CHAPTER VI
DEFENCE DYNAMICS PRIOR TO 1971

The defence policy of independent India borrowed the philosophy of Indian National Congress to begin with. It believed that Free India would be free from any kind of external threat. Its assumption was based on the belief that all major powers would be preoccupied in their own reconstruction programmes in the post World War II Era, and that immediate neighbours would recognise the strength of India. The above could be further substantiated by some of the resolutions, speeches and writings made during of the national movement.

As early as 1928 Nehru spoke publically that "India was protected by the balance of power." He believed that (a) France, Germany and Italy were 'too much involved in their mutual hatred and jealousy and were too afraid of each other of trouble us at all; (b) The United States was 'too far away for effective action; (c) Japan had to face the hostility of the United States and the Western European powers and hence would dare to embark on a new adventure wish would be very dangerous; (d) Afghanistan 'may at the most risk a number of successful raids before we can defeat it and hold it in cheek, and (e) Danger from Russia was largely imaginary, since no
country is in greater need of peace than Russia. He further explained this by saying that: "The great war, the civil war, the famine and the blockade have shaken her foundations and done her tremendous injury...... she desires peace to build up the new social order she has established..... Her whole government was based on the goodwill of the peasantry and she cannot count on this goodwill in an oppressive campaign. She has so many enemies that she dare not of her own accord short an invasion of India and leave her Western flanks exposed to attack. Nor has she any economic reason to covet India... She wants Capital and Machinery and India can supply neither." But he made his position very clear on defence when he said "when freedom comes, we shall develop our army and strengthen it and make it more efficient than it is to-day."  

Nehru explained his thesis of balance of power in his two articles on Indian Defence in 1931 when he wrote that "it may be that some will covet her, but the master desire will be to prevent any other nation from possessing India. No country will tolerate the idea of another acquiring the commanding position which England occupied for so long. If any power was covetous enough to make the attempt, all the others would combine to trounce the intruder. This mutual rivalry would in itself be the surest guarantee against an attack of India."  

In 1934, while discussing Gandhi's article "Doctrine of the Sword," Nehru clarified his own position in his autobiography:
We were moved by these arguments, but for us and for the National Congress as a whole the Non-violent method was not and could not be, a religion or an unchallengeable creed or dogma, it could only be a policy and a method promising certain results, and by those results it would have to be finally judged. Individualism might make of it a religious or an incontrovertible creed, but no political organisation, so long as it remained political, could do so.¹

Then on 4 February 1936 Nehru again projected his views that a Free India would enjoy relative security against external aggression.

Further, in a article entitled “Defence of India” published in Young India. Nehru discussed the possibilities of attack on India by the USA, Japan, China and the Soviet Union and concluded that the only possible attack could come from Russia but only till such times, India achieves independence. He wrote: „...the danger from Russia, such as there is, is caused solely by this rivalry between her and England. It ceases for us as soon as British domination is removed and we are free. Our position, thus in a military sense, is better and stronger as an independent country than it would be if we continued to be involved in British internal Policy. We are inevitably led to the conclusion that the position of free India in the world would be a favourable one and the chances of external attack on her are remote.º
Then before World War II, he further confirmed his views in an article entitled 'The Unity of India', dismissing the possibilities of any threat from western powers as each one of them was too fearful of their neighbours. He further wrote that "Our policy towards them will be one of close friendship and cooperation, utterly unlike the 'Forward Policy' of the British. "There is no fear of any attack by Japan, because it, first, would have to absorb China and then have engage other powers. The overland route was blocked by deserts and the Himalayas offered 'an effective barrier and not even air fleets can come that way', the maritime approach was long, intricate, and dangerous. 'A Japanese invasion of India could become a practical proportion only if China has been completely crushed, and if the United States, the Soviet Union and England have been effectively humbled. That is a large undertaking.'"6

"Thus we see that, normally speaking, there is no great or obvious danger of the invasion of India from without. Still, we live in an abnormal world, full of war and aggression. International Law has created to be, treaties and undertakings have no value, gangsterism prevails unabashed among the nations. We realise that anything may happen in this epoch of revolution and wars and that the only thing to be done to protect ourselves is to rely on our own strength and at the same time that we pursue consciously a policy of peace. Risks have to be taken whatever the path we follow. Thus we are prepared to take the risk."7
It can thus be concluded that Nehru firmly believed that with India's size geo-strategic location and historical traditions, India faces no threat from any direction.

On the other hand Subhash Chandra Bose, President of Indian National Congress had his own view on defence. He argued for the creation of a military capability based on a defence industry under solely public ownership.9 By the closing years of Second World War, an apparent change seems to have come in the psyche of Congress leaders. It could be seen by statement of Nehru in 1947 in Bombay that "India would defend itself by all the means at its disposal".9 This statement probably, did not exclude atomic weapons.

