CHAPTER 2
DECISION MAKING FOR WAR IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT

“Never, never, never believe any war will be smooth and easy, or that anyone who embarks on the strange voyage can measure the tides and hurricanes he will encounter; the statesman who yields to war must realize that once the signal is given, he is no longer the master of policy but the slave of unforeseeable and uncontrollable events.”

- Winston Churchill  

Introduction

War is defined as “a legal condition which equally permits two or more groups to carry on a conflict by armed force.”  

War is the last resort when all other means to include diplomacy, economic sanctions, international pressure, alliances, threat to use force fail to achieve the desired political objective(s). The decision for war is one of the most complex decisions for any political leader due to the enormous stakes involved in the outcome of the decision. The outcome being highly uncertain with the potential for escalation due to the advent of nuclear weapons has further complicated the decision making for war.

India having fought five wars since independence has vast experience in decision-making for war. The security environment with adversarial relations with both the Northern and Western adversary enjoins upon the policy and decision-makers to remain abreast with the complexities of decision-making for war in all its manifestations. The chapter has been structured as follows: -

(a) Part I : Theoretical Construct of Decision-Making
(b) Part II : Determinants of Decision Making in India
(c) Part III : Conclusion

PART I: THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT OF DECISION-MAKING

Clausewitz defined war as ‘an act of violence intended to compel our opponents to fulfill our will’, and wrote: “war is not merely a political act, but also a real political

178 Singh, Harjeet, op cit, p 46
instrument, a continuation of political commerce, a carrying out of the same by other means.\textsuperscript{180} War is, therefore, a means to achieve a political objective and an act of policy. The policy focus on three main issues: “the end to be achieved, the way it is to be achieved and the means allocated to achieve the desired end.”\textsuperscript{181} The end state are the national interests or any other political objective to be achieved while the means are the resources, that includes the political capital, military, diplomatic, economic supplemented by technology, soft power, media, etc while the way is the general path translated into grand strategy that determines the employment of available resources. Politics cannot be separated from strategy, it employs the instrument of war to achieve its ends, it influences the beginning and the end of the war, retaining the right to raise the stakes or to make do with lesser achievements.\textsuperscript{182} The strategy is thus subordinate to the policy and for the strategy to succeed, the policy must provide all available means, if required carry out modification of the laid down aim and enable the strategy to operate freely with maximum freedom of action.

The decision for war is invariably under conditions of uncertainty as the action taken will result in more than one potential outcome, but the relative probability of each outcome is unknown. Therefore, the decision for war under is unquestionably the most difficult and complex task. To understand the complexities of decision-making for war, the theoretical construct in terms of the paradigm of war, the decision for war human dimension, the Just War Theory and other relevant models suitably supplemented with examples have been examined.

**The Paradigm of War**

War is not an isolated act and does not spring suddenly. Any war normally follows the paradigm Peace - Confrontation - Crisis - Conflict - War - Resolution.\textsuperscript{183} Very rarely the war leads to enduring peace, normally the confrontation continues. If we go by the Clausewitzian dictum that the object of war is not victory but peace, most wars would fall short of the standards.\textsuperscript{184} It is particularly true in the Indian context. The long-term peace and stability between India and Pakistan have not been achieved, despite having

\textsuperscript{180} Clausewitz, Carl Von, *On War* (New Delhi: Natraj Publishers, 2013) pp 3 and 10
\textsuperscript{181} Smith, op cit, p 262
\textsuperscript{183} Smith, op cit, p 183
\textsuperscript{184} Raghavan, VR, Lieutenant General, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM(Retired) ‘Wars Old and New: Structural Changes’ Adapted from the Field Marshal Memorial Lecture delivered on Infantry Day 27 October 2015 and published in *USI Journal*, Volume CLXV, October-December 2-15, No 602, p 463
fought four wars. The period after 1971 War was the longest when there was relative peace till Pakistan instigated the proxy-war in J&K in 1990 followed by the Kargil War in 1999.

*Peace* is the absence of direct or indirect violence and is the most desirable paradigm for obvious reasons. Nations with conflict of interests generally remain in a state of confrontation for a prolonged period and the transition from one to another state may or may not take place in a pre-defined sequence. *Confrontation* is political hostility between two nations or a group of nations and may continue for a short or fairly long period, normally for a long time. In the confrontation, “the aim is to influence the opponent, to change, or form an intention, to establish a condition and, above all, to win the clash of wills.” In the confrontation stage, political and diplomatic measures take precedence over the military to influence the opponent to change its intent. The ongoing India-Pakistan confrontation is being continuously played at the political, strategic and military levels. It has resulted in four wars in 1947-48, 1965, 1971 and 1999, and mobilization for another war in 2001-2002. The ‘No War No Peace (NWNP)’ posture along the Line of Control (LoC) and proxy war in J&K since 1990 are manifestations of the same confrontation. Unlike Pakistan, the India-China relationship falls in the lower spectrum of confrontation. The interplay of dynamics of the global security environment and geo-economics tends to keep the confrontation at the sub-optimal level with usual vicissitudes of troop face-offs along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). The cold war confrontation between the US and erstwhile USSR since the conclusion of World War II until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1992 is an example of confrontation at the global level that ended peacefully by political and diplomatic means. The confrontation normally transits through the crisis stage before escalating to conflict and war.

*Crisis* always involves a severe conflict of interest between nations, but conflicting interest’s alone may need not result in crisis. Usually, a crisis erupts when one of the nation’s resort to some form of conflict behavior in order to impact the other and strove to favorably resolve the underlying confrontation. An international crisis is a sequence of interactions between the governments of two or more sovereign states in severe conflict, short of actual war, but involving the perception of a dangerously high

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185 Smith, op cit, p 184
probability of war. The refugee influx to India from then East Pakistan in 1971 precipitated the crisis. India explored international diplomacy including UNO to resolve the crisis, but could not succeed and ultimately was resolved through the war. The terrorist strike on the Indian Parliament in December 2001 precipitated the crisis between India and Pakistan leading to the mobilization of Armed Forces of both countries with a high probability of war. The crisis was diffused by diplomacy with a series of diplomatic visits from the US and other powerful nations to New Delhi and Islamabad. Crisis thus falls in the intermediate zone between peace and war with possibilities for both. The crisis has certain special attributes basically a higher intensity of conflict with the perception of the greater probability of war along with charged up emotional content. Conflict results when the crisis or disputes between nations cannot be resolved through diplomacy and by threats of war or coercion. The conflict involves the application of force to attain the desired objective at the tactical, operational or strategic level and if the strategic level is reached, it results in an all-out war. The aim of conflict it is to attain a short time objective by application of force, while in confrontation the aim is to change the intent of the opponent through political and diplomatic negotiations. The 1965 India-Pakistan War was preceded by the conflict at the tactical level caused due to tribal invasion and capture of certain posts by both sides along the LoC in J&K. It escalated into an all-out war when Pakistan launched a full-fledged invasion in Jammu Sector to which India responded in Lahore Sector. The purpose in conflict or war is to “destroy, take, hold and forcibly attain a decisive outcome by the direct application of military force.” In conflict or war, the military activity is in the lead and takes place within the political or diplomatic framework. India, in 1971 War attained the decisive outcome of the return of refugees through the application of military force.

The Decision for War

Decision-making for war is one of the most complex and difficult tasks due to the uncertainty of escalation from conventional to nuclear war leading to humungous destruction and casualties. The outcome of the war which will always remain

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188 Smith, op cit, p 184
189 Ibid, p 184
unpredictable impacts the nation’s prestige in terms of achieving or losing political objectives. Sun Tzu rightly said: “it may be known that the leader of armies is the arbiter of the people’s fate, the man on whom it depends whether the nation shall be in peace or in peril”.\textsuperscript{190} As war is an act of policy intending to achieve a political objective, the decision to go to war is always taken at the political level by undertaking an in-depth cost-benefit analysis after exploring all other means, i.e. diplomacy, economic sanctions, international pressure, alliances, and threat to use force etc.

History is replete with examples of war with nations fighting against one another for numerous reasons which may be ideological, political or economic. But it is difficult to carry out any generalization to the reasons for war. Similarly, there is no set model or theory specifically for decision-making for war due to the dynamism and interplay of a number of objective and subjective determinants. Richard Haass, an American diplomat, and strategic expert, termed the 1991 US-Iraq War as a ‘War of Necessity’ and the 2003 US-Iraq War as a ‘War of Choice’ for the USA.\textsuperscript{191} Wars of necessity are those wars that are waged to secure or protect vital national interests and for which there are no viable alternative options, other than the use of force. Wars of necessity are essentially reactive following the universally accepted principle of self-defence and also includes pre-emptive wars when a threat is imminent. Wars of choice, by contrast, are those which are launched to secure or protect less vital national interests and for which there are viable alternative options available. Diplomacy, economic sanctions, even inaction, or anything else other than the use of military force are the alternatives that exist for wars of choice. Drawing inference from the two US-Iraq Wars, Haass argues “the distinction between wars of necessity and wars of choice is heavily subjective, inevitably reflecting an individual’s analysis and politics.”\textsuperscript{192}

Nations and different decision-makers can use the same facts to arrive at different conclusions about necessity and choice. Sometimes, a war of choice pays handsome dividends, if success is assured before undertaking it. A war of necessity includes kinetic options to defend aggression and pre-emptive war when a threat is imminent.

\textsuperscript{190} Sun, Tzu, \textit{The Art of War The Oldest Military Treatise in the World}, Translated from Chinese by Giles, Lionel and Edited by Phuntsok Nawang (New Delhi: Pigeon Books,2008) p 60

\textsuperscript{191} Haass, op cit, p xvii- xvii. Richard, N Haass, is an American strategic affairs expert with deep insights into the decision-making process of the USA by virtue of his key diplomatic assignments. He has authored or edited 12 books on American Foreign Policy and is currently the President of the Council on Foreign Relations since July 2003

\textsuperscript{192} Ibid, p 11
All of India’s wars were wars of necessity to defend the territorial integrity that is a vital national interest. In the 1971 India-Pakistan War, the use of force became a necessity to ensure the return of refugees whose continuous influx was threatening the socio-economic interests of India. It was a last resort after exploring other alternatives, as vital national interests were at stake. Following the terrorist attack on Parliament, in 2001, the Indian armed forces were mobilized and remained in battle positions but did not go to war as diplomacy was considered a viable option.

The Greek historian Thucydides analyzed decisions about war and peace for over two thousand years ago and wrote: “the three greatest motives for war were Fear, Interest, and Honor.”

States go to war either due to some fear or interest. Though fear prevents individuals to go to war, fear of loss of prestige is a motivator to initiate or join a war. ‘Fear’ and ‘Interest’ often yield to considerations of ‘Honor’ or ‘Threats to Honor’. The Honor of the country or the leader plays an important part in the decision for war. Persuasive speeches based on the narrative of honor are used by the leaders to prepare the soldiers for war. Interest is both individual as well as that of the state. Hermocrates said in 424, “I suppose no one will dispute that we went to war in order to serve our own individual interests and we are, now, in view of these interests debating how we can make peace.”

Same is true for states who for their own interests go to war and after the war makes peace again for their own interests.

The 1962 India-China War initiated by China exemplifies the concept of fear, honor, and interest. China after achieving independence erroneously perceived that Indian leaders did not respect New China, but still, believed in maintaining the British legacy of imperialism. A need to punish the perceived fears of Indian efforts to undermine Chinese control of Tibet manifested in the decision for war. It was also an opportunity for Mao to establish himself as his authority was challenged after the failure of the Great Leap Forward Policy. Mao, considering India to be militarily weak, decided to humiliate India to win the power struggle against his opponents Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping. Pakistan’s reasons to launch the tribal invasion in Kashmir followed by the war in 1965 are attributable to Bhutto’s personal interest to grab the power in both

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194 Ibid, p 15
195 Subramanyam, K with Monterio Arthur, *Shedding Shibboleths India’s Evolving Strategic Outlook* (Delhi: Wordsmiths, 2005) p 324
win or lose situations. Pakistan also feared India’s growing military strength in the next few years after completion of its modernization and rearmament programme. “Decisions for war reflect a kaleidoscope of fears, goals, preferences, motives, and other considerations; an aggressor’s belief that relative military strength at the point of attack is only one of these factors.” 196 Deterrence is not the main factor to initiate war but is one of the important factors while carrying out a cost-benefit analysis of the decision to war. “War rarely start because one side believes that it has a military advantage.” 197 Notwithstanding the subjective nature of human decisions for war, the Just War theory postulates certain tenets for waging a war that can be morally justified.

