Second World War and the founders of UN; China was represented by Taiwan, an island in the Pacific Ocean which was outside the People's Republic of China. Obviously, this was the choice of the US who had more say in the initial days. Later, towards the close of the 20th century, Taiwan was replaced by People's Republic of China. The membership of the Security Council has become almost hereditary; this is one prime weakness of the UN in not being able to represent the aspirations of the international community.

All critical resolutions of the UN need to be cleared by the Security Council with total consent. Even if one member objects, the resolution would not be carried through. Many important issues do not get access to the UN because of this veto power. This is another prime weakness of the UN in handling pressing international issues.

All other weaknesses of the UN can be overcome if these two prime weaknesses are resolved. So far none of the Security Council members was willing to discuss this issue because each has a vested interest in retaining the veto power. The world has changed a lot since the inception of UN in 1945. From a bi-polar world in the 1960s we will be moving into a multi-polar situation in the 2020s. In 2020, the world is keen to discuss the pandemic of Covid-19 in the UN, but unable to do so because China does not wish it. What use is the UN if it cannot deliberate on a pandemic that has affected millions across the globe, taken the lives of many and has crippled the global GDP by at least a fifth of its annual-volume? Besides the concept of permanent membership smacks of feudalism least befitting to an enlightened world of the 21st century. This is the inflexion point for reform of the UN.

Elements of Reform

What should be the elements of the reform? Since the UN is forum of all nations of the globe its constitution and internal processes should reflect this ethos. This noble objective can be achieved through two basic / principal rules of representation and governance.

1) Every nation on the globe shall be offered a membership to the General Assembly of the UN with the broad guidelines of
   a) Membership shall be irrespective of the form of the government of the nation - democratic/autocratic/ monarchy/military junta/ etc.
   b) Membership is not allotted through the decision of the Security Council. Nobody shall have power to deny membership to any nation.
   c) Nobody can take away the membership; UN may impose strictures/ penalties etc., through due process, for defaults in discipline/compliance.
   d) Every member is expected to pay membership fee towards the expenses of the UN. This shall be linked to the GDP of the nation and shall be decided by the UN based on its budget needs.

2) Security Council [SC] is the upper house of the UN vested with certain amount of decision/authority. Strength of 9 members is suggested. These members shall be prominent nations of the world and acceptable to at least two-thirds of the members of the General Assembly. They should broadly represent various regions/continents of the globe. The membership shall not be permanent; it is subject to review/recall/election at intervals of 5 years. The rules guiding their choice/retention/recall are

   a) There shall be 9 members in the Security Council

   b) Initially the top-9 economies of the world shall become the members of the Security Council.

   c) The members will have a mandate for 5 years. At the end of 5 years the members are eligible to seek fresh mandate from the General Assembly. Each member will have 9 votes to be cast to 9 individual member-nations. No member can cast more than one vote to any candidate-member

   d) Only nations with two-thirds votes in the GA shall become members of SC. To fulfill this criterion, multiple rounds of polling may be held, if necessary.

   e) An SC-member can be recalled for indiscipline or rogue/unethical behavior or similar other issues. The recall will need two-third majority in GA and SC respectively.

   f) For non-repayment of membership fees, a member-nation will be deprived of its voting rights till the default is cleared.

3) Important policies and decisions will need the clearance of Security Council. [The present policy in this matter, with modifications as considered necessary, may be continued]

4) Resources of UN will have to come primarily from the membership fees.
   a) Membership fees (fees to be a member of the GA) shall be decided on the basis of "from each according to his capability". Nominal value of GDP in dollar terms shall be the basis of deciding a member's capability. The suggestion is to link the membership fees to a fixed percentage of the nation's GDP. The exact percentage should be worked out after considering the annual budget of UN and the value of the global GDP.

b) When a nation is elected as member of the Security Council, the nation is bound to pay additional fees. The membership fees to the SC should also be fixed in a similar manner; the fees for SC shall be higher than the fees for GA.

c) UN and its Resource Mobilization Team shall explore other means of raising resources so that the burden on the members by way of membership fees can be minimized.