Earlier to Sept 7, 1946, Nehru, as Vice-Chairman of the Viceroy's Executive Council, made it very clear in his broadcast about his proposal to keep away from the power politics of groups aligned against one another which have led in the past to two world wars and which may again lead to disaster on an even vaster scale. He said: "We believe that peace and freedom are indivisible.... We seek no domination over others and we claim no priviledge position over other people".10

Further on August 15, 1947, the members of the Constituent Assembly (of India) took a pledge of dedicate themselves to that ancient land attaining her rightful place in the world and making her full and willing contribution to the promotion of world peace and welfare of mankind.11
Thus, Congress came to power in 1947, with a defence policy which could be termed as a "Policy of Minimum Defence" without the foresight of a nation in making and threats emanating from neighbours.

The partition weakened India, because of the fragmentation of her territory, of her economic resources, her armed forces, her over population and her productive infrastructure. The leaders at the helm of affairs have concluded that with this weakness it is difficult to continue to follow a forward policy (like the British) in the north and to have blue water navy in the south. "We simply did not have the means to do both, and above all our priorities were different i.e. socio-economic objectives contributing to the promotion of peace and welfare of mankind."12

The government thereafter advanced certain measures to reduce the public image of the British Indian Army which functioned as "an army of occupation". They believed in military subordination to political authority and military organisation to be maintained as an important organ of the state without involving itself in politics. To guide defence affairs and to establish cordial civil-military relations, defence committee of the cabinet was formed and made responsible to provide directions to emerging defence policies. The experience at their command was only of conflict over Kashmir.13 The defence planning and strategic contingency plans of this period provided for the movements of the army across the plains of the Punjab. It was thought, rightly
or wrongly, that comparatively speaking Pakistan would remain inferior in military strength and would be unable to force her hand further in the dispute over Kashmir. In fact a comprehensive grasp of the role of the military in government was just emerging. The leaders had experience of defence matters only to the extent they were concerned with mechanical aspects of 'budget-cutting' to reduce military expenditure, reforms in the recruiting system, and demands for Indianisation etc. There was little consciousness of the need to considering 'Military Wisdom' in the governmental system.14

Partition - Governing Principles

Governing principles15 for the division of the British Indian Armed forces by partition council also had their influence on the emerging defence policy of Independent India. These principles were:

i. "India and Pakistan should have each within their own territories forces, which (a) from 15 August would be under their own operational control, (b) on 15 August would be predominantly composed of non-Muslims and Muslims respectively and (c) are as soon as possible after 15 August reconstituted predominantly on a territorial basis.

ii. The heads of the three services for each Dominion should be selected and given authority to begin setting up their own Headquarters so as to be ready to take over command by 15 August 1947. The heads of
the service would be directly responsible to their respective Ministers through their Defence Members and would have executive control over the Forces in their territories.

iii. The existing Armed Forces of undivided India should be under the administrative control of the then C-in-C in India until they had been finally sorted out into two distinctive forces and the two Governments were in a position to administer them. The C-in-C in turn would be under the control of the Joint Defence Council which was to be set up consisting of the Governor-General or Governors-General of the two Dominions, the two Defence Ministers, and the C-in-C in India.\[16\]

This partition council which also functioned as Joint Defence Council\[17\] (Until Joint Defence Council was formally constituted) effected division of the Armed Forces in two stages. In the first stage, the forces were divided roughly on a communal basis and in the second stage the units were asked to comb itself on the basis of voluntary transfer. For finalizing other professional aspects the council established "Armed Forces Reconstruction Committee"\[18\] and three working sub-committees for the Army, Navy and Air Force separately with service officers and civilian financial advisers.

As a result India's basic strength of Army, Navy and Air Force projected the following picture for ensuing military policy.
The Indian Armed Forces, Post-Partition (1947)

1. Army

Personnel: about 280,000 of all categories

Divisional organisation: 4th, 5th, and 10th

Infantry regiments (15): Punjab, Madras, Maharatta light Infantry, Rajputana Rifles, Rajput, Jat, Sikh, Dogru, Garhwal Rifles, Kumaon, Assam, Sikh light Infantry, Bihar, Mahar. The Gurkha Rifles consisting of 1st, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 8th and 9th regiments totaling 16 battalions.

Armoured Units (12) : Skinner’s Horse, 2nd Lancers, 3rd Cavalry, Hodson’s Horse, 7th Light Cavalry, 8th Light Cavalry, Deccan Horse, Scinde Horse, 16th Light Cavalry, Poona Horse, 18th Cavalry and Central India Horse.

Artillery regiments (18½)

Engineers: 61 Units organised into the Madras, Bengal and Bombay Engineer Groups.

2. Navy

Personnel: 1,000 officers and 10,000 ratings.

Vessels: 4 sloops, 2 frigates, 1 corvette, 12 fleet minesweepers, 4 trawlers, 4 motor minesweepers, 4 motor launches, 1 survey ship.
3. Air Force

7 Fighter squadrons (Tempest 2’s and Spitfires)
1 transport-communication squadron (C-47’s and Devons)
1 artillery observation Post flight (Auster 5’s Miscellaneous Tighe Moth, Percival prentice and spitfire training aircraft).19

At the beginning of independence defence decision making machinery was in its infancy, because of lack of professional and administrative experience in matters of defence. Although ICS officers were exposed to British defence-making machinery but they were assigned some peripheral jobs. Military officers, on the other weakness, probably, was realised while forming the ministry of Defence. To take stock of the situation and to have a broader perspective of the requirements of defence and security, government of India needed some kind of expert advice on the basis of which future plans and policies could be formulated. It is in this context, probably, that P.M.S. Blackett was asked to give his opinion on “measures necessary for India to become near self-sufficient in defence production”. It this report, known as “Blackett Report”, that evoked mixed responses.