**Just War Theory.** The Just War tradition is as old as the warfare itself. Saint Augustine, commonly recognized as the father of the Just War tradition, “attempted to reconcile the apparent pacifist teachings of Jesus in the New Testament with the legal obligations of the early Christians to fight in their country’s wars.” 198 It was, however, Saint Thomas Aquinas who furthered the study of Just War by interpreting Augustine’s writings and summarising them into a set of rules saying that one may sometimes justifiably kill another person in self-defence. 199 The Justification of War or *bellum justum* as originally enunciated by St Augustine and St Thomas Aquinas and then further developed upon and put into deeper perspective by subsequent thinkers essentially comprises of six tenets for waging war namely ‘just cause, last resort, competent authority, proportionality between harm inflicted to good achieved, limited ends and protection of non-combatants.’ 200 The first four of these tenets pertain to justification or conditions that aid in the decision to wage a war and refers to *jus ad bellum*, while the other two tenets are relevant in the conduct of

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197 Lebow, Richard Ned, quoted in Ibid
198 Kumar, Dinesh, ‘Assess the Applicability of the Just War Criteria to the 1971 India-Pakistan War Leading to the Creation of Bangladesh’ Essay on Conflict Resolution (UK: University of Bradford, 2005) p 1
war referred as *jus in bello*. Kautilya’s Arthasastra added, “political intercourse (diplomacy) even during the war does not cease.”

The Just war theory assumes that war, at times, may be necessary to be launched, but should be justified in terms of right intention like restoring peace or ending some injustice being ‘perpetrated and should be conducted with restraint. Indeed, on occasions war may not be merely morally permissible, but may also be a moral duty. The ancient Indian gurus had also elaborated on the virtues of Just War. The Hindu God-incarnate Lord Krishna justified the war in his famous discourse compiled as the *Bhagwad Gita* to his dilemma-ridden soldier-disciple Arjuna to whom he was charioteer during the famous *Mahabharata* (Great War). In 1699, fed up by the tyranny and sustained campaign of forcible conversions by the Mughal ruler Aurungzeb, the Sikh religious leader Guru Gobind Singh created the *Khalsa* (the pure) to fight the tyranny of the Muslim ruler and epitomized the same in a Persian verse meaning, “When a problem defies all other means of solution, it is just and proper to take the sword in hand.”

War is thus the last option or solution to a problem. **War should be undertaken as a last resort after having exhausted effective alternatives to war.** Effective alternatives are normally diplomacy, economic sanctions, the threat of employment of force and application to achieve limited ends, but these should not be applied too rigidly to this clause as sometimes it may result in the malice of the wicked being reinforced by the weakness of the virtuous. Restraint is perceived as weakness. The strategic restraint exercised by India in keeping the war limited in the 1999 Kargil War was perceived as India’s military weakness and did not deter Pakistan from pursuing its policy of exporting terrorism. A decision to go to war must follow after the failure of deterrence and diplomacy. Only a government lawfully constituted and having the resources has the right to represent those interests should be entitled to declare war. During the conduct of war, combatants should employ minimum force necessary to achieve legitimate

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201 Khanduri, op cit, p 55
203 Radhkrishnan, S, *The Bhagavadgita*, (Woking and London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, Fifth Impression, 1958). The Bhagavadgita, which is a dialogue between a God-incarnate and his disciple just before the beginning of a war in a battlefield, dates back to at least 5 BC and possibly even 200 BC and details the tenets of Just War.
205 Coates, op cit, p 189
206 Fisher, Ed, p 20
military objectives while ensuring that innocents are not harmed and combatants are protected after they have surrendered or taken as prisoners.

Western analysts have evolved three models for decision making, namely the rational, organizational processes and political bargaining models. These models are based on certain assumptions about the behavior of a decision maker, who is an individual at the simplest level. At the collective level, whether a group, organization or government, the unit is considered a coherent and monolithic entity, with individual consciousness. Similar to the models, Glen Snyder and Paul Diesing have evolved three theories of decision making namely utility maximization, bounded rationality, and bureaucratic politics. These models and theories are explained in the succeeding paragraphs.

A Rational Model or Utility Maximization Theory selects a single homogeneous good as the desired end state. A set of well-defined and mutually exclusive alternatives are examined, from which the decision maker chooses the one that affords the maximum utility in attaining the desired end state and minimizes the costs of possible failure. The leader synthesizes the individual and collective rationality and thus imposes his identity on the group. In the 1971 War, India decided ‘the return of refugees as the single homogeneous good’ to be achieved. It searched various alternatives including international diplomatic and UN pressure along with calibrated and incremental support to Mukti Bahini to coerce Pakistan to work out a reasonable political solution for the return of refugees. When it failed, India resorted to war to achieve the desired end state. The war afforded the maximum utility leading to the creation of Bangladesh and the division of Pakistan.

An Organizational Process Model or Bounded Rationality Theory does not have a single set of goals with an agreed order of preference but offers heterogeneous goods having positive or negative constraints. A negative constraint is already in existence. The positive constraint may not be the best alternative but an acceptable one considered just ‘good enough’ to achieve a single goal avoiding one or two negative constraints. Bounded rationality and maximizing theory can be combined by adopting

208 Snyder, and Diesing, op cit, p 27
209 McGrew and Wilson, Eds, op cit, pp 8-10 & Snyder, and Diesing, op cit, pp 340 - 359
one as the basic and other as the supplementary. Two or three alternatives are considered reasonable to be examined. This model or theory is best during the crisis stage, wherein an acceptable strategy is adopted which may not be the best one. India’s decision for the 1965 War fitted into the Bounded Rationality Theory or Organizational Process Model.

The Political Bargaining Process Model or Bureaucratic Politics Theory carries out bargaining amongst various agencies involved in decision-making. It assumes that the government as a decision maker comprises many ministries having different responsibilities and different resources with variable influence within the government. Respective departments develop their own preferences based on role and level of contribution to the national interest. The outcome is determined by their relative importance and the self-defined interests they have to protect. The decision space is complicated by competing problems and the solution emerged is an attempt to satisfy each participant. In practice, the theory amounts to building a majority consensus. India’s adoption of the Forward Policy prior to the 1962 India-China War is an apt example of the Political Bargaining Process Model/Theory in which the decision was taken as a via media. The differences in China’s threat perception emerged between the Army and the civilian bureaucracy. The Foreign Ministry and the Intelligence Bureau strongly felt that China would not go to war for solving the border issue and the Indian Army’s progressive deployment on the border would compel the Chinese to withdraw. The Indian Army had certain reservations about the Forward Policy but adopted the same, which later turned out to be tactically unviable.

The first two theories pertain to the intellectual component of the political leader entrusted with the decision-making i.e. the PM or the President, while the third theory pertains to collective group decision-making composed of individuals with different governmental roles, values, perceptions, and degree of influence. The theories highlighted above pertain to general decision-making and can assist in taking prudent, rationale and considered decisions for crisis situations as well as war. The theoretical framework can be applied with certain modifications specific to our situations. Just war theory as the name suggests pertains to only war and is as pertinent today as it was in the yesteryears.

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210 Snyder, and Diesing, op cit, p 28
PART I: DETERMINANTS OF DECISION MAKING IN INDIA

War being the continuation of policy is thus a subset of the national security policy. “The political object is the goal, war is the means of reaching it, and means can never be considered in isolation from their purpose.” The political objectives will decide on war as a means to achieve them. Article 51 of the Constitution of India, Directive Principle of States decrees that India shall endeavor to uphold, and protect its sovereignty, unity, and integrity, promote international peace and security and maintain just and honorable relations between nations reflect that India is content with its post-partition frontiers. It implies non-aggression, non-interference and a status quo power not interested in expanding its boundaries. India’s subsequent security policy flowed out of the directive principle. India on achieving independence, accordingly, focused on economic development to provide the basic essentials to its citizens and accorded minimal attention to military capability development. India adopted non-alignment as the pillar of its foreign policy to avoid being aligned with either the capitalist bloc led by the US or the communist bloc led by the USSR. Acutely aware of the country’s economic and military weakness, Nehru viewed alignment as beyond India’s means and felt, it would not be in consonance with dignity to align with any super bloc. The relative value of the military to achieve any political objectives by means of war was almost negligible. The government’s moralistic postures, antimilitarist attitudes, non-aligned stance and stress on economic development as the ultimate source of nation’s strength reinforced by the absence of any apparent military threat to Indian security at least in the sixties and the Gandhian belief of superiority of moral over physical force acted as a philosophical barrier to attaching undue importance to the military uniform. India’s thought process on security indirectly rejected Clausewitz’s definition of war as an instrument of policy.

Guided by the above policy, India, allotted minimal defence budget. Between 1947 and 1962, India’s defence expenditure averaged not more than 2 percent of the gross national product (GNP) per annum. The need to build a strong military was felt

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211 Freedman, Ed, op cit 1994, p 207
214 Ibid, p 143
215 Smith, Chris, India’s Ad hoc Arsenal Direction or Drift in Defence Policy (SIPRI, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) p 47
essential to protect the territorial integrity and maintain an independent foreign policy and not to conquer adversary’s territory. Considering inability to confront both Pakistan and China militarily and perceiving Pakistan’s hostile intentions revealed during the 1947-48 War with the unlikelihood of any change in its attitude, India decided to accord relatively higher precedence to Pakistan as its arch-rival. Nehru decided that India would steadfastly confront Pakistan militarily, but deal with China diplomatically.\textsuperscript{216} This was prudent, rational and realistic policy considering India’s limited resources. This policy was adequately supplemented by domestic efforts to politically integrate J&K into the national mainstream. India’s China policy was focused to develop strategic friendship and reconciliation despite differences on Tibet. The PM Nehru justified his policy saying, that his country had only two alternatives to deal with China: “to build up a military force which would enable her to speak on terms of equality with China, or to seek a modus vivendi for co-existence with China;” for political and economic reasons, he doubted that the first was feasible.\textsuperscript{217}

Accordingly, all of India’s wars were ‘wars of necessity’ to defend aggression and ensure its socio-economic security. India has never sent troops abroad except for the UN Peace Keeping Operations and at the request of the legitimate government of the Maldives and Sri Lanka in 1987. India’s decision for war with Pakistan in 1971 was in keeping with the Indian tradition of legitimizing the use of force in certain circumstances, namely, if there is no alternative way of securing justice. Its decisive military victory in 1971 over Pakistan did not result in a change in India’s policy for non-use of force to resolve territorial disputes with its neighbor. Speaking at the NDC seminar in 2010, SS Menon, the then NSA stated, “In the Indian tradition the use of force is legitimate if it is for a good cause; instead, this was a doctrine that saw force as necessary in certain circumstances, to obtain justice, when all other means are exhausted, and which also recognized that force was not always the most effective or efficient means to this end.”\textsuperscript{218} India, as per its policy that has been in practice since

\textsuperscript{216} United Service Institution of India (USI) Study, \textit{A View from the Other Side of the Hill} (New Delhi: Vij Books India Pvt Ltd, 2015) p 9. The USI Study was undertaken during 2013-2015 to take a holistic look at the India-China War 1962 especially from the Chinese side. The study team comprised eminent defence and civil retired officers namely Lieutenant General Vinay Shankar, Air Marshal Bharat Kumar, Major General PJS Sandhu, Major General GG Dwivedi, Ambassador Ranjit Singh Kalha and Ms Bhavna Tripathi. It was edited by Major General PJS Sandhu, Deputy Director and Editor USI. Also see Note to the Foreign Secretary 18th June, 1954


\textsuperscript{218} Menon, SS, NDC Golden Jubilee Seminar, New Delhi, 21 October 2010
independence has not used force and is unlikely to use force to achieve political objectives, however, the same cannot be legislated for our adversaries who have used force in the past and contentious issues continue to exist. To understand the dynamics of decision-making for war, it is considered imperative to evolve a ‘Threat Scenario’ under which India may be required to take decision for war.

