

MY ENTRY FOR U.S.I GOLD MEDAL ESSAY COMPETITION- 1969*

Motto: Act or Perish

SUBJECT

“There is considerable apprehension that the size of our Defence Budget is too great a burden for the Country to bear for an indefinite period. Do you consider that all Defence appropriations are justifiable or that they are well spent? What measures of economy are possible and in which fields? Discuss the whole question of cost effectiveness of defence in relation to the threat to INDIA and our economy”.

INTRODUCTION

The horrors of each war bring out to man the futility of such wars and yet man has not been able to avoid wars. It would appear that wars between countries though an evil to mankind are inevitable. It is perhaps because of the law of nature – the survival of the fittest, that a militarily strong nation has no patience to enter into prolonged negotiations over a dispute with a militarily weaker nation. Being confident of success the strong is tempted to force a self advantageous solution to the dispute with the weak through use of military force. Whatever be the outward causes of a war, therefore, the root cause invariably is military imbalance between countries who have some disputes to settle. Wars could, perhaps, be avoided between such countries if each was strong enough to deter the other from undertaking a military adventure against it by making it too costly to be worthwhile trying. We too have to be militarily strong if not for ourselves forcing military solutions on others, at least for preventing others from forcing them on us.

It is an unfortunate aspect of human nature that it tends to concentrate on the present and ignore the future. It is probably because of this that at the end of each war, the future war is forgotten. Preparation for war is a continuous process and any slackening of the effort at present will reflect adversely in the future when the war actually breaks out. We shall then have no time for making amends. Also, as the time when the war might breakout cannot be predicted, (except perhaps a few days before the war), our preparations for war during this peace time have to be made at top speed till at least we have built up the necessary deterrent. After that we may be able to relax a little. It is in this light also that must view our defence expenditure.

The defence burden that a nation may have to carry is the price it pays for its freedom. No price can be considered too high for freedom; not at least for the proud Indian Nation. The positive approach for us would be to find ways and means of raising funds for our defence rather than close our eyes towards the danger and jeopardise our security and freedom. Come what may the needs of defence must be met. They must be met in full in keeping with the existing threat and not arbitrarily to suit our conveniences. Any expenditure less than adequate would amount to waste as it would not serve the purpose for which it is spent. We can ill-afford the luxury of maintaining armed forces purely for ceremonial purposes. This thinking must not, however,

* My entry was not considered suitable for any award but an abridged form of this essay entitled “Lest we falter” was published in the USI Journal which was subsequently reproduced in the Journal of the US Staff College Fort Leaven Worth Kansas USA.

prevent us from exercising utmost economy in our defence spending to ensure that we get back every rupee's worth. Whatever measures of economy we may take "we must not allow cost effectiveness to cost our effectiveness"[@] in national security matters.

The size of the defence budget of any country is justified not by the percentage that it forms of the country's National Gross Product or by comparing it with the defence budgets of other countries but by the prevalent threat to its security and ways and means at the disposal of the country to counter this threat. Before passing a judgement on the justification or otherwise of our own defence budget, therefore, it would be but proper to first study the nature of the threat existing to the security of our country and our defence requirement for countering this threat.

The external threat to our security posed mainly by our two potential enemies – China and Pakistan. We have long pending disputes with both of them and both believe in war as a means for settling disputes. Whereas China's policy is based on Mao's maxim that "political power grows out of the barrel of the gun", Pakistan cries "Jihad" in settling her disputes with us. Besides the external threat there is also a growing threat from internal disorder. Let us consider each of these threats one by one and assess the defence effort required to counter each.

THREAT FROM CHINA

Although the Chinese have outwardly created a border dispute with us to justify military action the real source of threat from China comes from her general policy of fomenting "World Revolution" meaning world domination. Her not too secret claim over vast portions of our country including the whole of Arunachal, Assam and Bengal should be an eye opener to those who believe (or want others to believe) that the Sino-Indian dispute is merely a dispute over border adjustment which could be sorted out across a conference table. It would be unwise for us to believe that the Chinese claim over Arunachal, Assam and Bengal is merely to scare us into accepting their claim on the disputed territory along the border. This is in fact their national objective in keeping with their expansionist policy.

However ridiculous the Chinese claim may look today it must not lull us into complacency under the temptation that after all we may be able to avoid a war. Claims, when they lie unchallenged for years (may be hundreds of years) have a tendency to become real. A false territorial claim must, therefore, be treated with as much serious concern as would an actual invasion of the territory. Our future generation 100 years hence is going to be terribly embarrassed when the Chinese confront them with their over hundred years old maps showing most of Indian Territory as theirs. We could at least help them by printing maps today showing Tibet as part of India, even if it means precipitating a war on this account. This is a responsibility we owe to the future generation which we must not shirk so that posterity does not condemn us for showing cowardice against a powerful enemy.