Broadly, the content of this report was as follows:

a. The report assessed India’s economic, industrial and technological capability in a geopolitical framework.
b. The report was based on an earlier report entitled *Scientific and Organizational measures required to make India a self supporting defence entity*, by Wansborough Jones which outlined 4 important roles for the Indian Armed forces: (i) to secure the land frontier against raids from border tribes or from attack by a second-class army; (ii) to support civil power; (iii) to provide a small expeditionary force capable of protecting India's regional interests and (iv) within available financial resources to develop a force capable of taking the field in a first-class war.

c. The report suggested that India's defence needs were primarily related to threats from the north-west and therefore technical planning for a small-scale war is a fundamental requirement, but this did not mean elimination of further exploration of a more sophisticated defence profile for the future.

d. The report further believed that to become self-sufficient, a strong economy and industrial base was essential and hence initial reduction in defence expenditure was advisable to encourage growth in other sectors.

e. The procurement of weapons be divided into 'competitive' and 'non-competitive' basis to keep balance between different choices of technology. Fighter aircrafts, heavy tanks etc., were kept in the former category whereas small arms, field guns, motor-transport and night bombers and included in the later.

f. The mission of Indian Navy could be, as per the report, (i) the protection of coastal shipping against mining, submarines,
surface and airborne attack with the capability to respond, in all eventualities, (ii) escorting and protecting a small number of ocean convoys, including that of Merchant Shipping, and (iii) co-operation with the Army and Air Force in repelling enemy landing operations.

g. The Indian Air Force (IAF), may not have a long-range bombing role on the basis of cost and efficacy. However, the report recommended the acquisition of smaller single engined fighter-bombers with an adequate strike capability, night fighters, photo-reconnaissance aircrafts and trainers; The report further recommended consolidation of "Hindustant Aircraft Factory", to emphasise the advantages of development of highly trained anti-aircraft units to protect airfields factories and other key targets.

h. Finally the report did not favour India's potential for developing on indigenous capability in advanced military technology, such as chemical and biological weapons, high-performance aircraft, guided missiles, atomic weapons, millimetric radar and large ship design etc. Instead, the report preferred the route towards self-sufficiency through increasing the efficiency of existing weapon systems.²⁰

The above report which provided a basis for independent India's defence policy, was not received well in professional and administrative circles on the ground that (a) indigenous defence production was relegated to third position after economic and industrial development and considerable reduction in defence expenditure was recommended; and (b) the report attempted to
downgrade the negative importance of the armed forces in favour of economic growth.

The Indian Cabinet did indeed take a decision in 1949 to adopt a defence policy with the defence of the north-west as a priority. The policy was based on the assumption that in the event of a war, Pakistan would have the initiative in launching an attack on Kashmir. With possible diversionary attack in other sectors. In such a situation the Indian Army division in Kashmir would attempt to hold the attacking forces while the rest of the Indian Army advanced towards Lahore and Sialkot. A decisive defeat of the Pakistan Army, coupled with the occupation of Lahore, was considered sufficient to bring Pakistan to the negotiating table. At the diplomatic level, the Indian Government would work to prevent Pakistan from receiving war credits from external powers, which would enable it to continue fighting the war. If all these indigenous efforts failed to halt the war, the Government would mobilize international support for a negotiated settlement.21

This policy did not take into account the developments in the North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA). It was believed that any penitential threat from China, if any, could be managed by diplomatic process, though the Government was aware of an emerging threat from China.

B.N. Mullik in his book “My years with Nehru: The Chinese Betrayal” has brought out this fact when he says that from the
very beginning Jawarharlal Nehru had his reservations about China”. Frank Moraes also in his book, “Witness to an Era,” has written that in 1952, when he went as a member of a cultural forum that the basic challenge in South-East Asia is between India and China. “That challenge runs along the spine of Asia. Therefore, in your talk with the Chinese keep it in mind. Never let the Chinese patronize you”. Further, Dr. Menkakar also gives the same hint in his book “The Guilty Men of 1962” when he says that at the time of his visit to Peking in 1954, during his discussions, Nehru had said “that some day or other these two Asian giants, were bound to tread on each others, horns and come into conflicts, and that would be a calamity for Asia. That was an eventuality which we should all strive hard to avert.”

Nehru himself disclosed in the Parliament on November 27, 1950 “ever since the Chinese revolution, India had to take note of this major fact and what this new China, was likely to be”. Subsequently, on December 9, 1959 this referred to the Border Committee, which was appointed in 1951, and said that since 1950 the picture of the two powerful states coming face to face with each other on a tremendous border issue had been before the government. They might have “differed as to the timings in our minds as to when that would happen: weather in five years, ten years, fifteen years or thirty years.” All these go to confirm that Nehru’s government had reservations about China.