5) Some additional points to the guidelines will be:

a) There will be no veto power with any SC-member.

b) Normal resolutions will need simple majority of 50 % or more votes. Special resolutions will need two-thirds majority.

c) Any Resolution that has global or long-term policy implication or Substantial Resource [financial/military/other] implication is treated as 'Special Resolution.' All other resolutions will be treated as 'Simple Resolution.'

This author is proposing this set of reforms as they are easy to comprehend. Primarily, these reforms will make the UN more participative, representative and hence democratic. It will no more be hegemony of certain groups and lobbies. To a large extent, this set is adequate to take care of the concerns of the 21st century.

But who will Bell the Cat?

None of the current SC members would like to forego the veto power they are enjoying. Only in a crisis situation, when everybody is keen to reign in the tangential whims of member-nations, will the comity of nations have the opportunity of debating the structure of the UN. The vast number of GA members, the silent majority will have to take the initiative to drive the reforms. Let this idea be debated among them; once it becomes a talking point, the momentum should push it through. The current crisis situation is an opportune moment to think of alternatives. Let sane thinking prevail on all or else UN will be part of history and a relic of the world.

The Dalai Lama, India and Tibetan Buddhism

By Dr Jigme Yeshe Lama
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In the year 1959, the Dalai Lama along with tens of thousands of Tibetans were forced into exile after the occupation of their homeland by China. Since then, for more than six decades, the Dalai Lama (the Tibetan spiritual leader) has made India his second home, a country that has given him the status of an honoured guest providing shelter and services to him and his people. With support from the successive Indian governments, the Tibetans have established a government in exile, based in Dharamsala in the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh.

Numerous state governments in India have given land and other facilities to build their settlement camps. There are 39 formal settlements of the Tibetans and dozens of informal communities across India where they live. The state governments have aided in the construction of schools, monasteries and other cultural institutions leading to preservation of the Tibetan way of life.

Support and aid from India have sustained the Tibetan identity and culture that is under much duress in its homeland. India's hospitality to the Tibetans has led to the survival of a unique civilisation that used to thrive in the Tibetan plateau. It is due to this indebtedness that the Tibetans, especially the Dalai Lama, have repeatedly expressed their gratitude to India for providing them with a space to sustain themselves. The Dalai Lama often terms himself as a "son of India." The year 2019 was commemorated by the exiled Tibetans as 'Thank You India' year to express their utmost gratitude.

The Indian support has increased the resiliency of the Tibetan refugee population that has led to the survival of a Tibetan way of life. On the other hand, for India, the presence of the Tibetans is beneficial, especially in the long run as the festering territorial disputes in the Himalayas with China are tied to Tibet and Tibetans. The presence of the Dalai Lama along with the other Tibetan Buddhist hierarchs in India provides New Delhi with an advantage to gain legitimacy over the predominantly Tibetan Buddhist communities in the Himalayas.

The Indian state's successful rehabilitation of Tibetans has also earned praises from other countries, thus increasing its soft power. The presence of Tibetans with their brand of Buddhism has benefited India as thousands of foreigners are seen to be attracted to Tibetan Buddhism. They make their annual forays for teachings and empowerments from the numerous Tibetan Buddhist masters based in India. Thus, they are a good source of revenue for the Indian state and also aid in boosting the local economy. Under His Holiness the Dalai Lama, numerous Kalachakra empowerments have been bestowed by him to hundreds of thousands in different parts of India. Multiple of them being given in Bodh Gaya, Bihar that has led to the flourishing of the local economy.

The potential of an economic boost from such a Buddhist empowerment was even comprehended by the local business community based in Dharamsala when in 2019 they wrote an appeal letter to the Dalai Lama for a possible 2019 Kalachakra teachings in the hill town. Hence, the Tibetans are seen to be actively contributing to the economy of their adopted home. A significant number of them from the younger generation have received education in Indian colleges and universities and are seen to be employed in various sectors within the Indian economy.

Tibetans are also recruited in Establishment 22, a special force under the supervision of the RAW, India's external intelligence agency and are thus directly tasked with protecting the integrity of their adopted homeland. In the recent clashes between India and China over the Galwan valley in Ladakh, the bravery of the Tibetan troops was on display, when Nyima Tenzin, a company leader died in a landmine blast in late August, near the site of the border tensions with Chinese troops[1].