Our stand against the Chinese must form part of a general policy of crying halt to the territorial disintegration of the country. For this we must be farsighted to be able to see decades – nay centuries ahead. Any short sighted vision that does not see in the disputed territory any thing more than a "vast expanse of waste-land", which could be bartered for peace, would be disastrous for the country. The territorial transformation that a country may undergo, through voluntary surrenders or surrenders under external pressures, may be so gradual as not to be discernable to the ordinary national. Who has ever bothered about the fact that India today is less than half the size she was less than forty years back. Hitler may have used his theory that "no country's territories were created by God" as a justification for committing aggression, but to us

[@] US Secretary of State Melvin Laird

it could at least drive home the fact that territorial sanctity is maintained by the use of force and not by the goodwill of a neighbour who believes in Hitler's maxim.

Threat Through Tibet

The Chinese are believed to have at present a total of 13 Infantry Divisions poised against us along the Indo-Tibetan border. While assessing the threat from the Chinese Army in Tibet, we must also take into account their ability to reinforce this army with additional troops from the mainland. There are two main limitations that would restrict them in their reinforcement programme. One is their other military commitments and the other is the limitation to the number of troops that can be maintained in Tibet due to logistical reasons. We must not, however, be over optimistic regarding their limitations in our assessment of the Chinese threat through Tibet. A totalitarian regime with war as its creed has military potentials much greater than we are wont to understand through our normal technique of appreciation. Their tight security of information deprives us of the accurate data required for the appreciation and their sub standard of subsistence upset our calculations. We normally have a tendency to underestimate the threat. According to information available, out of a total of 115 divisions the Chinese have deployed 28 against Taiwan, 50 against Russia and with 13 divisions in Tibet they are left with a reserve of 24 divisions. This reserve includes troops that have been kept as stand by for Laos and Vietnam. These figures[@] would indicate that China has no real uncommitted reserves from where to reinforce troops in Tibet. It would, however, be unsafe to assume that. Besides the 300,000 Security and Border troops available to her to play about with, it would not be difficult for her to squeeze out a couple of divisions from other theatres and throw them in Tibet if and when required depending on the political situation existing at that time. The real limiting factor would then be the limit to the number of troops that could be sustained in Tibet. This limitation would also have been overcome by the Chinese to a large extent by carrying out advance stocking over all these years of occupation and also by additional procurements of food in Tibet. Considering all these factors we may expect a threat from up to 20 divisions in Tibet.

Threat Through Burma

The threat from the Chinese Army does not just come from their troops in Tibet. They also pose a sizeable threat to our eastern region through Burma; and this in spite of the ideal relations and cooperation that exists between us and the Burmese. The fact is that despite the gallant efforts of the small Burmese Army, they have not been able to bring North Burma under their *de facto* control. The comparative ease with which hostile Naga gangs have been able to move through this part of Burma from India to Yunan and back adequately demonstrates the vulnerability of our eastern frontier to a Chinese invasion from this direction. This threat should be as serious a concern to us as the threat through Tibet and must be planned for with equal urgency. Many arguments could, perhaps, be put forward to rule out the possibility of a Chinese invasion of India through Burma. Such arguments were put forward to rule out the possibility of a Japanese invasion of India through Burma and we know to what detriment. For the Chinese it is going to be a much easier affair than it was for the Japanese. Their lines of communication will be much shorter. Those of us who feel that lack of roads through North Burma is going to limit the number of troops that may be deployed by them must not forget that roads have never been a great bother to the Chinese army. With their scanty logistical requirements, and extensive use of man power for transportation purposes they can sustain troops in a country not connected by roads with their base, long enough to allow their peculiar road construction to catch up with

[@] All statistics regarding the Chinese Armed Forces have been taken from "India in World Strategic Environment" an Annual Review by Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis New Delhi.

the advancing troops. During the 1962 invasion they are known to have constructed roads right up to their forward most troops within days of their advance. The only limiting factor would, perhaps, be the attitude of the Burmese insurgents towards this invasion through their territory. Here too it could be presumed that their hoax of being the “liberators” is going to work with the majority of the simple North Burmese tribes. All limitations considered they would be able to deploy up to 3 divisions along this axis. They are not likely to use the Stillwell road, unless a world war breaks out, as it would entail advance through territory under more effective control of the Burmese Army and invasion of India would involve invasion of Burma also. Needless to say that we should be prepared to go to the aid of the Burmese in case Burma is invaded.