Without doubt, the Blackett Report was a useful document for defence policy makers and was discussed in the Defence
Committee of the Cabinet and given due recognition for it and provided four important principles: First, the need for self-sufficient. Second, consistency between proposed defence policy with that of foreign policy; Third, economic viability of the policy and Fourth, the Politico-economic of the armed services.

The policy adopted in 1949 was encouraging since policy makers have recognized that India's military power was not sufficient for a major war and hence it should be linked with foreign policy based upon diplomatic negotiations and the utilization of international opinion.

Theoretically, policies do not succeed on paper alone unless they are successfully implemented. The government did make an attempt to restrain the role of the military and to cap defence expenditure but changing situations forced the policy makers to adopt changes in its implementation. It could be seen in its practice.

In 1950, the size of the Army was reduced from 3,00,000 men to approximately 2,50,000 men in order to make it more mechanized. The proposal for further cut in infantry in 1951-52 was not implemented.25

The procurement of major weapon system during this period was insignificant, but it was quite significant in terms of stores and ammunition which provide adequate buffer-stock of minor component of logistics. India's small efficient army could provided
effective defence against Pakistan without major changes in its organizational structure. Thus between 1947 and 1958 there was little effort in acquiring infantry weapons, but the emphasis changed in 1958 when Mr. Krishna Menon became Defence Minister.

Initially for sometime the mortars, artillery, howitzers and 303 Rifles of British days were retained in the service. It was only in late 1950s that about 200 Centurion were procured from United Kingdom. The stimulus was of course, US military aid to Pakistan.

On the organisational aspect few significant changes were also made: (a) the rank of commander-in-chief was abolished and President of India was made Supreme Commander of Armed Forces. It was done, probably, to bring balance between the three services and to create civilian superiority over the military; (b) the Ministry of defence came to be dominated by the civil service officers and it was made ‘Ultimate’ in decision making in all military matters; and the warrant to precedence which lessened the army image was changed with the principle of civilian control.26

The Navy and Air Force were considered only in their supporting role in the policy guidelines of 1949 but between 1948 and 1956, the Indian Air Force received sufficient hardware to become an independent service.

Starting with 100 Spitfires and Tempests in 1948, the IAF acquired some De Havilland Vampire-F3 Fighters in the latter
months of 1948. Again in 1949-50, 52 Vampire FB9s and Vampire NF54s were added. Then in 1953-54, 71 French Dassault MD-450. Ouragan fighter bombers were acquired with the changing situation Government decided 1 April 1956 to procure few English Electric Canberra. Light bombers, Photo-reconnaissance aircrafts and T4 dual-control trainers. The number of Canberras in Service was further enhanced by 20-30 units in 1961-62. In mid-1955, the Government considered the purchase of 30 Dassault Mystere IVA interceptors with licensed production. And in mid-1957 and Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd., (HAL) was beginning to produce Gnat. Simultaneously more orders were placed on UK firms26 which included 160 Hawker, Hunter MK.56 FGAs. With these additions the IAF had acquired a strategic bombing role vis-a-vis Pakistan.27

These procurement details seem to reflect few addition in the policy adopted in 1949 in which the emphasis was on strong land forces. This addition was the procurement projection of the fact that Government of India kept on reacting with the changing strategic environment. The fact remains that the IAF managed to acquire most of the weapon systems which it required to become a viable force. This expansion was preceded by the consolidation of the US-Pakistan military aid agreement, which was anticipated by the Indian intelligence. But this IAF procurement signified a kind of gap between pronounced defence policy and actual defence posture.28

Similarly, on the Naval side decision makers believed that India should control a strong and independent Navy in
commensurate with the country’s size, its long coastline, geopolitical location and potential wealth. As a result, a policy was formulated for according a strategic role to Indian Navy after 1947. In fact, before the Blackett report, the Indian Naval Headquarters had drawn a 10 year plan of Naval Expansion under the direction of vice-Admiral Parry, Seconded from the Royal Navy.

The expansion programme commenced in 1948 and within two years a light cruiser and three ‘R’ class Destroyers were purchased from the UK. A Directorate of Naval Aviation was also formed in 1948 with plans to develop Fleet of Air arm. The procurement of two aircraft carriers from the UK was also planned for 1955 and 1957.

The Indian Government reconsidered the naval programme and formulated new plans for a small carrier force in January 1950. The scheme was marginally revised in 1953, resulting in decisions to purchase a fleet replenishment vessel from Italy. In addition, a light cruiser and two inshore minesweepers were also purchased from the UK in 1954 and 1955.

Another six-year naval programme was launched in 1955 with the vessels to be built in British shipyards and purchase of the British light fleet carrier, Hercules, which was renamed the INS Vikrant, and was bought in January 1957 and was commissioned in March 1961.29

In this expansion the bottom line of defence policy was an adequate land-air based defence against Pakistan, with adequate naval strength for dealing with the Pakistan navy separately.
This rate of procurement by the Armed Forces clearly indicated that defence policy of this period was clearly reactive nature. The first explanation for this is that the decision-making process was tilted in favour of the long-term ambitions of the Indian elites. They believed that India was destined to become a nation of considerable power and influence in South Asia and in the Indian Ocean region.