**Threat Scenario**

China is likely to continue to engage India in a mutually beneficial relationship for economic and other benefits without addressing the core issue of resolving the boundary dispute. Perhaps China has to gain more by not settling the dispute. It can exploit the differences and keep India occupied in a low-level confrontation while keeping the threat of hostilities open.

China’s White Paper titled ‘China’s Military Strategy’ issued in May 2015 while maintaining its earlier stance of “avoiding war through the military strategy of Active Defence” indicated “strong desire to retain the option of first use of military force.” It legislates the use of forces to achieve political goals. Its doctrine is aimed at fighting and winning ‘local wars under high tech and informationalization conditions.’ While a direct application of military force to resolve boundary dispute or power projection leading to war is unlikely, but aggressive posturing, short of war as seen in Doklam in Sikkim 2017, and earlier in Ladakh in 2013 and 2014 is likely to continue. Such crisis graduating to tactical conflicts is within the realms of possibility. The probability of conflict escalating to war is low, but a short yet intense engagement as a prelude to a final settlement of the boundary issue cannot be totally ruled out, depending upon the geo-strategic environment including its relationship with the US and other factors.

Pakistan does not possess the military capability to threaten India’s territorial integrity but is capable of threatening its internal security. Pakistan’s concerted drive to modernize and upgrade its warfighting potential is reflective of its policy to achieve deterrence against India’s conventional military superiority and continue to abet cross-border terrorism in India. While preferring to avoid conventional war, it could exploit the situation in the event of hostilities along our Eastern front.

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Pakistan is likely to continue its policy of cross-border terrorism using nuclear deterrence as the core of its security policy, in order to wrest the maximum advantage in any diplomatic process towards resolution of Kashmir. The threat of non-state actors initiating a high-profile terrorist strike on a valued target causing a large number of casualties remains. India’s ground response to Uri terror strike in 2016 was upgraded to air strikes in 2019 following the terrorist attack on a convoy at Pulwama. The use of air to strike a terror camp deep inside Pakistan territory reflects India’s desire to compel Pakistan to shun its policy of using terrorism, but it is unlikely to act as a deterrent against non-state actors. Pakistan’s response by employing its air power leading to a dog fight is reflective of its resolve to not to alter its policy. As Pakistan is likely to continue acts of terror and India displaying its political resolve to escalate with an equally effective counter-response, the possibility of further escalation cannot be ruled out in the future with the high probability of war between the two nuclear-powered neighbors. Though the intensity of US pressure of the level of 2002 is unlikely, yet due to the nuclear threat, there will be tremendous international pressure to exercise restraint. Under such conditions, sandwiched between international pressure and national interest to make its adversary’s policy cost-prohibitive, if not altered, India would be required to take a decision to wage a war against Pakistan with the probability of the situation spinning out of control. To deter India from launching a conventional military offensive in the event of escalation, Pakistan would invoke its strategy of ‘first use’ of nuclear weapons to avoid military defeat. It is at this juncture that India would take a deliberate decision to launch a conventional offensive based on its second-strike capability in sync with its ‘NFU’ doctrine. Pakistan has a sufficiently high nuclear threshold although it plays upon ‘contrived irrationality’.

The ongoing state of confrontation with both the adversaries can precipitate crisis anytime with the probability of escalation to war. The ability to skillfully handle the crisis erupting out of border confrontation with China and sponsored acts of terrorism by Pakistan will set the stage for prudent decision-making for the ultimate resort – the war. Against Pakistan, India would be placed in a similar predicament as in 2001-02 to balance the international pressure to exercise restraint and securing its national interests to defend the country against acts of terrorism. The constraints of viable and optimum military capability to inflict a decisive defeat on Pakistan like in 1971 and the probability of an escalation of all-out conventional war to nuclear war would further complicate the decision-making for war.
Determinants for Decision-Making for War

The determinants that influence decision-making for war in India are as follows:

(a) National Interest.
(b) Diplomacy and International Alliances/Partnerships.
(c) Nuclear Doctrine.
(d) Military Preparedness.
(e) Economic Strength.
(f) Political Leadership.
(g) Intelligence.
(h) Public Opinion and Media.
(i) Think Tanks.
(j) Decision-Making Process

National Interest

Nations are always engaged in either securing or protecting their national interests. Morgenthau, an American political scientist and author of ‘Politics Among Nations’ has given the meaning of national interest as “survival i.e. the protection of physical, political and cultural identity against encroachment by other nation-states.”

Brookings Institution has defined national interest as “what a nation feels to be necessary to its security and well-being – it reflects the general and continuing ends for which a nation acts.”

National interest is thus an important concept in international relations.

National interests are classified as vital and non-vital interests. Vital interests are those interests that are essential for the survival of a nation. These interests concern the very life of the nation and if compromised, would severely prejudice the survival of the nation; therefore, survival of a nation is the first and foremost interest.

Survival implies the protection of physical identity that comprises of territorial integrity; political identity encompassing political structure and cultural identity historical values, belief systems upheld by a nation. If the state disappears, then no

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221 Ibid
other interest remains. National interests are also classified as primary interests (that cannot be compromised), secondary, permanent, variable, general and specific.\textsuperscript{223} \textbf{The primary interests are the goals, while secondary interests become foreign policy objectives. Interests are also expressed as desired end states.} The preamble to the Constitution of India summarizes our national interests. Securing ‘social, economic and political justice’ and ‘promoting unity and integrity of the nation’ has been enshrined as the national interests.\textsuperscript{224} The security of Indian territory on land and sea and that of air space and safeguarding and enhancing the well-being of Indians in a free and secure nation are vital national interests of India. War can be justified for defending or securing these interests after exploring all effective alternatives.

India fought the wars in 1947-48, 1962, 1965 and 1999 to protect its physical identity when its territorial integrity was threatened. The 1971 Bangladesh War was fought to protect its political identity as the politico-economic system was threatened by the huge refugee influx into India in the wake of Pakistani military crackdown on the populace of East Pakistan. The refugee influx formed a sort of ‘indirect aggression’ due to the heavy economic burden and social-security threat.

Non-vital components are those parts of national interest which are determined “either by circumstances or by the necessity of securing the vital components” and are determined by a “host of factors - decision-makers, public opinion, party politics, sectional or group interests and political or moral folkways.”\textsuperscript{225} These are those interests that the nation normally seeks but need not go to war to secure them. The political objective of the 2002 mobilization of the IA post the terrorist strike on Parliament in December 2001 i.e. stop cross-border terrorism by Pakistan was achievable by other means like the diplomacy and international pressure etc. and that’s why India did not go to war. Stoppage of cross-border terrorism in India by Pakistan is a foreign policy objective for India. The various means normally employed for securing the national interests are diplomacy, economic means, alliances/treaties and at times coercive means. It is incumbent of all nations to explore peaceful methods before embarking upon coercive means, yet some nations continue

\textsuperscript{223} Ibid
to employ coercive means to pursue national interests assessing them to be cost-effective and politically expedient. National interests are sometimes misused to pursue non-vital interests. The US justified the building up a strong nuclear base at Diego Garcia to meet the USSR challenge in the Indian Ocean. USSR justified intervention in Afghanistan for meeting Soviet national interests. All the wars fought by India since independence were wars of necessity to protect the vital national interest of territorial integrity and socio-politico cultural identity.

The national security policy and strategy must be focused on achieving national interests. National Security Strategy is the art and science of using all the elements of national power during peace and war to secure national interests and formulation of national strategy employs the strategic thought process based on the use of Ends, Ways, and Means.\textsuperscript{226} While the vital interests in terms of territorial integrity are clearly distinguishable, terrorist incidents that impact the nation’s prestige are not clearly discernible in terms of primary or secondary interests. There is a need to lay down clear threshold levels to classify terrorist incidents in terms of vital or non-vital interests in order to facilitate decision making for employment of military instrument and other elements of national power.

**Diplomacy and International Alliances/Partnerships**

Foreign policy and diplomacy are interconnected. The foreign policy seeks to protect and enhance the country’s strategic space, while diplomacy deals with implementation of the foreign policy objectives. “Foreign policy may be likened to a weapon and diplomacy to its delivery system; if diplomacy is weak then even the best foreign policy would be ineffective.”\textsuperscript{227} Diplomacy is thus a tool to effectively implement the policy objectives. Military and diplomacy though belong to two different realms yet both are considered two sides of the same coin. As the military is the last resort to wage a war, diplomacy is the first line of engagement to avoid war.\textsuperscript{228} Diplomacy seeks to avert war either through direct negotiations between the two belligerent states or through another mutually accepted third country. Nations employ

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{226} The US Army War College Methodology for Determining Interests and Levels of Intensity, Retrieved from Internet: http://www.au.af.mil/awcgate/army-usawc/natinte.htm (Accessed on 10 November, 2018)
\item \textsuperscript{227} Saran, op cit, pp 27-28
\item \textsuperscript{228} Muthanna, KA, Brigadier, ‘Military Diplomacy’, *Journal of Defence Studies*, IDSA, Volume 5, No 1, January 2011, p 1
\end{itemize}
threats of use of force and other means to demonstrate capabilities to boost negotiating leverages with the adversarial country. Diplomacy also invokes deterrence in negotiations. Diplomacy remains active during the confrontation and crisis phase prior to the war and even during the war, it plays an important role to bring an early end to the war. It again assumes an active and predominant role after the war to work out a peace agreement. Kautilya summarized diplomacy, “use diplomacy as much as possible, but remember, diplomacy without adequate power to back it can be still-born and ineffective.’

Diplomatic and political measures take precedence over the military during the confrontation stage. The likely outcome indicates the probability of war and accordingly, the decision-makers are better armed and forewarned for the right decision. The 1962 India-China War was preceded by a high-level summit between India and China held in April 1960 in Delhi. The summit ended in failure with both sides blaming each other. China considered its proposed ‘package deal’ as an “earnest effort to reach a preliminary agreement that would help settle the boundary question” but Nehru’s unwillingness to negotiate increasingly looked like intransigence and even preparation for military aggression. Nehru due to lack of trust in Chinese leadership and their continuous changing stance did not accept the package deal. In conflictual relations among states, diplomacy may regulate the rivalry, preventing its intensification to war and find solutions to some problems. It was imperative for both India and China to explore bilateral diplomacy to deliberately seek areas for cooperation, discuss the validity of their respective claims and resolve/minimize the areas of conflict, but this did not happen. The use of force is an accepted way of pursuing national interests in the Chinese thought process, while in India it is more ambiguous and seen as a failure of diplomacy rather than as its extension. India-China Agreement for Maintaining Peace and Tranquility on the

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230 Package Deal proposed by China to settle the boundary dispute implied that China was willing to recognize India’s claim to the North East Frontier Administration (NEFA) in the eastern sector, comprising 84,000 square kilometers, in exchange for India accepting China’s claim to Aksai Chin in the western sector, encompassing 38,000 square kilometers.
231 Hyer, Eric, _The Strategic and Regional Contexts of the Sino-Indian Border Conflict: China’s Policy of Conciliation with its Neighbours in Gupta and Luthi, Eds, p 97_
233 Saran, op cit, pp 121-122
Border 1993 has tremendously expanded trade and technology exchanges. However, it has not led to the two countries closer to the resolution of the long-pending boundary dispute. Frequent border incursions as per each country’s perceived boundary alignment keep taking place, sometimes leading to face-offs between the forces deployed along the borders. In June-August 2017, the 72-day long face-off on the Doklam plateau of Bhutan between Indian and Chinese troops was successfully diffused by astute diplomacy leading to mutual disengagement. The crisis had the potential to escalate but both countries conducted a series of negotiations to resolve the face-off. The Indian government stayed steadfast and employed deft, principled diplomacy backed up by military resolve.