Our Requirement of Troops

Due to the peculiar nature of the terrain in areas of likely operations, infantry is going to be the decisive arm. So our main requirement against the Chinese would be that of infantry – and as such type of terrain has a tendency to ‘eat up troops’ we would need plenty of it too. Another factor that helps in determining the required strength is that a deterrent cannot be developed with a purely defensive posture. For this the defence has to be offensive to be able to give a bloody nose to the attacker. Considering all these aspects our requirement of troops to counter the Chinese threat would roughly work out as under: -

- (a) Requirement of troops for tactical deployment for defence against a Chinese invasion through Tibet – 10 infantry divisions.
 - (b) For offensive action in Tibet - 4 infantry divisions.
 - (c) Requirement of troops for invasion through Burma - 2 infantry divisions.
 - (d) Assisting the Burmese against the Chinese in Burma - 1 infantry division.
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|-------|-----------------------|
| Total | 17 infantry divisions |
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Air Threat

Although the Chinese are believed to have the third largest air force in the world, it is unlikely that they will use their air force against us to any great extent for the following reasons:

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- (a) Due to the reasons of distance they would have to base their aircraft for use against us at Tibet or areas adjoining where it may not be possible to build up sufficient fuel reserves.
- (b) The mountainous terrain of the likely area of operations precludes the possibility of effective tactical air support. Use of air force being an expensive affair the Chinese would not use it unless the returns are worthwhile.
- (c) Strategic bombing which would involve bombing of civil areas would tarnish their image of “liberators”.

This is not to say that they would not use the air force at all. They could use it in a limited way for interdiction, air reconnaissance and against our transport aircraft. For this they are likely to employ up to about 10 fighter bomber squadrons from air fields in Tibet.

Countering Chinese Air Threat

Air supply for our army in Arunachal and Ladakh is practically inescapable and our air effort would be mainly directed towards providing air transport support to the army. Our Air Force would also be required to counter enemy’s interdiction plans and protection of vulnerable points. What it all amounts to is maintaining of a favourable air situation over the areas of operation. Besides the normal supply mission there is also a special requirement of the army operating in jungles and mountains for “close air transport support” of helicopters for increasing

its tactical mobility. The requirement of air force against the Chinese would, therefore, work out roughly as under: -

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|---|----------------|
| (a) Fighter-bombers for maintaining favourable air situation | - 15 squadrons |
| (b) Aircraft for air transport support (roughly 100 tons a day) | - 15 squadrons |
| (c) Close air transport support (helicopters). | - 8 squadrons |

The Naval Threat

The naval threat from China in event of a Sino-India war is seldom realised although the threat is very much real. The reason for this is that we have not yet been woken up by any rude shock on this side, the way we have been in respect of the army in 1962. Needless to say that we cannot afford to wait for any shock to realise that such a threat exists. The sea routes are our life lines and must form an obvious target of attack for our enemy. If the Chinese did not attack these targets in the war of '62, it was because there was no need for them to do so. The victory on land had been quick and complete and did not leave scope for any naval action. In a future war, however, a quick walk over may not be possible for them by merely fighting a war on land. Faced with stiff opposition on land, they will take recourse to hitting us where it will hurt most – i.e. our unprotected sea routes. The British withdrawal has now thrown the responsibility of protecting our sea routes squarely on our own selves. We shirk this responsibility only at our peril. By choking our aid and trade the Chinese could bring about the collapse of our Army, however strong it may be, without fighting it. There is no reason why they should not do it.

The total Chinese fleet* comprises of 4 Destroyers, 12 Frigates, 150 torpedo boats and 33 Submarines. How much of it will actually pose a threat to our navy is dependent on the extent to which the 7th American Fleet is able to contain the Chinese Navy. It is of interest to note that the number of submarines held by the Chinese Navy is quite out of proportion to the number of Destroyers and Frigates. This is indicative of the capability of the Chinese Navy to interfere with any shipping in the Indian Ocean, the cordon of the US 7th Fleet notwithstanding. After the British withdrawal the only worthwhile naval strength that could challenge the Chinese in the Indian Ocean is that of Indonesia. We know how hostile Indonesia can be towards us with a pro-Peking regime in power. Although we have every reason to believe that the present regime in Indonesia would continue in power, we must all the same cater for the contingency of a hostile Indonesia while considering the naval threat from China.

Our Naval Requirement

The threat from the Chinese Navy comes mainly from its submarines. Our Navy will also have to be, therefore, based on submarines. It would be, to say the least, ridiculous to expect our submarine less Navy to meet the Chinese threat to any extent. According to modest estimates our Navy requires a minimum of 10 submarines to be able to put up significant resistance against the Chinese. Apart from these the Indian Navy would also require a minimum of about 20 odd torpedo boats for coastal defence.