The second possibility is that government may not have recognized the growing drift in defence policy and a third possibility could be that professionals would have convinced the government that their requirement was reasonable in view of the growing threats.

Thus, defence policy of the period was conditioned by three main influences. The first was the 'partition factor' which provided inadequate military power. The second policy with reference to its borders along with threat from Pakistan and the third problem was an extra avenue for major powers to interfere in the region through Pakistan as an opportunity for competition by proxy: while the Government made a deliberate effort to avoid cold war pressures, because of India's experience of two World Wars. They wanted to avoid putting their country in a position whereby it could not be drawn into a war without its prior consent.

In the final analysis Nehru and Menon were being primarily pragmatic. They felt that if the Congress Party was to survive its early years of independence, it was essential for it
to meet at least some of the increasing expectations of the masses following the departure of the British. Moreover, involvement in superpower politics would have led inevitably to rising defence expenditures even with grants and aid. Increased defence expenditures during this period would have affected significantly the resources available for development. This is not to doubt the sincerity of Nehru's foreign policy, his commitment to a 'third force' and his role within the United Nations, but pressing domestic concerns were also a factor which influenced the evolution of Foreign Policy - a 'guns without butter' routine for India.

During the first decade of independence, Nehru was determined to industrialize the Indian economy and bring India's million of people above the poverty line, all to be achieved within the framework of Democratic socialism. In order to achieve this end, Nehru realised that defence expenditure had to be subjected to the strictest control. Consequently between 1947 and 1962 India was spending less than 2 per cent of her GNP for defence. During this period the net national product increased unevenly and the rate of growth fluctuated between 1 to 4 per cent per annum. Allowing for an increase in population of over 2 per cent annum, very little was left over for increases in standards of living investment, or indeed, improvement to the National Security apparatus. Furthermore, Nehru prompted a political debate regarding the effect of high defence expenditure upon natural development.
Consequently, defence policy formation was conditioned by three basic assumptions. First, the armed services and the threat of militarism had to be kept in check. Second, given the nature of the relationship between defence and foreign policy, the attainment of self-sufficiently in defence production coupled with independence from the superpowers became two important criteria. Third, in nation-building programme, expenditure on defence should not reduce resources available for investment.

**Defence Policy 1962-71**

The brief and limited conflict of 1962 exposed many shortcomings in defence policy of India and in its attempted implementation.

In response to the Chinese invasion from autumn 1960, India responded by establishing small and generally isolated outposts in the disputed areas.  

The objectives of this 'Forward Policy' were (a) to block potential lines of Chinese advance (b) to undermine Chinese control of the disputed areas through the interposition of Indian posts and patrol activities and (c) to threaten Chinese lines of communication and supply. These objectives seemed practicable militarily, but with a disproportionate burden on India's existing lines of communications. Apparently, these objectives were based on the premise that the Chinese had been moving only where there was a vacuum and that they would not challenge Indian posts by force
of arms. The policy makers, therefore, hoped that such a modest
display of its determination would make Peking amenable to some
kind of negotiated settlement.\textsuperscript{31}

The events and November of 1962 involving military
operations along the two thousand miles of the frontier and
resulting in the defeat of the Indian armed forces in the North
East Frontier Area, this defeat gave filip to the Indian
consciousness of the inadequacy of the nation's defence apparatus,
the urgent need to strengthen the whole defence mechanism against
any probable threats.

The reason for failure in NEFA could primarily be explained
by the inadequacies of the defence Mechanism, the defence policy
and the poor development in Sino-Indian relations. Human
weakness is matched only by human caprice and both are fairly
universal characteristics of the human species. The best of
purposes, the best arrangements or procedures that may be worked
out in whatever detail; each one of these depends for success upon
the man who works them. The quality of man is more significant
by far than the perfection of the machine in his charge.\textsuperscript{40}

The unpreparedness of India in terms of its military strength
was the main handicap was largely due to the face that the political
leaders had placed their trust in the long history of friendship with
China. They believed in Chinese friendship and good neighbourliness
on the basis of the Panch Sheel, the five principles of peaceful
co-existence.
The coordinating efforts in terms of implementing defence policy at highest organizational level (MOD) was probably was also another reason. The then Defence minister Mr. K. Krishnan Menon's was widely known i.e "The enemy to guard against was Pakistan, a Pakistan encouraged and supported with military aid from the west, particularly from the United States, and because of her claim of Kashmir and her general confrontation with India. Krishna Menon truly believed that if and when war came to India's borders, it would be one the frontier with Pakistan and not with Communist China."

The dramatic change of events brought a changes in realisation of the nature of the Chinese aims. The India's machinery was caught in unawareness in terms of a war to be fought absolutely on different terrain without adequate military preparations. Further organization had not developed, till then, the system of 'flow of information' to meet such a contingency.