India after the 1947-48 war with Pakistan failed to articulate the legalities of the J&K’s accession as well as the sequential implementation of the UN resolution internationally. India instead of pursuing to wrest back the lost territory was willing to sacrifice PoK as it proposed partitioning J&K along the existing CFL. India succumbed to US pressure to hold bilateral talks with Pakistan after the humiliation by China in the 1962 war but did not accept US proposal to accord territorial advantages to Pakistan who staked its claim almost to the entire state. In interstate relations, reciprocity defines the success of most initiatives.

The 1971 War was preceded by India’s extensive diplomatic campaign to mobilize international opinion to underline the need to pressurize Pakistan to evolve an acceptable political solution and create conditions conducive for the return of refugees. The international community showed sympathy to the Indian cause but expressed inability to persuade Pakistan to change its policy in East Pakistan. Indian diplomacy succeeded in signing the Soviet Union Friendship Treaty to deter Pakistan from obtaining Russian military equipment and sought USSR support in the event of Chinese militarily intervention on the side of Pakistan. Indian diplomacy and military complemented each other brilliantly during the 1999 Kargil War. Considering bleak chances of bilateral diplomacy succeeding to restore the status quo in Kargil, India decided to militarily evict the intrusions and concurrently launched a vigorous international diplomatic outreach campaign to discredit the Pakistani claims of Mujaheeeds occupying the heights. It downplayed bilateral diplomacy and categorically rejected Pakistan’s demands, but sought to isolate it diplomatically. As the military operations gathered momentum, India confident of militarily evicting the
Pakistani intrusions did not accept Pakistani proposals for a cease-fire. To seek an honorable exit to end the conflict started by them, Pakistani PM Nawaz Sharif went to Washington and agreed to withdraw its forces after meeting the US President. International diplomacy succeeded in diffusing the crisis precipitated by the terrorist strike on Parliament in India in December 2001. The 1999 Kargil War is an apt example where India’s military and diplomacy complemented each other successfully. **Diplomacy succeeds where it is suitably backed up by strong military capability.**

The concept of Gunboat Diplomacy\(^\text{234}\) is as valid as it was in the olden days.

Diplomacy remains relevant during and after the war to achieve the laid down political objectives. During the war, diplomacy shapes international opinion and perceptions in the justness of the cause. After the war, the political negotiations determine the final outcome of the war in terms of enduring peace or otherwise. India’s diplomacy could not succeed in converting the military victories in 1965 and 1971 to establish enduring peace on its terms and conditions. In 1965 the intense Soviet pressure prevailed upon India to return the captured areas to Pakistan and status quo was maintained. Post the 1971 Bangladesh War, India had strong levers to pressurize Pakistan but instead chose an indulgent approach to strengthen the hands of Bhutto domestically, hoping that his leadership would result in a process of democratization, thus ending military dictatorship in Pakistan. India failed to impose an unambiguous solution to the Kashmir problem from a position of strength despite having more than 93,000 prisoners and a large territory under its control. Pakistan succeeded in getting the Kashmir issue delinked from the Shimla Agreement. Perhaps Mrs. Gandhi was convinced by Haksar’s observation not to impose humiliating terms of peace similar to the one imposed upon Germany at Versailles by the Allies after the First World War. Humiliating conditions sowed the seeds of the Second World War.

George Kennan, a well-known diplomat, and political realist, once said, ‘You have no idea how much it contributes to the general politeness and pleasantries in diplomacy when you have a little, quiet force in the background.’\(^\text{235}\) This quiet military force

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\(^{234}\) Gunboat diplomacy refers to the pursuit of foreign policy objectives with the aid of conspicuous displays of naval power, implying or constituting a direct threat of warfare, should terms not be agreeable to the superior force. It is basically intimidating the other side to grant concessions. The mere presence of boats would obviate the need to use other measures. Source: Gunboat Diplomacy. Available on Internet: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gunboat-diplomacy (Accessed on 12 November, 2018)

\(^{235}\) Malik, op cit, 2013, pp 179-180
needs to be strong enough in all its manifestations to signal strong political resolve. In the backdrop of the nuclear threat, the war would be preceded by intense diplomacy wherein international pressure to avert war would play an important role in decision-making for war. The decision-makers need to act with greater assertiveness to pursue their own vital national interests. Due to the need to avert all-out due to the nuclear threat, the relevance of diplomacy has increased substantially to pursue national interests.

Diplomacy is extremely important to build international alliances/partnerships to exercise greater leverages with the affected countries. Engagement as a mechanism is concerned with whether a country uses the capacity of its allies to affect national will to fight and whether allied support increases the country’s confidence and expectation of victory. Coalition or alliance/partnership works most efficiently when the interest of allies converges which is very rare. The security alliances and partnerships with friendly countries and treaty/agreements aid the government’s decision-making in the employment of military instrument. However, the practical viability of these treaties/agreements and mere political statements need to be carefully evaluated in the backdrop of emerging international security environment and allied country’s own national interests and aspirations. In reality, the interests of allies converge only up to a point; as soon as one of the allies has to make sacrifices for a common goal, one cannot rely on the coalition. Pakistan misinterpreting China’s assurances for military support was emboldened for the 1965 War, but China avoided direct involvement and intervened in a symbolic manner to support Pakistan towards the closing stages of the war. Similarly, Pakistan tried to woo China’s military support during the 1971 India-Pakistan War. When the Indian Army had closed on to Dacca, the Pakistani Government kept on encouraging Lieutenant General Niazi and other top officials in Dacca to continue fighting, assuring them of direct military intervention by China and USA. Nothing happened from the Chinese side while the US had dispatched Task Force of its Seventh Fleet into the Bay of Bengal. Nations always act in their own self-interest. China and Pakistan are likely to continue to pursue their policies of aggressive posturing along the borders and

236 RAND Corporation Study (RAND Study), National Will to Fight Why Some States Keep Fighting and Other’s Don’t. (Santa Monica, Calif, RAND Corporation, 2018). Retrieved from Internet: www.rand.org/R2477 (Accessed on 7th October 2018) p. 52
237 Moltke in Freedman, Ed, op cit 1994, p 218
sponsoring cross-border terrorism into India with an inbuilt factor of deniability respectively. As war is not a viable alternative, it devolves upon India’s diplomacy to resolve the disputes peacefully.

**Military Preparedness**

The military capability consists of both tangible and intangible factors. Tangible factors are the relative military strength, the standard of training and operational preparedness while the leadership and morale constitute the intangible factors. Military preparedness includes the state of equipment, absorption of technology and state of training, etc. There are numerous examples where nations with lesser military capability have gone to war against their opponents having the larger capability. Peace, is, however, preserved only when an equilibrium of power exists among great powers as otherwise the strong may attack the weak.\(^{239}\) Power parity prevents war as no state can expect a victory in such a situation. India’s decision to extend the war in 1965 to the plains of Punjab was emboldened by the marginal numerical military capability superiority over Pakistan. In the 1971 India-Pakistan War, India had built up a stronger military capability in East Pakistan which enabled it to achieve a decisive victory over Pakistan.

India’s present military capability is quantitatively and qualitatively superior to Pakistan while it is inferior to China. As the decision for war is a function of political resolve and military capability; the latter is the most important determinant for war.

“Strong capabilities increase a government's confidence and expectations of victory and therefore should strengthen the will to fight; strong capabilities can also provide similar confidence to elites (strengthening cohesion), citizens (strengthening popular support,) and allies (strengthening allied support.)” Military preparedness in terms of the state of equipment, ammunition and other essential war making instruments are as important as the capability itself and facilitates decision-making.

India’s military capability is structured for executing ‘Defensive-Offensive Strategy,’ against China and ‘Offensive-Defensive Strategy’ against Pakistan. As appreciated earlier under threat perception, China can launch a limited war under informationalized conditions having limited aims, force levels, short duration. With the creation of infrastructure in Tibet, China can induct an adequate number of forces

\(^{239}\) Paul, op cit, p 5
for a short war in a reasonable time-frame. As a sufficient number of Indian formations are deployed ab-initio coupled with terrain advantage of mountains and supplemented by shifting of forces from the West to the East, the Indian Army can limit/contain China’s conventional military offensive by adopting the ‘Defensive-Offensive Strategy.’ Early and advance intelligence about Chinese build up will enable informed and better decision making.

India’s numerical superior military strength against Pakistan is capable of deterring Pakistan from waging a conventional war but is not strong enough to compel Pakistan from abetting cross-border terrorism. The possibility of Pakistan initiating conventional war like the military offensive in the 1965 War is almost negligible, however, the possibility of shallow intrusions like the Kargil in 1999 cannot be ruled out. One of the reasons for keeping the Kargil War limited was also a lack of strong military preparedness. The then COAS General Malik’s famous statement, “We will fight with whatever we have”240 is illustrative of the inadequate military preparedness. Amplifying the same, General Malik wrote, “When the Kargil War broke out, our ‘bottom line’ holdings and reserves of weapons, ammunition and equipment were in a depleted state due to a continuous lack of budgetary support, a tedious, almost non-functional procurement system; the procurement structure in the MoD was responsible for the sub-optimal utilization of funds and long delays.”241 The former COAS during an interview with the author alluded to the shortcomings in military capability as a constraint in 1999. 242

The state of military preparedness has not improved since then. The Parliamentary Standing Committee of the MoD had highlighted that the state of equipment of the Indian Army is 68 percent obsolete, 24 percent current and only 8 percent of the state-of-the-art category.243 The continuation in service of obsolete equipment and weapons adversely impact military preparedness. Modernization of the armed forces is progressing at a snail’s pace due to the cumbersome procurement process, low budgetary allotments, and bureaucratic red-tape. The unduly long-time required for materialization of approved projects is another cause of concern. In the last three financial years (2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17) only 8 -10 % of the 144 defence

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240 Malik, op cit, 2006, p 154
241 Ibid, pp 153-154
242 Interviewed on 20 November 2018
243 Joshi op cit
The war wastage reserve ammunition needed for laid down fighting for 40 days of intense war is woefully short, particularly of tanks and guns. In some cases, it is even below the Minimum Acceptable Risk Levels for 20 days fighting. The dependence on imports and the long gestation period for procurements is adversely impacting military preparedness.

The above state is a cause of great concern as it reflects the under-preparedness of the military to execute conventional military operations. Pakistan, well aware of this state of affairs continues to indulge with impunity in fomenting cross-border terrorism and confident of deterring India’s conventional retaliation due to its nuclear deterrence. Pakistan’s vigorous pursuance of its cross-border terrorism policy since the nineties reflect the failure of India’s military capability. This was reinforced by India’s limited response to Kargil intrusions and no action after mobilization during Operation Parakram. Besides the nuclear deterrence and international pressure, lack of military preparedness was a constraint as alluded by the then Army Chief during the Kargil War.

The cold start doctrine formalized after operation Parakram factoring Pakistan’s nuclear threat seeks to capture territory by quickly launching shallow offensives along multiple thrust lines, inflict substantial damage to enemy’s war-waging potential in the shortest possible time. The doctrine presupposes that war would be a short duration one, limited at best to two-three weeks and therefore, the aim is to deliver a military blow in the shortest possible time frame. The war may not remain short, the possibility of the escalation exists. Praveen Swamy, editor of Force Journal and a strong advocate of developing conventional capability opines that “credibility should also involve a seamless transition from conventional to nuclear domain” by formulating “joint plans to integrate conventional and nuclear forces”. There is plenty of merit in this. As India by conducting an aerial strike in response to Pulwama terrorist action has raised the escalation ladder, the need to build in seamless escalation dynamics is emphasized. This will add to the deterrence value of nuclear capability.