Nuclear Threat

Due to the disastrous consequences of starting a nuclear war, it could, perhaps, be reasoned out that no country would want to start a nuclear war with a country that has the capability to retaliate. It is also perhaps with this in view that China is developing its nuclear power – to attain immunity to a nuclear attack by the US or USSR by developing a retaliatory

* All the data regarding the Chinese Air Force and the Navy has been taken from “India in World Strategic Environment” published by the Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis New Delhi.

power. The question, however, arises that whatever her initial reasons for turning nuclear, would she be tempted to use these weapons against countries with which she has disputes to settle and which are not in a position to retaliate. She herself having turned nuclear realising the futility of “nuclear umbrellas” would not believe that any country would risk a nuclear attack on itself for the sake of another. In spite of all these factors in her favour, it may be argued that she will not resort to a nuclear attack against India for one simple reason the bomb will not be able to distinguish the “Bourgeoisie” and the “reactionary” from the “proletariat” and its use would expose the true face under the sheepskin. This China would never risk as long as her aims and objectives are being served by “other means”.

There may not be an immediate necessity for India to produce the bomb but it would have to be done in the long run. We must grow militarily over the years as a natural course. We have been pushed into becoming a military power in the past and will continue to be so pushed in the future also till we attain the strength in keeping with our size, population and position on the globe. We are also destined to pose a challenge to the Chinese supremacy and a confrontation with them is inevitable. A stage may come when confrontation with a powerful India may lead China to a state of desperation and she may be tempted to use the atom bomb. We cannot be found lacking in this respect then. Our growth in the nuclear field must, therefore, keep pace with our growth in other military fields as a natural course even if there is no nuclear threat from the Chinese at present.

THREAT FROM PAKISTAN

Most of the Indo-Pak disputes are a result of the unnatural division of the Sub Continent. On the face of it, therefore, it should not be difficult for the two countries to settle these disputes through mutual adjustments under an appropriate climate of amity. In fact, however, such a climate cannot be created easily due to certain other factors which have nothing to do with the disputes as such. One such factor is the Two Nation Theory on which is based the formation of Pakistan. The triumph of the Two Nation Theory came the triumph of suspicion, hatred and intolerance between the peoples of the two nations that were created through partition. One might have expected that this suspicion, hatred and the consequent intolerance would go after partition, but it did not. The poor political leadership in Pakistan had little to offer to their people after the separate state for the Muslims had been created and, therefore, they continued to thrive on enmity with India for their survival. Not only this, with 60 million Muslims having opted to stay back in India, the Pakistani leadership started harbouring designs for bringing about another partition of India on the basis of religion. Whether the Indian Muslim likes it or not Pakistan continues to treat them as Pakistani nationals on the basis of the Two Nation Theory for serving her political ends. This will ever remain a source of trouble between the two countries and if India is not strong enough, Pakistan is likely to indulge even in armed intervention every time “its nationals” are maltreated in India. The Kashmir dispute, which is the main hurdle in normalisation of relations between the two countries, is also the result of Pakistan seeking rights over Indian Territory on the basis of religion. She is even prepared to fight for such rights and hence there exists today a perennial source of threat to our security from Pakistan.

The entire armed strength of Pakistan is today poised against India alone. The threat is, therefore, posed mainly by a modern army consisting of 12 infantry divisions, two armoured divisions, and two armoured brigades*. The Pakistani Air Force comprises of about 250 combat

* All data concerning armed strength of Pakistan is based on “India in world strategic environment – Annual Review 1968-69” published by the Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis, New Delhi.

aircraft. On the naval side, of significance is their plan to acquire at least four submarines in the near future. These submarines can pose a substantial threat to our shipping via the Suez Canal. Such a formidable force aimed solely against us should be a matter of serious concern to our defence planners.

Except for the war in Kashmir where it will take more or less a similar form to that we will be required to fight against the Chinese, the war with Pakistan will take the form of highly mechanised and mobile warfare. The emphasis will mostly be on armour particularly in the sector opposite Rajasthan. The future war will also follow the 1965 pattern – quick and short. To avoid stalemate in the built up areas of Punjab and in an attempt to achieve decisiveness in the shortest time, the entire scene of war is likely to shift to the Rajasthan sector with a form similar to that of the Desert Campaign of World War II. This type of war is an expensive type and if it is not decisive in the short period, the side that is able to sustain itself for a longer period will win unless, of course, the side asks for UN help to enforce a cease-fire.