It projected the weak foundation upon which the Indian defence apparatus was planned. It is natural that any display of new initiatives or new ideas or new proposal for the improvement in organization would meet some resistance and opposition. But individual animosities should not have prevented objective examination of any new suggestions or proposals. But this was not the case in the decision making machinery of defence during the period. It is the picture that one can gather from official records.
Another factor was the marriage of convenience between Pakistan and China; and lack of information about the situation in the Aksai Chin area in western Ladakh along with Chinese intentions, their objectives, their plans and their preparedness. It seems that India’s ‘threat-perception’ at that time could not recognise adequately, the real extent of the ‘military threat’ which was emerging across India’s northern border during the 1950s.  

Although political purpose, strategic planning and preparations, gathering, analysis and appraisal of intelligence nature of international relationships and postures, were being taken care of the military leaders however had very little knowledge as to what was going on across and within the borders, since they had negligible participation in the process. This lack of information made military planning difficult; since and contingency plan needed necessary data predicting for likely situations. It is a common understanding that preparations for the commitment of resources to a campaign and for the deployment of a military force of any kind in battle need long and complex planning in different terms and depths with necessary Military exercises.

Indeed, all public information, discussion and debate after the events of 1962, in Parliament, in the press, in publications concerning the NEFA campaign have all tended to confirm the lack of cohesiveness in Defence Policy and planning.  

The Government appointed the “Henderson-Brooks inquiry” into the military operations for northern borders and on the basis
of which the then Defence Minister, Y.B. Chavan, gave a report dealing with matters of intelligence, planning, and preparation. He said that "much more attention would need to be given than had been done in the past, to the work and procedures of the General Staff at the services Headquarters as well as in the command Headquarters and below, to operational planning, including logistics as well as the problems of co-ordination between the various service Headquarters."

He added that "the main lesson learnt was that the quality of General Staff Work, and all the depth of its prior planning in time, was going to be one of the most crucial factors in our future preparedness." "There is naturally very little that can be exposed to the public about an intelligence system or its working with out damaging the very function which it performs, namely, to gather information not otherwise obtainable, for the purpose of the nations security and defence." He assured that "necessary measures had been adopted and more would be taken, to ensure the continuous improvement in collection, assessment and co-ordination of all the intelligence that would be necessary to provide the essential base on which along correct defence policy as well as real day-to-day military preparedness can be based." Further, Union Minister for Planning, Gulzarilal Nanda, declared in a Broadcast over All India Radio on 6 February 1963": "We can Safeguard peace only when we have the strength to make aggression a costly and profitless adventure. The greater our economic and defence potential, the less will be the danger from across our borders. The bare truth
was that our faith in our neighbour in the north had been shattered and it cannot soon be restored. India has henceforward to remain on a constant vigil and in a state of complete readiness for every eventuality.... From now on, defence and development must be regarded as integral and related parts of the National economic plan." A striking example of this is the recent double digit growth of GNP of China linked with it's defence needs.

Thereafter, Indian Government and Polity were united in the need to commit increased resources and effort to upgrade the country's defence capabilities. The first budget after the war in 1963 planned for a near doubling of defence expenditure from the Rs.473 crores allocated in 1962-63, which included an emergency allocation of Rs.100 crores for the ware efforts to Rs.867 crores. In the following year Indian increased the percentage of GNP spent on defence to 4 percent per annum a massive 32.5 percent of total government expenditure. At the same time all debate, at any level on the required scale of defence expenditure disappeared. Instead, the primary question became one of how best to allocate the quantum increase in defence allocations.  

Expansion of the Armed Forces

Accordingly, with the changing strategic equations, Government undertook expansion of the armed forces, the production base and the operational infrastructure. The blue print for this expansion was reflected in the five-year Defence Plan of 1964. The plan had six objectives:
1. The creation of an 825,000 man army and the modernisation of its weapons and equipment;

2. Modernisation and stabilization of the Air Force at forty-five squadrons, and the provision of suitable ancillary facilities;

3. The modernisation with new foreign or Indian Ships but not expansion of the Navy;

4. Establishment and increase in the domestic defence production base;

5. Infrastructural improvements in the border areas; and

6. The expansion of Research and Development.39

Thus the Lal Bahadur Shasturi Government committed to a full scale Modernization Programme with a renewed emphasis upon the threat from China. The plan expenditure amounted to significant increase in India's defence capabilities; with certain inherent weakness. Despite the commitment to increased defence production, the armed forces remained heavily dependent upon imported defence military technology.

As a first step India, appealed for military aid to friendly countries and received encouraging responses.

The USA and UK both extended equipment grants of $60 million and Canada, France and Australia contributed supplies to the value of about $10 million.