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244 Kumar, Dinesh, The Worrisome State of Indian Army, *The Sunday Guardian*, 12 January, 2019
245 Ibid
The poor state of the country’s war-waging potential adversely impacts decision-making for war. A robust conventional military capability factoring all tangible and intangible factors is the need of the hour as this will strengthen the political decision-making for war. Development of an indigenous military base as well as adequate budgetary allotments, streamlining procedural processes and homogeneous civil-military relations are imperatives to maintain a high state of operational preparedness. There is an urgent need to optimize technology for intelligence acquisition and assessments. Besides equipping the military, there is also a need to shift the focus, particularly of Army from counter proxy war to conventional war training specifically in J&K. To strengthen the conventional military capability to execute swift offensive operations, the RR should be replaced from the counter-terrorism grid in J&K by the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) and RR, in turn, should relieve the reserve formations deployed for counter-infiltration grid along the LoC in a phased and gradual manner. The regular Army so relieved should train in executing conventional military offensive across the LoC. This would not only enable training but also act as a deterrent force against any high-profile terrorist attacks in J&K.

**Nuclear Doctrine**

India’s draft nuclear doctrine, announced on 17th August 1999, is based on the principle of Credible Minimum Deterrence and the doctrine of NFU. Nuclear weapons by India intends to deter a nuclear adversary by making the cost of first strike unacceptably high. India’s NFU is thus a strategy of deterrence by punishment whereby it avoids the first use but promises punitive retaliation. NFU Doctrine supported by massive retaliation is, therefore, the bedrock of Indian nuclear strategy.

China has adopted a no-first-use posture, though no-first-use is not applicable during a war on Chinese territory. The latter caveat, though ostensibly meant for Taiwan, has implications for India as China claims Arunachal Pradesh, to be its own territory. Thus, the probability of China employing the nukes in a conventional scenario exists. The need for China to adopt a first-use nuclear strike may arise when its conventional

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248 Kanwal, op cit, pp12-13
military offensive is contained by the Indian Army and is unable to achieve its military objective(s). India’s defensive military capability though is adequately strong to contain any Chinese offensive, but China has qualitative and quantitative military superiority adequately backed by vast infrastructure created in Tibet.

There is no official Pakistani nuclear doctrine primarily to maintain an element of ambiguity and irrationality as it best serves its national interest. Pakistan is known to have adopted a ‘first use’ posture. After the Kargil War, Pakistan articulated ‘Graduated Escalation’ entailing an incremental increase in stages of nuclear threat to deter India from attack. It has identified certain threshold levels in terms of space, military, economic including naval blockade as well as stoppage of Indus waters and internal stabilization to employ nuclear weapons against India.

The broad general national consensus on India’s NFU doctrine based on credible minimum nuclear deterrence seems to be weakening now. Bharat Karnad, a research professor and national security expert, wrote, “NFU may be useful as political rhetoric and make for stability in situations short of war, but as a serious war planning predicate, it is a liability; NFU is not in the least credible, because it requires India to first absorb a nuclear attack before responding in kind”. The previous Defence Minister expressed doubts over the utility of the NFU and Lieutenant General BS Nagal argued for dropping it. SS Menon, the former NSA too indicated openness to review, “for the present, the NFU is the best response, but that situation is changing rapidly, and it is important that India think through the alternatives. The election manifesto of BJP in 2014 promised to revise and update nuclear doctrine, but the PM quelled those speculations asserting NFU won’t be revoked and stated: “NFU is a reflection of our cultural inheritance.”

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251 Kanwal, p 16
254 Karnad, Bharat, Nuclear Weapons and India’s Security (New Delhi: Macmillan, 2004) quoted in Kanwal, op cit, p 21
255 Singh, Kunal, ‘Why is India’s NFU Policy under so much Strain’, The Hindustan Times, 10 January, 2019
256 Menon, SS, Choices Inside the Making of India’s Foreign Policy (Gurgaon: Allen Lane, Penguin Books, 2016, p 183
257 Singh, Kunal op cit
Brigadier Kanwal, after analysing the points for and against the continuation of the NFU concluded in favour of retaining the policy and stated “NFU posture continues to remain suitable for effective nuclear deterrence; it is a stabilizing posture that helps India prevent the breakdown of deterrence.” The continuation of NFU is based on the argument that the onus of escalation is on the adversary. With specific reference to China, he feels that India does not need a ‘first use’ nuclear strategy based on the premise that its conventional military capability would be able to contain the Chinese offensive. Chinese infrastructure development and military modernization have eroded the terrain advantage India had as a defender and there is a vast disparity between the two conventional forces in China’s favor, thereby putting India’s NFU under immense pressure. NFU may not be able to deter a conventional Chinese offensive backed by nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles deployed in Tibet. To ensure a seamless transition from conventional to nuclear war, it is imperative that India’s defensive capability is up-graded to match with Chinese military strength and concurrently, due to the vast disparity between the conventional military forces of India and China, there is a need to revisit the NFU considering the long-term threat perspective from China.

With relation to Pakistan, India being a status quo power apparently has no intentions of launching a major conventional offensive into Pakistan unless provoked by Pakistan’s continued sponsorship of high-profile terrorist attacks on India. India’s second-strike capability is based on a triad of land, sea and air-based forces. The land component comprises of SRBMs i.e. Prithvi and IRBMs i.e. Agni, while air component consists of nuclear glide bombs to be delivered by fighter-bomber aircraft i.e. the Mirage 2000 and SU-30 MKI; the SSBNs armed with submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) forms the sea component. The sea component was inducted on 5th November 2018 that completed the triad and enhanced the nuclear deterrence capability. The PM Mr Modi declared “India’s first nuclear ballistic missile submarine INS Arihant had completed its maiden deterrence patrol” and added, “in an era like this, credible nuclear deterrence is the need of the hour.”

This is a significant achievement considering India’s doctrine of NFU. Admiral Arun

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258 Kanwal, op cit, p 36
259 Ibid
260 Singh, Kunal, op cit
261 Arihant’s Patrol Over N-triad in Place, our Submarine our Shield against Blackmail: PM, The Indian Express, 6 November 2018
Prakash, the former Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) and strategic analyst, wrote, “As a nation committed to ‘NFU’, it is of critical importance that an adversary contemplating a nuclear first strike should never be in doubt about the credibility of India’s nuclear deterrent and the assurance of a swift, devastating response.” By letting Pakistan make the difficult decision, India is not engaged in nuclear brinkmanship. As deterrence is a mind game, India’s doctrine must enhance nuclear capability, particularly the second-strike capability. There are others who feel that Pakistan has nullified India’s conventional advantage by resorting to proxy war using the nuclear shield. India, now, has access to better technology than what was available in 2003 when NFU was evolved. India’s surveillance and missile capability enable the effective execution of pre-emptive counter-force strikes. With the testing of Arihant, India has developed a credible deterrent capability.

With the credible second-strike nuclear capability in place, India has taken the position that it will respond with a massive strike even if Pakistan uses a low yield weapon against an Indian target, even inside Pakistani territory. This is intended to negate Pakistan’s threat of TNWs as well as any nuclear bargaining through them. India’s NFU with relation to Pakistan is considered viable. Pakistan’s nuclear threshold is reasonably high. Its refinement and operationalization of its New Concept of War Fighting (NCWF) with the relocation of forces are indicative of its resolve to fight the conventional war strongly. Let Pakistan take the difficult decision to initiate a nuclear strike which would be adequately responded by India’s viable second-strike nuclear capability. India should regularly communicate that the threat of massive punishment would outweigh the advantages that Pakistan perceives of getting from its first use policy.

A robust conventional military capability is imperative to inflict decisive defeat on Pakistan. It would supplement the credibility of second-strike nuclear capability. Having acquired the capability for a robust and credible second-strike capability, the focus shifts to political resolve and intention that would manifest in the decision-making for the conventional war against Pakistan. With capability and credibility in

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262 Prakash, Arun, Admiral (Retired) The Significance of Arihant, *The Indian Express*, 7 November, 2018

263 The Draft Nuclear Doctrine states, “any nuclear attack on India and its forces shall result in punitive retaliation with nuclear weapons” (clause 2.3). The position with regard to forces has been reiterated by Defence Minister Fernandes (Military Option if Diplomacy Fails, *The Hindu*, January 3, 2002)
place, the nuclear signaling for launching the second-strike in conjunction with the conventional offensive needs to be calibrated at the appropriate time. A well-coordinated and integrated politico-military decision-making process incorporating essential stakeholders is imperative. The nuclear threat should put the onus for escalation on the adversary. India also needs to showcase the indigenous capability that enables it to exercise its option of second-strike capability without fear of any international technological sanctions for further development.

**Political Leadership**

Decision-making is foremost a human activity that requires understanding, knowledge, and wisdom. Understanding is a synthesis of knowledge into the application for a specific situation. Knowledge is information gained through experience and reasoning, while wisdom is the ability to discern what is right or wrong; knowledge is knowing how to use a gun while wisdom is when to use it and when to keep it holstered.\(^{264}\) The personality of the leader reflects the personality of the nation. In a questionnaire forwarded to the environment, all the respondents overwhelmingly endorsed that the political leader is the most important determinant in decision-making for war.\(^{265}\) Churchill's inspiring leadership during World War II rallied his government and the people of Britain for the war. His immortal words, “We shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender.”\(^{266}\) galvanized Britain. Highlighting the significance of leader, Sun Tzu stated, “No leader should put troops into the field merely to gratify his ambition; no leader should fight a battle simply out of pique. But a kingdom that has once been destroyed can never come again into being; nor can the dead ever be brought back to life. Hence the enlightened leader is heedful, and the good leader full of caution.”\(^{267}\) It took many years for Japan and Germany to regain their erstwhile clout after suffering immense devastation after World War II. Thucydides, a Greek historian, highlighting the significance of human nature had argued that people were motivated by calculations of self-interest but other factors

\(^{264}\) What is the difference between Knowledge and Wisdom? Retrieved from Internet: https://www.gotquestions.org/wisdom-knowledge.html (Accessed on 15th November 2018)

\(^{265}\) Refer Question 20 of Appendix B on page 359

\(^{266}\) Winston Churchill speech to British House of Commons on 4 June, 1940 quoted in RAND Study, op cit, p 8

\(^{267}\) Singh, Harjeet, op cit, p 298
mattered like fear and honor, that was not quite the same as self-interest. The significance of a political leader as a predominant factor in decision-making for war is thus beyond doubt, and he is expected to be knowledgeable, mature and wise endowed with the moral courage to keep national interest uppermost.

The Indian political leadership is a mixed bag of successes and failures in decision-making for war. All of India’s wars were wars of necessity wherein the decision to defend aggression was thrust upon the political leadership. Nehru’s political leadership during the 1947-48 India-Pakistan and 1962 India-China Wars was anything but inspiring. He displayed a proclivity for appeasement and submissiveness while taking crucial decisions for and in war. Lord Mountbatten, the Governor General intimidated Nehru to chair the meetings of DCC which is the prerogative of the PM and played a critical role in policy-making which far exceeded that of a constitutional figurehead. This proved highly damaging for India as the decisions were driven by the British strategic interests that were aligned with Pakistan’s interests. Mountbatten prodded Nehru to take the Kashmir dispute to UN which till today is haunting India. Nehru could not calibrate his well-intentioned policies to the power-politics of the emerging cold-war dynamics and failed to see through the real British motivation to pursue their strategic interests. To be fair to Nehru, he displayed commendable resolve, determined leadership, and political foresight to steer the Indian Army during the war despite the Governor-General and British Generals blatantly adopting a pro-Pakistan agenda to pursue their own strategic interests. In 1962, the PM Nehru failed to understand the real Chinese intentions and got carried away by his own misplaced sense of idealism in international relations. He felt that all issues can be resolved diplomatically but failed to judge the need to strengthen diplomacy with adequate military preparedness. Course-correction was essential seeing China’s unrelenting aggressive stance to resolve the boundary dispute on its own terms and conditions. Mr. Nehru’s socialist background, liberal learnings and intense dislike for matters military kept the operational preparedness of the Armed Forces out of the strategic discourse of the country.