Defence Requirements against Pakistan

As indicated by the nature of our likely war with Pakistan discussed above, Armour will be the decisive arm against Pakistan. Due to the great possibilities of use of armour by Pakistan both because of the nature of the terrain and the strength of her armoured forces, there is a requirement on our side for permanently grouping of armour with the infantry into combat forces on the lines of German Panzer divisions. Lack of cover available to the ground forces, as it would be in the plains, makes them very vulnerable to air attack. We would, therefore, need to have at least a favourable air situation if not complete air superiority over Pakistan during the war. On the naval side we should at least be able to match Pakistan's Navy to prevent them from interfering with our shipping. Here again, as against China, the requirement is for submarines rather than any other sea craft. With the above in view, our total defence requirements vis-à-vis Pakistan would roughly work out as under: -

(a) Army	
Armoured divisions	4
Infantry divisions	15
Extra armoured brigades for affiliation with infantry divisions in plains	10
(b) Air Force	
Fighter Bomber squadrons	30
(c) Navy	
Submarines	6
Motor torpedo boats	15

This requirement is based on the strength of the Pakistani armed forces as it exists today. Any future increase in their strength will necessitate a proportionate increase in our strength.

Counter Insurgency

There are two main types of insurgencies that the Armed Forces may be required to handle; the insurgency by the secessionists, and insurgency by those seeking a change in the Government through force. Both these tendencies are at present becoming more and more permanent and unless they are curbed they may take the form of a civil war. The requirement of armed forces for quelling any such rebellion will be stupendous. Foreign support which is vital for any type of insurgency to flourish would not be lacking. China and Pakistan are already known to be fanning the flames with their active support to Naga, Mizo and "Naxalite"

insurgents. The quantum of support to insurgents will naturally increase during war with these two countries. They would also utilise these insurgents to nourish their respective Fifth Columns. Whereas much of the task of counter insurgency devolves on our Para Military Forces, the Armed Forces would still be required to seal off the borders to prevent foreign aid reaching the insurgents and for actual counter insurgency when the insurgents become too strong for the Para Military Forces to handle. At this stage it would be difficult to assess the requirements of troops for such an eventuality. Any immediate requirement could perhaps be met by troops held as Army GHQ reserves; provide we have some.

THE NATIONAL POLICY

One month before his death, Sardar Patel saw dark shadows of coming events and wrote a prophetic letter to Pandit Nehru, warning him the danger to the security of the country. In this letter he made a fervent appeal to the prime Minister to evolve a clear cut National policy, the lack of which was preventing us from fully gearing up our resources to meet this threat. He wrote that “we must have a clear idea of what we wish to achieve and also of the methods by which we should it” and that “any faltering or lack of decisiveness in formulating our objectives is bound to weaken us and increase the threats that are so evident”. Thanks to the great Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri much change has come about in our National Policy. His simple but very significant slogan of “Jai Jawan – Jai Kisan” is indicative of priorities and a complete change in outlook. Even then can we really say that there is no faltering in the pursuance of our defence objectives? We falter mainly because of our belief (or shall we say wishful thinking) that war could be avoided. This thinking is, indeed, dangerous.

While formulating our national policy on defence we must be very clear and decided with regard to the following: -

- (a) That wars cannot be avoided; much less by remaining militarily weak.
- (b) That our fight is a fight for existence and whereas the mode our fighting could be changed to suit our resources, fight we must whatever the cost.
- (c) That military preparation is a continuous process and its pitch must not be allowed to fluctuate with the changing political climate.
- (d) That we will have to be prepared for the worst situation with the possibility of meeting all the threats at the same time.
- (e) That our general defensive policy must not prevent us from being aggressive in the pursuance of this policy.

THE DEFENCE BURDEN

The size of a country's defence budget is justified by the extent to which it meets the country's defence requirements and not by the number of crores of rupees or the percentage it forms of the country's National Gross Product (GNP). Having considered the threat to our country and with a national policy spelling out clearly the determination of the nation to meet the challenge, it would appear that we are spending much less than what our requirements dictate. It is also quite clear that however much economy that we may exercise in our expenditure the present defence budget of Rupees 1110 crores is not in a position to sustain any strength of the armed forces beyond what is being maintained to day. On the other hand we have seen that in order to meet the combined threat from China, Pakistan and the insurgents we would require at least an increase of about one third the present strength in our Army. In the case of our Navy and the Air Force it would have to be much more. It may not be a very accurate calculation but our

defence budget would have to be to the tune of Rupees 1600 crores, (about 4.5 percent of GNP) to be able to meet our defence requirement. Compared with the burden we ought to carry, we are, therefore, carrying very much less and it would be unfair to raise any hue and cry over what we are spending on defence today.

