

## INTRODUCTION

Amusing as it may appear ever since the Sino-India war of 1962 I have remained a worried man fearing that the Chinese would come back at us one day. Why so? People may ask in wonder. I was neither the Prime Minister nor the Defence Minister of India to worry over such a matter. True but then I was an Indian true and sincere worried over what would happen were the Chinese to attack again. It might be worse than what they did to us in terms of material damage loss of territory and humiliation. The source of worry is the apparent lack of defence preparedness on our part to face the Chinese threat that appears so imminent. One does not have to be much of a military expert to see this. And yet not many in the country, including those who are directly responsible for maintaining the territorial integrity of the country, seem to be much bothered about the danger. One wonders at this generally apathetic attitude of the nation in face of a very much live threat from China. It is just cannot be that the present Government of India has not been able appreciate the nature and the magnitude of the existing threat to the territorial integrity of the country. A plausible explanation could be that over awed by colossal effort that would be required to meet the military threat from China squarely, the Government is engaged in some hush hush diplomacy as, what it believes to be, a more convenient alternative. The media, which has presently donned the role of India's most ferocious watchdog, seems to have got taken in and is probably keeping quiet in, what it considers to be, national interest. The Opposition, which pouncing at the Government at the slightest opportunity, is also quiet, probably under the belief that any talk of threat and preparations to meet it might provoke the Chinese and thereby precipitate matters. Hence the general national attitude of God is in heaven and all is well in the world. A frightful reminder, indeed, of the time preceding the Sino-India war of 1962 when Nehru unleashed his *Panchsheel* diplomacy to counter the Chinese military challenge and the nation, rather than upbraiding him for his utopian ideas applauded him for his originality becoming of a genius. One dreads to think that nation is today heading towards an 'action replay' of tragic pre- 1962 war era. To work out how wars could be avoided, we must first understand why wars take place at all.

In technical terms international policy objectives of all nation states are borne out of self interest and may be categorised under either "dominance" or "containment". Whereas the policy of "dominance" aims at a change in the world order - be it in the political set up or in the

territorial configuration of nation states - "Containment" aims at maintaining the *status quo*. Whatever a nation's reasons for adopting the policy of change – be it for undoing the wrongs of history or in pursuit of imperialism and satiation of sheer greed – the fact would remain that it would entail acts of aggression on the part of the nation while seeking such a change. A clash of arms between nation states with these conflicting sets of policy objectives – one seeking change out of self interest and the other wanting to prevent it also out of self interest - is, therefore, inevitable. However, it is also a fact of life that notwithstanding the importance of the use of force to a country's quest for change it would not go in for it unless it sees in it a fair chance of success. The best way of preventing a war by the other side seeking status quo, would, therefore, be to remain prepared for the eventuality to the extent as would leave no or remotest chance of victory for the potential aggressor.

In the context of our relations with two of our neighbours, Pakistan and China, it may be noted that both, with their eyes set on Kashmir and Arunachal respectively, have their policy objectives aimed at territorial gains at our cost. There is little gainsaying the fact that they can achieve these objectives only through the use of force. Consequently the only way for India to prevent Pakistan and China from coming at it again and again in pursuance of their objectives is to raise its force level to the extent necessary to convince them of the futility of any such attempts. One does not have to be a military expert to say this. This, besides being common sense, is enshrined in political science. Unfortunately, as of today, there appear to be no indications that could suggest that India is engaged in raising its force level to that required extent. This is puzzling enough but even more puzzling is the fact that the country is generally quiet over the issue.