India’s victory in the 1965 War is attributable to PM Lal Bahadur Shastri’s bold leadership. Mr. Shastri provided resolute and determined leadership to the country and belied doubts about his ability. He took the bold decision to take the battle into

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Pakistan for an all-out war instead of fighting a defensive battle on own territory. This took Pakistan by surprise. It not only forestalled an emerging adverse situation in J&K; it also conveyed the political message of deterrence for future to Pakistan that ‘aggression against J&K would be construed as aggression on India and demonstrated Kashmir being an integral part of India. The creation of Bangladesh and partition of Pakistan in the 1971 War is due to the outstanding political leadership of PM, Mrs Gandhi who defied the political pressure of US President Nixon to take the bold decision of military option in supreme national interest to liberate East Pakistan from the clutches of Pakistan’s tyrannical rule after shrewdly exploring all possible options. She superbly synchronized the entire political, diplomatic and military machinery with profound maturity and sound judgment. Her vision, forethought and bold action transformed the crisis of huge proportions into a strategic victory.

In the 1999 Kargil War, the PM Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee handled the crisis with profound wisdom and maturity in synch with the international environment keeping national interest uppermost. He wisely adopted the Strategy of Restraint considering Pakistani motives and assumptions in undertaking the Kargil intrusions. He showed great courage of conviction to not to be carried away by the popular mood of an all-out war, yet displayed firmness and resoluteness in projecting the country as a responsible nation that was compelled to launch a limited war achieve short-term gain restricted to the eviction of intrusions only. He, however, could not display the same firmness and political wisdom in the 2001-2002 post the terrorist strike on the Parliament in December 2001 when he failed to act decisively after mobilizing the Indian Army. He could not draw the correct balance between succumbing to US pressure that wanted strategic restraint and the domestic pressure that desired decisive military action. Majority of the respondents partially agreed that emotional and cognitive content predominate decision-making for war.\textsuperscript{269} PM Vajpayee’s decision to mobilize the Armed Forces in 2001 was strongly influenced by deep emotional hurt of personnel and the national honor.

Decision making is an essentially cognitive process, in which emotions, stress, fear of failure vis-a-vis hope of success, tolerance of ambiguity and locus of control of a leader play an important role. The theorists talk about rational, emotional, intuitive and cognitive decision-making approaches, but feel that emotional and cognitive

\textsuperscript{269} Refer Question 11 of Appendix B on page 356
content predominate decision making for war. Research has shown that emotions are part of virtually any decision-making process, there is no uniform influence of emotion or effect per se on decision making; rationality is more due to the appropriateness of emotions and not due to formal consistency of preferences.270 Stephen Rosen explaining the role of emotion in decision-making hypothesized the *Emotion-based Pattern Recognition* model in his book ‘War and Human Nature’; whose salient aspects are highlighted in the succeeding paragraphs.271

(a) People normally adopt an obvious general course of action which is based on the relevant information stored in the memory over a period of time and tend to relate the same to the new problem, which the decision maker may or may not be consciously aware. Reason and conscious cognition can reverse or modify the emotion-based decision if time permits and compelling data is available, otherwise, it plays only a secondary role, particularly if an earlier decision has proved to be successful.

(b) Emotion-based pattern recognition generates a decision that subjectively ‘feels right’ and is confidently acted upon. This becomes the main solution in a group setting in which others tend to play a secondary role to devise an alternative decision. These emotional decisions are often the result of inaccurate identification of the problem resulting in a sub-optimal decision which can lead to policy failure.

Judgment is another key element of decision making and requires experience and practice. Judgment can be exercised through intuition or a participative process involving many stakeholders or a combination of both. Intuition is the ability to understand something without the need for conscious reasoning. Intuition in the context of decision making is defined as ‘non-sequential information-processing mode.’272 Intuition may appear subconscious; however, intuitive decision-making is based on intellect, experience, education, and training. This empowers the decision-makers to identify patterns, trends, problems, and solutions.

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271 Rosen, op cit, pp 29-35

272 Intuition, Retrieved from Internet: https://www.google.co.in/search? (Accessed on 14 November 2018)
The decision to go war will always be loaded with uncertainty regarding the final outcome as well as other unintended ramifications. The propensity to take risks or avoid risks is an important factor in the personality of a leader. A strong and clear-minded leader is more likely to take a better and informed decision in a faster time frame. While the decision to exercise strategic restraint by Mr. Vajpayee during the Kargil War 1999 was prudent, firm and logical in synch with environmental realities, the decision to order mobilization without any planning for what was to be done and later demobilize without achieving any tangible gains signaled to Pakistan of backing down due to its nuclear threat and international pressure. In 1982, the British PM Thatcher was not deterred from undertaking the Falkland invasion against Argentina despite the geographical distance and even economic non-viability. Russia under Putin took a bold decision to annex South Ossetia despite NATO threats spearheaded by the US.

While taking important strategic decisions pertaining to national security like the war, political leadership tends to consider the perceived stakes involved. The most important variable at the national level is the perception of threat, and whether it is existential or not.\textsuperscript{273} The cohesion of the government in terms of a coalition or a single party majority in India impacts the decisions. A monolithic single-party majority government can take strong decisions vis a vis a coalition government where all the allies would favor a decision from their own political perspective. In matured democracies, coalition and opposition leaders generally favor decisions that are in national interest overcoming political expediency. Leadership is the most important determinant for decision-making for war. \textbf{The need to empower the political leader as well as his key advisors through an institutionalized process is imperative.}

**Economic Strength**

A country’s economic strength and resilience to sustain the war effort is an important determinant in decision-making for war. For a war of necessity to defend aggression forced on the nation by the adversary, the economic state of the nation will not substantially impact the decision for war as going to war has been necessitated to safeguard the vital national interest. The state of the economy, may, however, influence the scale of war in terms of aim and force levels employed. For a war of

\textsuperscript{273} RAND Study, op cit, p 42
choice, which does not fit into India’s policy to explore various alternatives available other than employing military force, the state of the economy will be an important factor. A more resilient and stronger economy can sustain the war for a longer period on its own without being dependent upon other countries. The country can resist international pressures of economic sanctions and can sustain cut in the supply of military hardware. India in 1971 was encumbered with the huge economic burden of management of refugees. The relative cost of waging war vis a vis the economic burden of management of the continued influx of refugees was an important determinant for the decision for war by India. The cost of war was assessed to be Rs 5,000 million whereas the cost of expected 9 million refugees in October was Rs 5,250 million rupees; the cost of war was a one-time cost, while that of refugees was recurring cost every year.\textsuperscript{274} It was also assessed that any cut in economic assistance by the donor countries due to India’s decision for war would be effectively managed by imposing a moratorium on debt repayments.\textsuperscript{275} Indian diplomacy achieved a fair amount of success in employing economic pressure on Pakistan. The World Bank’s Aid Consortium decided on June 21, 1971, not to renew multi-lateral economic assistance to Pakistan until such time that political stability and normal commercial intercourse was resumed.\textsuperscript{276} The non-renewal of economic aid also led to the termination of various bilateral agreements providing military aid to Pakistan. It undermined Pakistan’s ability to continue military operations within East Pakistan. A maritime economic blockade was imposed to cut off supplies and other material aid to Pakistan to financially exhaust him.

At the time of the Kargil War in 1999, the economy of the country had improved and was in a position to sustain the war in spite of the embargoes placed due to the nuclear tests in 1998. However, the economic advisors stated that a responsible action\textsuperscript{277} will result in the opening of the economic embargoes. The US-India civil nuclear cooperation Agreement of July 2005 and waiver by Nuclear Supplier Group in 2008 were recognition of India’s responsible actions.

\textsuperscript{274} Subrahmanyam K, \textit{Bangla Desh and India’s Security}, (Dehradun: Palit and Dutt Publishers, 1972) p 106
\textsuperscript{275} Raghavan, op cit 2013 p 207
\textsuperscript{276} Ganguly, op cit 1999, p 103
\textsuperscript{277} Responsible action implied a limited war with fixed aims that would help India to get the economic sanctions lifted imposed after the nuclear explosions in 1998.
The state of the economy, however, impacts the capability building which in turn is the most important determinant for decision for war. The budgetary allotments have already been discussed in Chapter I and not being repeated here.

The economic strength of a country and allocation of adequate budget allotment are very important determinants for capability building and military preparedness, which in turn facilitates decision-making for war. The state of military preparedness either emboldens or constraints the decision-maker. A relatively stronger economy over the adversary may even weaken his will to sustain the war for a longer period, thereby building pressure to cease military operations. The longer the country can sustain economic pressure over an adversary, the weaker the adversary’s capabilities may become as supplies run low.278 The economic resilience determines the war stamina.

Intelligence

Intelligence at the national and strategic level is required for threat assessments, force structures and modification in plans. The updated enemy capabilities and assessments empower the decision makers to take considered decisions in a shorter time frame of the emerging crisis. More than the mere intelligence inputs, the threat assessment is of far greater relevance in decision-making for war. India’s intelligence has not been able to contribute effectively in decision making for war.

The PM Nehru did not believe that China had the ability to threaten India, for his assessment was that China’s first priority would be to attend to its huge domestic problems and would thus have little time for foreign ‘adventures.’279 In fact, what India assessed unlikely was one of the reasons to initiate the hostilities. Mao was discredited due to the failure of the Great Leap Forward Policy and would have been out of power. In order to regain power and unify the nation, he decided that the best way would be to employ the armed forces against an outside enemy; India was a ‘soft’ target.280 The persistent misplaced belief of Indian intelligence that China’s invasion was unlikely, without risking a wider war completely ignored the prospect

278 Subrahmanyam, op cit. p 32
279 USI Study, op cit, p 5
280 Lintner, Bertil, China’s India War Collision Course on the Roof of the World (New Delhi: Oxford University Press 2018) p xxi. Bertil Lintner is a Swedish nationalist and former Correspondent with the Far Eastern Economic Review, Hongkong and has written 17 books on Asian Politics and History. He is currently with Asia Times Online and Asia Pacific Media Services
that China could launch a limited calibrated punitive strike.\textsuperscript{281} India overlooked the implications of the important operational level activities like the infrastructural developments to include highways linking Lhasa with the mainland in Tibet region and major logistics bases in Tibet.

In 1965, there was a lack of clear assessment of Pakistan’s intention to carry out large-scale infiltration of tribesmen for which the recruitment, training, and organization started as early as May 1965.\textsuperscript{282} Had these inputs been known, the Indian Army’s deployment along the Punjab border ordered after the Kutch skirmishes could have continued to act as a deterrent for the planned insurrection in J&K. The preparations and build-up of Pakistan’s divisional size force comprising of tanks for the offensive in Akhnur sector on 1\textsuperscript{st} September were not known to the Intelligence Bureau responsible for external intelligence. India’s decision for the 1965 War was taken on 3\textsuperscript{rd} September 1965 when the Pakistani offensive had made substantial progress and threatened Jammu. India was unaware of the existence of Pakistan’s newly raised armored division and its location. This was the armored division which made the Indian offensive recoiled in the Khemkaran sector.