The main reason for the apprehension among some people that we are carrying a burden more than we can bear is that basically we are not military minded. Defence of the country from external aggression has never been our concern. This was the concern of the British while we concerned ourselves with fighting against the British aggression; of course without any army. As the army then was also used to serve British imperialism, any expenditure on the Indian Army has all along been treated as a burden. Apparently we have not yet completely got out of that psychological environment. What other explanation could there be for the general feeling in the country that the defence burden today is much more than we can bear when judged from any known standards it is not so. Even if we were to measure the burden by the percentage it forms of the GNP it would be seen that with a percentage of 3.3 we are among the nineteen countries of the world that have the lowest percentage (ie below 3.5%). These nineteen countries do not, incidentally, include our potential enemies. Worked out as a percentage of per capita income we stand the second lowest in the world.* What to talk of the present defence budget, even the amount that was allocated for defence before 1962, (which was half of what it is today) was considered too great a burden on the nation notwithstanding the dark shadows that coming events had begun to cast over the country then. Surely this does not speak highly of the Nation's maturity in military thinking.

This sort of thinking should not, however, prevent us from lightening the burden of defence expenditure through positive means. Positive means would be those that would lighten the burden without cutting down necessary expenditure on defence. It may appear paradoxical but it is possible. One such step can be an all out drive against waste, tax evasion and corruption which deprive the Government of necessary funds. Before coming to a conclusion that we do not have enough funds to prepare fully against threats to our security, we should have at least insured that all the dues to the Government have been collected and that we are spending well to get the maximum out of each rupee that we spend; not only in the field of defence but also else where. We can hardly boast of having achieved either of these to be able to complain about the defence burden being too much. The real burden on the Nation is waste and corruption and not expenditure on defence.

The burden on defence could also be reduced by raising funds for defence by means which do not hurt anybody. It is surprising that while we are able to find numerous ways for raising funds to meet expenditure, which could even be questioned, no attempt has been made to raise funds for defence other than those obtained from the State Revenue which is quite meagre. If, for instance, lotteries could be floated by the States every month or so for raising funds for themselves why couldn't the Centre do it for defence? Besides this other ways could be found such as sports tournaments, cultural shows etc. The Defence Ministry could even run some business to ensure regular inflow of funds for defence. It may sound a little strange but may be worth while trying to seek the assistance of religion in raising funds for defence. 'Durga' is the Goddess of war any offerings that the people voluntarily make to the Goddess could justifiably be used for defence purposes. Similarly the Hindu religion also preaches worship of the Goddess

* *India in the World Strategic Environment Annual Review 1968-69*, Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis, New Delhi.

'Mother India'. This worship should be encouraged and offerings there of collected for spending on defence.

If we are not able to meet our defence requirements even after all sources of revenue have been exploited, corruption nipped and waste cut down, the Government would be justified in levying war tax to meet the deficit. The burden that the people would have to carry would be the price of freedom that none can grudge. This may also prove to be a blessing in disguise; for sacrifice for the sake of freedom, (which few of us have had any opportunity to make), will bring home to the Nation the value of freedom and increase their determination to preserve it. History is full of examples where nations are known to have made extreme sacrifices for the sake of freedom for years on end.

Any anxiety over our defence expenditure is not, however, totally unjustified. We are a developing nation and would naturally like to make maximum amount available for development and raising our standard of living. But what development is possible without security and what is the use of raising the standard of living at the cost of not only security but also self respect. Even a rich nation with self respect would be a dead nation. We shall not be required to carry this burden for long. The defence budget that meets our defence requirements fully will remain more or less constant whereas the GNP will keep on raising, thus bringing down the percentage that the defence budget would form of the increasing GNP. As a matter of fact the defence expenditure itself boosts up industry and employment prospects and may help in raising the GNP of the country.

ECONOMY IN DEFENCE

A plea for an increase in the defence budget does not mean that no economy in the defence expenditure is possible. By economy is not meant saving on defence, but that we must get back fully our money's worth. Like this we shall be able to achieve more with the present budget that is done at present. While economising, however, we must guard against the tendency of becoming penny wise and pound foolish. The aim should be to judiciously consider all expenditure in relation to the amount involved, results achieved (effectiveness) and whether the same effectiveness could be achieved by spending less elsewhere. It is in this context that our defence appropriations should be reviewed. Whereas it would be neither feasible nor necessary to discuss all appropriations in detail, the policy governing defence expenditure could be discussed to some advantage.