The army was expanded to a well-equipped force of 21 divisions (including 10 mountain divisions). The effort was made
to recruit the hill peoples, Nagas, Gurkhas and other frontier tribes. Training was given in jungle and mountain warfare orientation. The existing capacity of High altitude Warfare school was enhanced, and AHQ mobile team was constituted to give 'jungle warfare' orientation to different units in their stations only. Simulated battle training was re-introduced to improve operational capacity in mountain and high-altitude areas. Certain changes in organizational structure (in the infantry, artillery etc) were carried out. A new directorate of combat development was established in the general staff branch to develop new weapons and tactical concepts. A new central command was created out of the Eastern Command (May 1, 1963) 4 new organization was setup under the Master General of Ordnance for the procurement of equipment and stores from foreign sources. The strength of military intelligence directate was increased by about 50% for ensuring better collation, evaluation and assessment of intelligence. The scout battalion was raised for service called the Indo-Tibetian Boarder, now known as ITBP.40

The replacement of the 303 Lee-Enfield British rifle by the semi-automatic Ishapore was speeded up. Heavy mortars were procured from France together with an agreement on licensed production. The Avadi Heavy Vehicles factory in Madras delivered 70 Medium tanks to the Army in 1965, the Sten Machine gun was replaced and improved communications equipment were sought from foreign and domestic sources.41
In Air Force and Navy there was less that could be achieved directly for defeat and thenceforth the emphasis upon modernization was placed squarely upon the Army. However, this did not prevent the Air Force from receiving a substantial increase in planned strength. Contained within the plans was expansion of the Air Force to 45 squadrons and proposals for a strengthening of ground-based air-defence, increased transport capacity, etc.

The Government also reached agreement with France over the licensed production of the Alouette 111 and between 1966 and 1973, 120 Units were produced at Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL), with an indigenous content of 90 per cent.42

The Navy received even less in the modernization programme. Although orders were made towards the Swedish and Japanese governments concerning possible collaborative ventures, it is likely that the moves were made to unsettle the UK’s confidence in future orders and thereby to up the ante-poly which was used against to good effect in the 1980s. The strategy quickly shared results when the UK offered the Indian Government credits totalling 4.7 million for the construction of three Leander Class frigates, an offer that was swiftly accepted. Both the UK and the USA refused to accede to India’s request for three destroyers and the UK was also equivocal over requests for production facilities for the Oberon Class submarine following the Indian Government’s acceptance of the Navy’s argument the capability of the Vikrant and establish bases on the Andaman Islands and at Vishakhapatnam which also became a major dockyard.43
War with Pakistan

Within a year of the commencement of the first five year defence plan India had to face 22-day war with Pakistan in Sept 1965. At the time the of cease-fire, India held 740 sq. miles of Pakistani territory in addition to the other areas of Titwal, Kargil and Hijipir Pass, as against 210 sq. miles of Indian territory held by Pakistan. The Tashkent Agreement, however, led India and Pakistan to accept the status quo i.e. complete withdrawal to positions held by them on 5 August 1965.44 PM Shastri also had to return Hijipir Pass, Kargil and Titwal in return for Ayub Khan’s acceptance of the renunciation of the use of force for settling disputes as per principles of the UN Charter.45

From the broader perspective of peace in the sub-continent and in pursuance of the Indian principle of non-use of force in the settlement of disputes, this concessions was within our national interests. Obtaining similar commitment from Pakistan about “the non-use of force” and particularly in view of the statement of Pakistan leaders specially those of Bhutto, that Pakistan cannot renounce the military option until the Kashmir question was resolved.46 In brief, the Tashkant Accord was a success to recon with of India’s diplomacy.47

After this accord and before the 1971 Indo-Pak war two major issues were of concern for defence policy makers. They were (a) arms procurement by Pakistan from foreign sources particularly from China, USSR, some countries of Western Europe and the
United States. With the objective of making up the losses of 1965 conflict and in the process to acquire 'parity' with Indian military; (b) frequent border violations.

On the other hand during the 1965-conflict China sent signal of hostile intent, accusing Indian troops of some activity in the Tibetan territory and undertook military maneuvers on our northern border, although attack as such did not materialize. However, this reinforced India's perception of possible two-theatre war contingency in the future. The perceptive effect of this security assessment was to go for such a planning which could make India's military power credible.

Although activity on the defence front between 1965-71 was of a low-key nature, policy makers had two major problems which came in their way further defence procurement; the first was domestic economic situation and the second was looseness in Indo-Soviet relations. The domestic economic crisis did not lead directly to a reduction in defence allocations but it certainly led to their stabilization. Between 1965 and 1971 total defence expenditure never went down, although it fell as a percentage both of total government expenditure and of GNP. From a high point in 1965-66, when defence expenditure totalled 4 percent of GNP, it declined to under 3.5 per cent before raising again (temporarily) between 1971 and 1973 to a fraction under 4.0 percent.48

The second factor which influenced defence policy and posture was Indo-Soviet defence interaction. During this period
motivations within the countries showed signs of complication because of triangular relationship between USA, USSR and China on the one hand, and bilateral relations between India and Pakistan on the other. The common factors throughout this period was to include or exclude the bottomline in global affairs, by both superpowers to alter the balance of power in Asia.