In the past, Establishment 22 were used for highly sensitive military operations such as 'Operation Eagle' (Chittagong Hills in the 1971 Indo-Pak war), 'Operation Bluestar' (Golden Temple in 1984) and 'Operation Vijay' (Kargil, 1999)[2]. The direct participation of Tibetans in the security of India is an important contribution from the refugee population towards its adopted home.

However, the single most important contribution made by the Tibetans for India is seen through their preservation and propagation of Vajrayana Buddhism, a school of Buddhism that originated in India from the fourth century CE [3]. This form of Buddhism incorporated numerous elements of tantricism that offered a speedy path to enlightenment. It had flourished in India from the 8th century CE to around 11th century CE receiving support and royal patronage from the Palas, Senas and the Gupta empires, many of which were located in eastern India.

Vajrayana practices were also prevalent in the northern parts of the subcontinent, in modern-day Kashmir and Swat valley Pakistan. They were richly patronised by the Kushana dynasty, and it was the Kushana emperor Kanishka who as a mighty patron had organised a historic religious council [4] in Kashmir that brought Vajrayana Buddhism into the limelight. It is seen to be incorporating local and tribal practices and thus can be viewed as a highly polymorphous belief system that exhibits significant hybridity.

These plural norms associated with Vajrayana Buddhism represent an important phase of Indian history, a period when a multitude of philosophies and practices co-existed and contended with each other. This was an age of heterodoxies that forms the core of the Indian identity, which at present is eroding. As stated earlier, Vajrayana Buddhism found adherents in Tibet and the Himalayas, where it was institutionalised by the monastic system and the lamas.

Buddhism saw a decline in India under the twin pressures of Turkic invasion in Eastern India and the Hindu renaissance, which led to the construction of elaborate temples and a shift in royal patronage [5].

Tantric Buddhism eventually made its way to the Tibetan plateau that further flowered into diverse schools within Tibetan Buddhism. There is a constant affirmation by the various Tibetan Buddhist schools of their Indian linkages, which is seen with them tracing their lineages to the numerous tantric masters who were based in India or who did travel to Tibet and the Himalayas.

The four major schools of Tibetan Buddhism are the Nyingma, Sakya, Kagyu and Geluk, who trace their philosophical roots to numerous Vajrayana masters from India. In this context, the activities of the Eighty-four mahasiddhas from India assume importance as many of them directly contributed in the creation of the various schools within Tibetan Buddhism. The role of the legendary Guru Padmasambhava, who was born in Swat valley, present-day Pakistan in the 8th century CE in shaping Buddhism in Tibet and the Himalayas become important.

He received much of his Buddhist education from the numerous mahaviharas located in Northern India, and he was invited by the Tibetan emperor Trisong Detsan to help in the construction of the first Tibetan Buddhist monastery in Tibet. Through Guru Padmasambhava's teachings, the oldest school that is the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism was established.

The most famous Indian scholar to visit Tibet during what came to be called the second dissemination of Buddhism was the Bengali master Atisa, whose followers laid the foundation of the Kadampa school that in turn provided the model for all later Tibetan monasticism[6], especially seen in the Geluk school to which the Dalai Lamas have traditionally belonged to.

Figures such as Tilopa, Naropa and Virupa who were active in India during the 9th and 10th centuries CE were instrumental in the establishment of the Kagyu and Sakya schools of Tibetan Buddhism. The huge corpus of Sanskrit text was translated into Tibetan which was studied in the monasteries, and that formed the basis of the religious and spiritual tradition in Tibet and the Himalayas.

No wonder, the scholar and Indian nationalist Rahul Sankrityayan went to Tibet in the 1930s in search of the Buddhist manuscripts. In this formidable task, he received much help from the Tibetan monk Gendun Chopel. He had discovered original Sanskrit hand-lettered, palm leaf manuscripts which had been translated and stored in vaults at Sakya, Pyokhang, Ngor and other monasteries in Tibet [7]. These Buddhist commentaries had been lost in its home of origin, India but had been preserved and propagated by the communities in Tibet and the Himalayas.

The Chinese invasion and the subsequent exiling of the Tibetans to India and other parts of the world have led to the global dissemination of Tibetan Buddhism. More importantly, Tibetan Buddhism has returned to its home of origin, where it was part of the numerous philosophies that used to grow and which gave India its pluralism and diversity. The numerous monasteries built by the Tibetans are seen to be upholding this ancient Indian thought.