India’s decision for the application of military instrument in East Pakistan was influenced by China’s stance which was known to India. The Indian government had copies of the correspondence in which China had urged Yahya in a letter on 11 April 1971 to reach a political settlement with East Pakistan as per the wishes of people. This sentence was neither published by the Chinese News Agency nor by the Pakistani government.\textsuperscript{283} By July 1971 the Indian government was in possession of the copies of the letters that were exchanged between China and Pakistan in April in which Beijing had clearly stated that China would not militarily intervene in support of Pakistan in the eventuality of an Indo- Pakistani War.\textsuperscript{284} As China did not give any commitment to Pakistan to ensure its territorial integrity, India accordingly did not

\textsuperscript{281} USI Study, op cit, p 157
\textsuperscript{282} Rao, KV. General, PVSM (Retired) \textit{Prepare or Perish, A Study of National Security}, (Lancer Publications, New Delhi, 1991) p 149
\textsuperscript{283} Pakistan Times, 13 April, 1971. Zhou Enlai letter as circulated by the Pakistani Government quoted in Sisson, Richard and Rose, Leo O, \textit{War and Secession Pakistan, India, and the Creation of Bangladesh} (Berkeley: University of California Press,1990), p 203. The writers have quoted interviews with various individuals.
\textsuperscript{284} Sisson, and Rose, op cit, p 199. The source of this information includes one former official of the Pakistan Foreign Service who provided copies of the Sino-Pakistani correspondence to the Indian intelligence services at the home of a well-known Indian journalist in New Delhi.
perceive China as a major threat to deter it from achieving its objective in East Pakistan.

The Kargil War 1999 was the direct outcome of the failure of intelligence, both at the strategic and tactical levels to detect the Pakistani intrusions on the Kargil heights. India was caught unaware by the stealth and secrecy employed by Pakistani to carry out the intrusions. After detection of the intrusions, the inability of intelligence agencies to know the identity of the intruders – whether they were Pakistan Army regulars or jihadi militants was a crucial factor in decision-making for the scale of force to be employed against the intruders. The then COAS General Malik admitted, “a factor that contributed the most to our surprise and to the fog of war was our inability to identify the intruders for a considerable length of time - Who were they? Were they militants or Pakistan Army regulars? 285 The Army Chief during an interview with the author expressed concern over the lack of technological intelligence during the Doklam crisis in July-August 2017.286

The Cuban missile crisis considered as an ideal example of prudent decision making was the result of the advance assessment of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) about the likely deployment of Soviet missiles. The CIA Director had raised the possibility of Soviet missile deployment with US President John Kennedy to Cuba on 10th August 1962, before any hint of such activity had been picked up.287 This enabled the President to consider the likely courses of action that would be implemented should this crisis occurred. The President was appropriately armed with advanced intelligence and assessment that enabled him to take the right decision to diffuse the crisis. India lacks a viable and strong intelligence acquisition and assessment capability despite some progress made as a result of the Kargil Review Committee Report. While there is a number of intelligence agencies to gather information, there is no strong central coordinating agency to carry out holistic assessments. The more the number of intelligence agencies, the more the need to protect their respective turfs.

Considering the dynamic global, regional and internal security environment, India needs a strong intelligence coordinating mechanism to assist decision

285 Malik, op cit, 2006, p 110
286 Interviewed COAS on 16th February 2018.
287 Rosen, op cit, p 59
makers to work out adequate response matrix and contingency plans that can be implemented prior to or during the early stages of the crisis. The need to integrate and optimize the technological intelligence and space reconnaissance including signal, electronic, imagery and human intelligence is the need of the hour for well-considered and prudent decision making. The advent of technology in the last decade has provided immense scope to the military to optimize the informational instruments.

**Public Opinion and Media**

Public Opinion and popular support play an important role in the decision-making for the crisis and the war. A supportive population or mass popular support for a war reduces the political risk for leaders and instead instills greater confidence in decision making. Decisions in synch with the public opinion lend greater credibility to the responsiveness of the government and enhance the morale of the troops on the battlefield. National will to fight and expectations of victory will generally be stronger when a majority of a population supports a conflict, or when the opposition to conflict is muted or perceived as radical.²⁸⁸

There was a sharp public opinion against China in India after the Tibetan Uprising in March 1959. It took the form of articles in national newspapers criticizing China for the high handedness in crushing the popular sentiment of the Tibetans for independence. The obscure nature of Tibetan autonomy, legitimacy, and character of Chinese sovereignty, and specific Tibetan objections to policies exercised by the current Beijing government were discussed and debated in great detail.²⁸⁹ This impacted the decision-making in both countries. To China, it reinforced their perception that India instigated the Tibetan Uprising and strengthened its belief to punish India to undermine its influence over Tibet. Within India, the media questioned the Government policies, particularly the concept of Panchsheel of peaceful co-existence in recognizing Chinese sovereignty over Tibet in 1954. It intensified when Nehru ruled out India’s interference in the internal affairs of another country. The moderate stance adopted by the PM was in sharp contrast to the views of other parliamentarians. In response to questions raised in the Parliament, Nehru maintained that internal affairs of China could not be discussed in the Parliament at length, which was met with angry objections, uproarious scenes, and hurling of angry

²⁸⁸ RAND Study, op cit, p 43
²⁸⁹ USI Study, op cit, p 125
words on the floor of Parliament.290 The contrast in India’s official China policy and the larger public opinion is clearly evident. It impacted India’s foreign policy decision making in relation to China. One of the reasons for the PM Nehru to reject Zhou Enlai’s offer of China’s package proposal for the boundary dispute was the prevalent public opinion in India during the bilateral talks in April 1960. Acknowledging public opinion in India, Nehru stated, “If I give them, then I shall no longer be the PM of India – I will not do it.”291 After the failure of talks between the Indian Defence Minister and Chinese Foreign Minister in Geneva, India had changed its stance of asking China to withdraw from Aksai Chin but to assuage domestic opposition, Nehru had wanted China at least to indicate willingness to withdraw; The PM was well aware that if this latest move became public he would be under tremendous pressure from domestic constituencies to repudiate it.292 The role of public opinion in shaping India’s foreign policy decisions towards China and also that of China towards India is clearly evident.

In 1971, when India was examining the various options, Dr. K Subramanyam, the renowned strategic affairs expert advising the government for the military option argued that “India should exploit the world public opinion which is very much in advance of the opinions expressed by the national governments.”293 India while taking the final decision for war considered the adverse implications that would be imposed on the population of India by the refugee influx. It also considered East Pakistan’s populations’ desire who were outrightly in favor of adopting a more pro-active strategy for restoring peace and were volunteers to be trained against the Pakistani Army. The migration of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees to India following the intensification of military operations in 1987 caused deep outrage in Tamilnadu. It was feared that the ethnic strife in Sri Lanka would cause unrest in South India that could lead to a conflict situation. India’s policy, therefore, was influenced by the need to maintain unity and territorial integrity of close neighbor Sri Lanka.294 The induction of the Indian Peace-Keeping Force (IPKF) followed thereafter. Popular support to the Kargil War helped shape both the national and international

290 Ibid, p 127
291 Maxwell, Neville, India’s China War (New Delhi: Natraj Publishers,1970) p 177. Recounted to the writer at the time by one of those present.
292 Raghavan, Srinath, War and Peace in Modern India A Strategic History of the Nehru Years (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2010) p 290
293 Ibid, p 209
294 Malik, op cit, 2006, p 7
environment. Perhaps Kargil has done to the Indian public what Vietnam did to the American people.²⁹⁵

Few months after the Kargil War, the government succumbed to the public opinion to release the terrorists in exchange of hostages in 1999. There were orchestrated protests outside PM’s residence after the CCS meeting on 25th December 1999. People demanded the release of the hostages at any cost and this continued till 30th December. The Foreign Minister Mr. Jaswant Singh’s plea that the Government had to keep national interest in mind and could not be seen as succumbing to the hijacker’s demands was met with abuses reminding him of the release of terrorists in December 1989 in exchange of Rubayya Sayeed, daughter of the then Home Minister Mohammed Sayeed. The media overwhelmingly supported the release of terrorists in exchange for the hostages. On 28th Dec, the Government had struck a deal with the hijackers for the release of three hostages in exchange of the hostages. The government of the day succumbed to the public pressure overlooking the national interest and the deterrence perspective. The Indian media’s handling of the crisis actually supported the hijackers and provided them with the publicity they were seeking. It reinforced India’s image as a soft state.

India’s adversaries have shown greater ingenuity in the effective utilization of media to shape public opinion. With respect to China, their media always project the government viewpoint and was in the forefront to lead the information warfare in Doklam face-off with India in 2017.

Popular support projected through the media shapes international perception which can be properly harnessed by the diplomacy to further own national interests. Public opinion and media are not always supportive of government’s rationality and objectivity. They can force the governments to take decisions which are not in national interest. The decision to release the terrorists in exchange for the hostages in 1999 is a case in point. Mr. Shyam Saran, cautioned, “the state should not allow itself to be pressurized by public opinion into actions that may lead to consequences worse than the original problem.”²⁹⁶ Prudence and national interest should dictate the decision-making and the leaders should show the resolve to resist public pressure. It,

²⁹⁵ Krishna, Ashok, Major General, AVSM (Retired) Lessons, Precepts and Perspectives, Ed Kargil The Tables Turned (New Delhi: Manohar, 2002) p 172
²⁹⁶ Saran, op cit, p 27
however, requires a mature professional approach to harmonize popular support and media to strengthen decision making for war.

**Think Tanks**

The detailed study of international/ national issues as also military aspects by an independent think tank/institution provides well-reasoned expert opinions to assist the decision-makers for logical decisions in times of crisis. Think-Tanks by virtue of specialization, research analysis, and engagement with a wide cross-section of public provide value able inputs to the decision makers. India has the fourth largest number of think tanks in the world having a total of 280 in 2015 with many of them headquartered in New Delhi ranging from government aided organizations to privately funded ones.\(^{297}\) The USA has the maximum having 1835, while China has 435 and Pakistan has 20.\(^{298}\) They generate a number of independent policy options to enable the decision maker to make a considered decision. As part of revamping the security architecture of the country, the Indian government recently formed a China-specific think tank Centre for Contemporary China Studies (CCCS) with officers drawn from the MEA, the three-armed services, intelligence agencies, ITBP and relevant ministries and concerned departments. This will function under the Minister for External Affairs with NSA as the Deputy Chairman. It is a welcome step and the role and tasking of other think-tanks can be made more specific and institutionalized. The huge potential of think tanks in the decision making process should be optimized through an institutionalized mechanism.

**Decision-Making Process**

Decision making for war is a very deliberate decision whose outcome impacts the achievement of its vital national interests. The nations have institutionalized decision-making mechanisms specific to their own requirements based on national values and belief systems. The process, therefore, becomes an important determinant for decision making. It is considered prudent to trace the evolution and appraisal of India’s apex

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decision-making mechanism in order to draw valuable lessons for futuristic decision-making.

India on becoming independent adopted the politico-military structure blueprint as recommended by Lord Ismay, the then Chief of Staff. A Defence Committee of the Cabinet (DCC) was constituted on 30th September 1947, with the Prime Minister (who was also the Minister of External Affairs) as Chairman, and the Deputy Prime Minister, the Finance Minister, and the Defence Minister as members with provisions to co-opt other ministers as per necessity. The heads of the three Services attend meetings of the Committee only when required to provide military appreciation or clarifications. The DCC - the apex decision-making body during the 1947-48 India-Pakistan War, was, however, hijacked by Lord Mountbatten in the very first meeting who instead of India’s PM, assumed the chairmanship which set a precedent and enabled him to play a partisan and critical role in all important questions relating to the Kashmir War.