Cutting Down Cost of War

The fundamental principle governing our defence expenditure should be that we must make our wars cost less. This is to be done by suitably changing the mode of fighting to suit our country's economy rather than cutting down expenditure on the existing mode and jeopardising its effectiveness. Unfortunately we have inherited techniques of war from the British for whom money was not too much of a problem. For them war was more of a science than art and just entailed crushing the enemy through sheer weight of their superior resources. Needless to say that we cannot afford such techniques. By following these techniques, not only are we spending more than we can afford but are also suffering from a handicap of not being able to execute these techniques effectively due to lack of adequate resources. Ineffectiveness of these techniques, even when backed by adequate resources, against techniques adopted by the communists, (which we will be required to fight against), is being demonstrated today in Vietnam. There is a need, therefore, for us to do a complete rethinking and evolving our own technique of fighting successfully to suit our own set of resources. For this we shall have to learn from the poorer countries of the east including China herself. Of great help would be Mao Tse Tung's theory of

substitution; substituting something we can afford for something we cannot, without losing effectiveness.

Following the theory of substitution we must exploit our great strength in man power. The “push-button” type of warfare has been evolved by the Western powers because of their lack of manpower and of course plenty of money instead. We, with our such huge resources of qualitative manpower, should, on the other hand, go for, what is termed as “mass army”. Other things not being too unfavourable, overwhelming numerical superiority still remains to be a major war winning factor. In jungle and mountains, which are known to “eat up troops” numbers are a particular necessity. Numbers also facilitate tactical mobility and compensate for strategic immobility (forced by lack of adequate resources). Manpower is not only cheap but also much dreaded. During the Korean war the Chinese mass attacks struck terror in the most mechanised and sophisticated army of the world. It is a pity that some people have doubted the ethical propriety of mass attacks. The doubt has arisen from a wrong notion that mass attacks imply use of manpower a gun fodder. This is not correct as mass attack does not mean attacking without fire support. It only compensates for lack of fire support. Situations particularly in jungles and mountains will not be lacking when even with our best efforts we may not be able to provide adequate fire support to the assaulting troops. Numerical preponderance will compensate for this.

Saving to Spend

A stage in defence spending has not yet reached where saving could be effected with a view to cutting down the total expenditure to reduce the burden on the nation. We could only save for increased efficiency of our Armed Forces. Some of the aspects of defence that will require a review to ensure proper utilisation of our meagre defence budget are given in succeeding paragraphs.

Interior Economy

As in the case of other departments we must also start economising by waging an out right war on waste. In cutting down waste through orders from the top there is a likelihood of some essentials being cut. Uniformity is not possible as circumstances of each unit will vary. Cuts on waste have essentially to be made voluntarily at lower levels who know exactly what is waste and what is not. These lower level commanders have only to be first educated in that waste must be cut for their own good and then encouraged in their efforts at it. In certain cases at present savings are rather discouraged and explanations called for from lower level commanders for effecting such saving. Public funds and troops rations are glaring examples. The authorities would no doubt be justified in ensuring that no savings are made at the detriment of the troops’ health and efficiency during the period expenditure is to be made but forced spending in the last few days of the period is a national waste. Lakhs of rupees are going down the drain like this. For carrying out any sort of interior economy each member of the Armed Forces has to be an interested participant in the campaign. He could be made interested in it by letting him know the result of his effort. If each member helps in saving 50 paise a month the government would have saved about Rupees 60 Lakhs over the year. We could effect much more saving than this. This much saving could, perhaps, be saved by our Military Engineering Service alone. India today needs each paise let alone Lakhs of rupees. The troops interest in saving could be raised by purchasing some major item of equipment, say an aircraft, out of their saving to show them how much they have achieved.

Weapons and Equipment

There is much scope for economising while we are trying to reequip our Armed Forces. While we should try and provide them with the best equipment we can, we must realise that all

that is old is not necessarily outmoded and most of it may still be good enough. In some cases the difference in efficiency between the old and the new may be so little that it is not worth suffering the cost in changing it. Most of our weapons fall in this category. The bluff that we lost the '62 War because we did not have automatic rifles may have worked but it was a bluff all the same. The difference could probably be made up through superior tactics and handling of the old equipment. On the other hand changing some type of equipment though costly may materially effect the efficiency of the Armed Forces and may be worth acquiring. An example is the wireless equipment. This equipment has experienced a complete revolution in its development and we would be suffering a handicap in not acquiring the latest for the sake of efficiency. The planners must, therefore, decide on particular equipment judiciously weighing the cost and whether the advantages are substantial which could not be acquired through less costly means. In the interest of economy they must not go after the glamour of the equipment. Crores of rupees can be ditched by any false move in this respect. We definitely made a false move in acquiring an aircraft carrier for the Navy when our actual requirement is for submarines. The factor that will materially affect our defence expenditure now is our decision regarding the expensive Surface to Air Missiles for air defence. If we weigh its advantages vis-à-vis the fighter aircraft we may find that it is not worth the cost. This besides the fact that even with our best efforts we will not be able to afford a sufficient number of them to be of any value. At present the only expenditure we should incur in this field is in the form of investment for their indigenous production which would reduce their price to an extent that we may be able to afford.

