

## **MANEKSHAW'S PERCEPTION OF PROXY WAR**

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“Pakistan dare not wage war against India” says Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw (ST Dec 17) and this being from the horse’s mouth must be accepted as true. But what consolation could this be to the nation when Pakistan can dare to wage a more convenient proxy war instead. As a matter of fact one of the lessons that Pakistan learnt from the Indo-Pak wars of 1965 and 1971 was that India was too strong a country for Pakistan to fight with. Too strong in every way – size, economy, material resources, manpower and all the other factors that go to build a country’s war potential. It is because of this lesson having gone home finally after the 1971 war that Pakistan switched over to the proxy war. The war through which Pakistan is seeking to promote its national interests without having to bear its ruinous consequences. Indeed if war is an instrument of state policy, proxy war is even better so. While it raises the chances of success for a militarily weaker nation the financial burden that it imposes is negligible. After all what is the cost of a few thousand Kalashnikov or AK Rifles that Pakistan is required to supply to the insurgents in Kashmir when compared with the expenditure that it would have had to incur had it gone in for an open war. Besides it is the Kashmiris that are paying with their lives for the Pakistani cause. So why should Pakistan even of changing over from an advantageous war to a disadvantageous one.

As far as India is concerned nothing would suit it better than an open war, which would free it of the severe handicaps under which it is fighting the present proxy war in Kashmir. But Pakistan has, perhaps, nothing to worry about, for it knows that India would never start a war on its own, even if it means prolonging the proxy war by some years or even decades, notwithstanding the consequent losses in men and material – such is its hatred of the word war.