Over a period of time, there was a constant decline in the status of the military in the security apparatus, basically due to the flawed perception of lack of any apparent external military threat. In March 1955, the government changed the designation of the Service Chiefs from Commander-in-Chief to Chief of Staff of their respective services. The 1961 Allocation of Business (AOB)/Transaction of Business (TOB) Rules excluded the military from the Ministry of Defence (MoD), designated the service headquarters as the ‘attached offices’ and relegated it to the lower part of the hierarchical security structure. This created the vacuum between the political and military leadership. The MoD manned exclusively by civil officials having limited or no expert domain knowledge of the services, occupies a superior hierarchical position than the professional military staff. The concept of ‘civilian supremacy’ was interpreted as ‘bureaucratic control’ over the armed forces and this institutional inequality led to adversarial civil-military relations.

The adversarial civil-military relations, which were expected to improve with the appointment of Menon as the Defence Minister and Thimayya as the COAS, further

299 Venkateswaran, AL, Defence Organisation of India, (Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India) p 89
300 Bhutani, Rajeev, Brigadier (Dr) Reforming and Restructuring: Higher Defence Organisation of India, CENJOWS, New Delhi, 2016
301 Ibid, p 6
deteriorated due to Menon’s abrasive working style and disregard for normal civil-military decision-making procedure.  

The political leadership and the civilian bureaucracy did not perceive any threat from China, while the Army, based on hostile activities, considered a military threat to its territorial integrity from the Northern neighbor. It wanted adequate military capability to counter the threat, which did not draw any positive response from the government. Dissatisfaction with the continuing passive response of the government [to military’s demand for capability building] was a major contributing factor to the controversy of the resignation of General K.S Thimayya, the Chief of the Army Staff on 01 September 1959. The PM’s statement in the Parliament, “the civil authority is and must remain supreme, it should pay heed to the expert advice it receives” was illustrative of the poor civil-military relationship that impacted the defence preparedness of the country. Overruling the Army’s reservations to the Forward Policy the civil authorities directed the Army to speedily implement the policy without further questioning and delay. This amounted to undue interference by the civil authorities in professional military matters. The 1962 war inflicted a humiliating defeat on India with poor civil-military relations as one of the reasons for lack of operational preparedness. During the war and after the declaration of emergency in October 1962, the DCC was re-designated as the Emergency Committee of the Cabinet (ECC) that took all strategic level decisions for the war.

In 1965, India followed a well-defined institutionalized process for politico-military strategic decision-making, with PM Shastri deliberating on the macro aspects of the impending war and the ECC taking all important decisions. There was no political or bureaucratic interference in the conduct of war by the Armed Forces. In the 1971 War, a small informal core group comprising of experienced and trusted civil servants functioned extremely well within the overall framework of the institutionalized decision-making mechanism i.e. the Political Affairs Committee (PAC). Over a period of time, the small core group emerged as an institutionalized body, with the PAC getting relegated to a mere formal structure without authority and power. The political leaders, the bureaucracy, particularly the key core group of the PM and the

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303 Kavic, op cit, p 154
304 Ibid, p 155
305 Ibid
military hierarchy were completely in sync with each other. The armed forces were provided with the fullest support and freedom to plan the timing, military objectives, as also the actual conduct of operations.

In 1987, the Indo-Sri Lanka accord leading to military deployment for peace-keeping operations was signed without adequate politico-military consultations and coordination. In no time, the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) was pitch-forked into an alien milieu where friends were foes; there was no political, diplomatic or military consensus about what to do, or how to do.\textsuperscript{306} Apparently, the political objectives were not spelled out clearly leading to ambiguity on the conduct of military operations. The IPKF returned without achieving any strategic objective and sacrificing numerous lives.

During the Kargil War 1999, India’s apex decision-making mechanism - the CCS functioned quite well wherein all the politico-military-diplomatic aspects were diligently deliberated. Barring the important decision of government’s stipulation of not crossing the LoC to evict the Pakistani intrusions, all important strategic level decisions were taken after consultation with the service chiefs. There was no political interference in the conduct of military operations. General Malik, the then COAS, stated, “informed and enlightened cooperation between the politicians, civil services and the armed forces, backed by public support, constituted a unique example of a security and strategic exercise by India.”\textsuperscript{307} The Strategy of Restraint exercised in the conduct of military operations in the area of interest in Kargil only was brilliantly supplemented by skillful diplomacy in downplaying the Pakistani nuclear factor. This did not allow Pakistan an excuse to escalate the war into other areas and internationalize the issue.

Post the terrorist strike on the Parliament in December 2001, the Army was ordered to mobilize without specifying the political objectives. As the political objectives were not defined, it was left to the Army and the operational commands to work out the various options. The mobilization of ten months saw poor coordination between the civilian and military resulting in poor orchestration of political and military moves. Resultantly the Indian Army demobilized without achieving anything viable.

\textsuperscript{306} Malik, op cit 2013, p 50
\textsuperscript{307} Ibid, p 138
In 2005, the Army HQ was made as an integrated HQ of the MoD but it was not empowered adequately. Admiral Vishnu Bhagwat, the CNS who was sacked by the government in 1999, wrote in his treatise ‘The Soldier and the State’: “By selective usage, omission, and interpretation of language, it (civil services) has continuously imposed a variety of constraints, checks, and curbs on the very functioning of the armed forces in general, and the business of service headquarters in particular.”

This has led to marginalization of the defence forces from the formulation of national policy process and agendas, even in the cardinal sphere of national security”. The three service Chiefs charged with the command of the armed forces and responsible for national defence and conduct of war have neither been accorded a status nor granted any powers in the decision-making apparatus of the government. As per the 2nd schedule, the Secretary, Defence is allocated the responsibilities for the defence of India and every part thereof including preparation for defence and all such acts as may be conducive in times of war to its prosecution and after its termination to effective demobilization. The Service Chiefs find no mention in this schedule but are held accountable for the defence of the country.

The current higher defence organization (HDO) of India is explained in the succeeding paragraphs.

The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) is the apex decision-making authority to take all decisions pertaining to national security. The CCS is the changed nomenclature of the erstwhile ECC and Cabinet Committee of Political Affairs (CCPA). The PM is the chairman of CCS and includes the Defence, Home, External Affairs and Finance ministers. The Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) and the Service Chiefs attend the meetings as per necessity. The National Security Council (NSC) formed in 1990 is a cabinet-level body of six members with PM as the chairman. The NSC deals with all issues that threaten India’s internal or external security. It focusses on an integrated approach to assessing long and medium-range threats, challenges and opportunities related to national security. The NSC consists of the Strategic Policy Group (SPG), National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) and

National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS). SPG has been recently reconstituted in October 2018 wherein, it will be headed by the NSA having three Deputy NSA instead of only one. The Cabinet Secretary, Vice-Chairman of National Institute of Transforming India (NITI) Aayog, the services chiefs, heads of important security-related ministries, major intelligence agencies and Governor, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will be the members.\textsuperscript{311} It is the principal mechanism for inter-ministerial coordination and integration of relevant inputs to formulate the national security policies. The NSAB consists of a convener and other distinguished and expert personalities from outside the government. National Security Adviser (NSA) is the principal coordinator to formulate and implement the long-term national security policies under the overall guidance of the PM and NSC. NSCS functions directly under the NSA and NSAB advise the NSC on all national security aspects.

Earlier in April 2018, the GoI formed the Defence Planning Committee (DPC) with NSA as the Chairman.\textsuperscript{312} The DPC has been entrusted with four major responsibilities namely Policy and Strategy, Planning and Capability Development, Defence Diplomacy and Defence Manufacturing.\textsuperscript{313} Defence manufacturing responsibility pertains to hastening up the defence procurement process considered as dysfunctional and align future acquisitions with the fund availability. The government has accorded approval for the establishment of three tri-service agencies to create a joint structure for cyber, space and special operations.

The COSC and the service Chiefs are part of the DPC while the Chief of Integrated Staff Headquarters (CISC) is to perform the functions of secretary DPC. As the CISC has been placed under the DPC, NSA will function as a pseudo CDS, thus control of the armed forces shifts from the Defence Minister to the PMO.\textsuperscript{314} The placement of DPC under the NSA is expected to bring in greater integration and momentum to capability development.

The Chairman of the COSC is a rotational, part-time appointment with senior most Chief nominated to the post. The tenure may vary up to a few months; hardly any

\textsuperscript{311} Ibid
\textsuperscript{312} Gokhale, Nitin, India’s National Security Architecture Set for a Revamp, 25 April 2018. Retrieved from Internet: bharatshakti.in/india-national-security-architecture-set-for-a-revamp. (Accessed on 7\textsuperscript{th} November 2018)
\textsuperscript{313} Ibid
\textsuperscript{314} Kakar, Harsha, Major General (Retired), A Compilation of Articles on National and Global Security Volume II (New Delhi: Creative Crows, 2018) p 71
incumbent has had a two-year tenure. He wields very limited powers and since the Chairman, COSC, is also the administrative and operational head of his own service, he cannot devote the majority of his time towards COSC functioning. With the formation of DPC, it is apparent that the CDS or permanent COSC has again been put on the backburner if not totally ruled out. Only time will tell whether NSA as the Chairman and HQ IDS as the Secretariat of the DPC will bring in the much-desired jointness and impetus whose functioning till now have been marred by turf rivalries of the three services. It seems to be an exercise in futility. Once CDS or Permanent COSC is formed, it is likely to function under the NSA and may not have direct access to CCS as was envisaged. On the whole, it is a very sub-optimal arrangement.

It would be pertinent to take an overview of the higher defence organization of the USA and UK who do not have the lacunae of the Indian system and functioning effectively. In the USA, the executive branch responsible for coordinating and supervising all agencies and functions connected with national security as well as the United States Armed Forces (USAF) is the Department of Defence (DoD). It is headed by the Secretary of Defence, who is equivalent to our Defence Minister and reports directly to the President of the US. Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) consists of Chairman JCS, the Military Service Chiefs including that of Marine Corps. He is responsible to advise the Secretary of Défense, Homeland Security Council, National Security Council and the President on military matters. The US has currently nine Unified Combatant Commands organized either on a geographic basis or on a functional basis. In the UK the Ministry of Defence (MoD) is responsible for implementing the defence policy. The Permanent Under Secretary of State for Defence (Permanent Secretary) is the senior civil servant at the MoD. The CDS is the professional head of the British Armed Forces and the principal military advisor to the Secretary of State for Defence and the PM. He is supported by the Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, the Chiefs of the three services and the Commander of Joint Forces Command. Service Chiefs reports to CDS and are responsible for developing and generating their respective military capabilities. As a Service Chief of Staff, he has direct access to the Secretary of State and the PM.

From the foregoing, one can infer that India’s existing security structure with the military subordinate to the civil power is in line with the accepted norms worldwide and compatible with the democratic policy-making process. India’s
decision-making process has normally functioned efficiently during the war barring the 1962 War where it reached its nadir and civil-military relations were the worst. Since then, the relationship has improved significantly though there were drawbacks in 1987 and 2002. The system works the best when the political objectives are well defined and there is minimal political/bureaucratic interference in the conduct of military operations. An effort has been made to revamp the security architecture which is a very welcome step, but it still falls short of the optimum mechanism.

PART III: CONCLUSION

War and peace are two diametrically opposite dimensions of international relations and statecraft. Peace ensures growth, development, and well-being of society while war is destructive and causes incalculable damage to growth and development created over a period of time. The transition from peace to war is rarely sudden, but normally follows a prolonged confrontation period interrupted by crisis and conflicts before escalating to war. A well-considered and rational decision can avert escalation from conflict to war. However, it would be dictated by the need to secure or uphold the vital national interest that should be the predominant determinant for any decision for war. The political leader entrusted with the decision for war is the most important determinant. The political wisdom, maturity, intellectual capability, vision, forethought, propensity to take risks and emotional stability of a political leader are extremely important traits required in a leader for effective and sound decision making. The need to have a well-established institutionalized mechanism involving all essential stakeholders in an integrated manner hardly needs any emphasis. The challenges to decision-making for war are many but not insurmountable. Scenario-building and politico-military war games can empower the leadership responsible for taking the vital decision for war and will minimize the imponderables/variables that impact decision making for war.