Maintenance

There is indeed much scope for saving in the maintenance of large number of troops in the field areas, which is very expensive and a big drain on the defence budget. This burden could be greatly reduced by speeding up the construction of roads to the forward areas but not totally eliminated because road maintenance from bases hundreds of miles away from the forward areas is in itself quite expensive. Besides, there is a limit to the extent to which construction of roads can be speeded up. Then after construction they will have to be allowed to "set in" before they can be used to take heavy vehicular traffic. The immediate requirement today is to cut down the quantum of ration supplies required to be carried to the forward areas by growing possible items in the forward area themselves. In Arunachal Pradesh, especially, the soil is virgin and so fertile that practically everything grows there. Vegetables, fruits and even rice could be grown next to the troops' barracks. Poultry, piggeries and dairies could also be started there with considerable ease. Military Farms could be suitably expanded to meet this requirement, while the troops could take on this task in the mean time. The troops are, in fact, already doing it but only to soar up their battalion funds and not as a saving to the Government. To give an example of how little we are thinking on making our forward areas self sufficient, there was once a case of a staff officer meticulously working out the requirement of ballies along with other defence stores for a formation in Arunachal and despatching tons of them to the rail head for onward air despatch to units surrounded by jungles. Thanks to the initiative of a Subedar these were never despatched to units – he used them for the construction of his 'Bhasha' and other construction work in the Rear.

Organisation

Some saving could also be affected by modification of our organisation. Our standard organisation in the Army for instance tends to be top heavy. Most of the headquarters are over staffed in comparison with the number of troops they are handling. Of course the work expands to fill the time available as enunciated by Parkinson and so they all remain very busy. This is

borne out by the fact that some of our formation Headquarters have been forced by circumstances to handle many more troops than authorised on the establishment and are doing so efficiently. Even if we are not to over-load the various headquarters too much, (to allow them to fight their paper battles also), and just worked on an organisation of “fours” instead of the normal “threes” saving would be tremendous. 48 infantry battalions would then be controlled by 12 brigade headquarters instead of the normal 16, and 3 divisional headquarters instead of the normal 5. It is considered that the ‘square’ concept of organisation will be of greater tactical value than the present ‘triangular’ one. Some saving of this nature could, perhaps, be carried out in the Air Force and the Navy also.

CONCLUSION

It is sad but true that the law of the jungle – might being right - is valid in international relations even today when the world is at the height of civilisation. We must, therefore, build up an armed might if not for ourselves forcing military solutions on others, at least for preventing others from forcing such solutions on us. India has disputes with China and Pakistan, both of who believe in war as a means for settling international disputes. We will have to develop a sufficient deterrent to prevent them from taking recourse to war. Our national policy on defence must be very clear and should lay down in no uncertain terms the necessity for building up such a deterrent at all costs. Once the *will* is there, ways will not be difficult to find.

Our defence budget must be judged in relation to the extent of threat to our security and not in terms of the number of crores of rupees or the percentage it forms of the GNP. Judged in relation to the threat we would find that it is not enough to meet our requirement. Our expenditure on defence, aimed at preventing a war, would be a waste if it does not serve the purpose for which it is being spent. It would appear that the burden of defence being considered by many people as too much for the country to bear, is more psychological than real. Judging from all standards we fall among the countries of the world with the lowest rate of expenditure on defence. Even if we were to increase our budget by one half we would not be spending beyond our means. Besides a concerted drive against waste, corruption and tax evasion, which by themselves will make available to the government sufficient funds for spending on defence, various other methods for raising funds for defence could be found without any body feeling the pinch of paying. Even if the pinch is there no one can grudge it; for it is the price we must pay for freedom.

We must economise in our defence spending not for cutting down expenditure but for ensuring that we get our full money’s worth. Besides carrying out interior economy in all defence departments, we have to do wise spending with regard to the acquiring new weapons and equipment for the Armed Forces. We cannot afford the western techniques of fighting and must adopt techniques of some Asian countries who have successfully fought wars with these techniques against modern and sophisticated armies from within their meagre resources. The task with regard to the defence of our country is colossal but this is indicative of action rather than inaction. The challenge must be accepted not only on grounds that it is threat to our very existence but also on moral grounds. Not accepting the challenge would be a sign of moral degradation of the Nation. Which proud Indian would ever accept such a situation?