More importantly, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama is a torchbearer for the propagation of this Indian philosophy which is dubbed by him as the 'Nalanda School'. Almost all his teachings and writings has centered around the teachings of Indian Buddhist masters, thus infusing life to a system of thought that once thrived in India. This should be seen as the greatest contribution from the Tibetans to their adopted homeland, fondly termed by them as "*phagpay yul*" or "*aryavarta*".

FIRST EVER RANSOMWARE DEATH!

By Sanjay Sahay

Author belongs to the 1989 batch of the IPS, of Karnataka cadre. He has accomplished high degree of professionalism in wide and varied professional assignments. He took voluntary retirement from service in March 2020. At the time of retirement he was ADG of Karnataka Police of Computer Wing and is credited for imbibing technology in policing. He is an avid public speaker on information technology, cyber security and management issues.

Things keep on getting crazier in the COVID-19 days, some related to the pandemic and some unconnected, nonetheless fall in the category of one of its kind. When an ambulance carrying a patient was reaching the University Hospital is Düsseldorf on Sept 11 night, it was sent to Wuppertal instead, 20 kms away. This is Germany. The treatment which was due to the patient in the first hospital was not made available on account of a hacker attack. The medical attention was delayed by an hour, which was critical. The woman died shortly thereafter. This is suspected to the first ransomware death in the world. Hospitals have been hit earlier as well by ransomware attack, how the future would unfold is seemingly clear.

Ransomware is the biggest cyber crime of the day, can lock data and operations for an individual user to critical infrastructure; airports, electric grids anything. We even now are happy with paying lip service to what is slowly developing into a pandemic or at the least can create panic of unimaginable proportions. German authorities in the instant case have already opened a"negligent homicide" investigation. The cyber attack which led to network outages had forced rerouting of patients, for even those who where were in need of emergency care. The 78 year old deceased in this case, an old woman, was in need of immediate medical attention for an aneurysm. She died after being sent to another city.

The homicide adds to blackmail and computer hacking investigations already underway. Police on their part to bring normalcy to the hospital operations contacted the hackers. They persuaded them to provide the digital key that would decrypt 30 infected severs of the hospital. What is the fate of the investigation in a ransomware case you can well imagine. Encryption has been creating insurmountable problems in the investigation of a variety of cases. Allegedly, the hackers did not know that they had attacked a hospital. A crime of this nature speaks a lot about what the future has in store for us. Even after so many days, the hospital is still trying to recover it's IT systems. Emergency care is likely to be resumed within the next week.

Being casual in Cyber Security can throw you out of business, still it persists. Might be a huge jolt would help. The update for the Citrix software in use has been available since January. Federal Office for Information Security said, "We warned of the vulnerability back in January and pointed out the consequences of its exploitation." It has been a known flaw in Citrix, provider of a VPN tool. This situation as not as strange as it looks, it is this precarious situation that might be the norm, its just chance that the hacks have not happened. Only proactive action can save the situation. The always well intentioned United Nations has called the nation states and cyber criminals to uphold a "digital ceasefire" amid the ravages to the coronavirus pandemic."

PLAYING WITH CYBER SECURITY IS WORSE THAN PLAYING WITH FIRE.

Nation is Indebted to:

Freedom Fighter
Uda Devi
Martyred 16 Nov 1857

Uda Devi was one of the prominent 'Dalit Veeranganas', who participated in the first battle of independence of 1857 against the British East India Company and led one of the fiercest battles in Lucknow which was termed Battle in Sikandar Bagh. She alone killed as many as 32 British soldiers before she died on the battlefield on November 16, 1857. She passed away more than 150 years ago but her bravery and courage is still an inspiration for many.

She was born into a Dalit family in a village in Awadh, Uttar Pradesh. At a young age, she sensed the anger among people against the British administration. She went to Begum Hazrat Mahal to seek help in preparation for the battle against the British. The Begum helped her to form the women's battalion which Uda Devi led herself. When Awadh was attacked by the British, she along with her husband became part of the armed resistance.

Even today she is praised in folk lore's in Awadh region.

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