The Soviet-Indian relations showed some strains in the late 1960's. Firstly because USSR probably was unhappy about India's stand on the NPT which was opened for signature in July 1968. Secondly domestic developments prior to Indira Gandhi's consolidation of power, appeared to the Kremlin to be moving too far to the right. Further, USSR was also critical of the progress India made on some projects initiated by USSR along with India's cautious condemnation of the Czechoslovakian crisis of 1968. Thirdly, India's objection to the publication of Soviet maps of South Asia which placed the Sino-Indian border more or less in its defacto position.

The most important activity between Pakistan and the USSR following the economic aid packages of the early 1960s was the successful conclusion of an arms transfer agreement in 1968. For Pakistan, the deal was designed to fill the vacuum created by the US embargo of 1965. This arms supply, of course, did not include, missiles, and other sophisticated weapons and also it came with a proviso which prevented their use against India. However, it was the political context which concerned India. Not only did
the deal coincide with a further weakening of US Pakistani relations following the premature cancellation of the US lease on Peshawer, but around the same time western news-papers reported discussions between Pakistan and the USSR over refuelling rights in East Pakistan. India had earlier refused to consider a similar request.49

In September 1964, Moscow agreed to provide India with an additional 38 Mik 21s as well as SA-2 Guideline missiles for air defence. In 1968 the transfer of 100 SU-7B fighters costing $1 million each began the continued until the end of the decade. India also received 40 T-54 tanks in 1968 and 1969 along with three F class submarines during the same period.50

The period between 1965-71, was devoted for operational improvements rather for procurement. Although the problem during the Sino-Indian Conflict was that of a technical and institutional nature but it was only in 1965 that air power was used for tactical combat support. In 1969 however, the command and control boundaries between Army and Air Force were redefined to facilitate co-ordination. This coordination later showed its significance in the 1971 war.51

The attention given to the Indian Navy between 1965 and 1971 was comparatively less because just like the Air Force, the Navy also had less operational commitment in 1962 and 1965 wars, because they were primarily land based. Although the Indian Navy was assigned the role of a ‘blue water’. Nearly two decades back it was not fully utilized. It was only in late 1960’s that the
chiefs of naval staff, Admiral Chatterji and then his successor admiral S.M. Nanda, piloted a high profile debate on raising the status of the Indian Navy. Arguing that the country's naval power should be increased in view of the emerging threat of serious nature from the Indian ocean, direction. This debate centered upon the British decision taken in 1966 to withdraw all forces east of Suez and surrender the control of the Indian Ocean, and on a power-vacuum theory. This debate gave opportunity to naval planners to argue that the country should extend its naval influence. Moreover, the Navy also found a measure of support in Parliamentary circles, who shared the long-term view of India becoming a world power of some significance in due course and parallel debate also emerged in the USA with a suggestion that it should India's maritime interests.

The other argument of Indian naval planners is that to overcome the problem of obsolescence, naval allocation must be enhanced. Thus the last half of the 1960s allocations to the Navy grew steadily from 7.8 percent defence capital expenditure in 1966-67 to 34.3 percent in 1970-71. This confirmed the realization of policy makers to accord due recognition to Navy in their defence planning. In fact its intention came in 1960 when the rank the Chief of Naval Staff was elevated to Admiral. This was further confirmed when the Navy received the first indigenous Leander-class frigate from Mazagon Docks in Bombay and Alouette helicopters from HAL in Bangalore."
Notes and References

2. Ibid., p 23.
7. Ibid., p 25
9. Cited in Kavic., op. cit. p 27
11. Ibid., pp. 479-80
13. Ibid., pp. 20-21
15. These principles were cleared by the cabinet of the interim government.
17. The term of this council was only upto March 28, 1948.
18. Field-Marshals Sir Claude Aruchimleck, the commander-in-chief in India as Chairman, with the Chief of the Air Force and the Indian Navy, the chief of then General Staff, and a couple of Civilism officers.
23. Ibid., pp.107-108.
24. Ibid., p.108.
26. Chris Smith., op. cit. p.56
27. Ibid., p.57.
28. Ibid., p.59.
29. Ibid., p.60. see also Kavic, pp.116-125.
30. In the autumn of 1960 China pushed a Patrol within ten miles of Danlet of Beg oldi, to the South of Karnakoram Pass, and in May of the following year the Chinese again pushed towards chushul. Shortly thereafter Chinese troops occupied Dehra compass and their establishment of a post on the Chipchap river 17 miles south-east of Danlet Beg Oldi in the late summer brought them to their 1960 claim line in this quarterly. They established other post at Niagzu and Damkur Guru and occupied Hot Springs.
33. Ibid., p 200
34. Ibid., p.207
35. Ibid., p.215
36. Ibid., p 216
39. Ibid., pp 192-193.
41. Ibid., p.195
42. SIPRI Arms Trade Registers: The Arms Trade with the third World (Stockholm, Almquist and Wiksell, 1975) p
43. Kavic., op.cit., pp 201-202
44. Foreign Affairs Record Vol.12 No 1. Jan 1966. pp.7-10
46. Cited in P.S. Jayaram., op cit., p 72
47. Ibid., p.167.
49. Ibid., pp.88-89
50. Ibid., p.89
51. Ibid., p.91
52. Ibid., p.91-92