

1  
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# **THE WAR THAT NEVER WAS**

**THE STORY OF INDIA'S STRATEGIC FAILURES**

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**CHANAKYA PUBLICATIONS DELHI**

**1988**

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2  
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**CONTENTS**

	PREFACE	3
1.	INTRODUCTION	8
2.	BRASS-TACKS EVENTS LEADING UP TO	21
3.	THE PAKISTAN ARMY	67
4.	THE INDIAN ARMY	81
5.	HOW INDIA LOST ALL ITS WAR	84
6.	THE LACK OF A RED TEAM	116
7.	SECTOR BALANCES	125
8.	THE RIVAL NAVIES	162
9.	THE RIVAL AIR FORCES	169
10.	THE MILITARY BALANCE IN THE EVENT OF WAR	187
11.	WHY OPERATION BRASS TACKS WOULD HAVE FAILED	197
12.	TRIDENT	244
	LAST THOUGHTS	259

**RESTRICTED**

**PREFACE**

A lot of people have told me they have read the preface to my last book, The Fourth Round. A lot fewer have read the book itself. These people, representing the Eager Audience, just dying to hand over their money for my overpriced and mildly boring endeavors, excuse themselves on the ground that the preface is much better written and much more interesting.

This is not the east depressing. Because, after all, Issac Asimov, the great and unmatched science fiction and science writer, is well known for his fascinating prefaces. Being up there with Issac Asimov (most of my audience not knowing about him, I have to put myself up there with him) is praise enough, even if he is rich and I am poor. (This is because his publishers pay and mine don't).

These days my latest endeavor is a book composed solely of Prefaces. It should be a best seller. The material is ready at hand because since my last book, there are another four lying unpublished. My readers will remember my complaints about having taken ten years to get published and three earlier books which didn't get published. This time it isn't the Government to blame.

But before you learn the details, you will doubtless be anxious to know what happened to The Fourth Round.

Well, not very much. It did not get banned, despite my best efforts. Only a couple of people in the Directorate of Military Intelligence bothered to read it and recommend banning. Unfortunately, they were unsufficiently important to get their way.

In feature was costly. Had the book been banned, doubtless an honorary fellowship at some American university for \$60,000 a year

**RESTRICTED**

would have followed. The obvious choice was the University of Arizona or the University of Southern California, hosts to the most beautiful women in the world. My wife of course wanted me to go to Harvard, because as any one knows, they have the worst looking women. Every time I consider returning to Harvard to finish my B.A., the thought of the Radcliffe women quails the soul.

At any rate, none of this proved relevant, because the book was not banned. It was merely ignored. The armed forces, reading it somewhere in the Northern Sector, in the National Interest would neither confirm nor deny that it had been read. There was no feedback at all. Asking for feedback was being Anti-National at a time when our great land was under attack from all sides (primarily from our politicians).

The book did, however, get many lunches from political officers in various embassies anxious to learn if the Government really wanted to attack Kahuta. After being told the Government usually acted without my advice, but probably the last thing on its mind was attacking Kahuta, each successive lunch was less lavish and the political officer less important. When finally lunch was at the Triveni Centre outdoor cafe (total bill Rs. 12), courtesy of the sixth secretary Ruratarian Consulate, it was obvious that the time had come to try a different racket.

How well did the book do? Oddly, I don't know. My publisher was typical of the old breed (and of many of the new). He did not see why royalties should be paid. By dangling the book in front of his nose I had managed to extract Rs. 11,500 from him before publication. He admitted to printing 2500 hard cover and 3000 paperbacks, and complains to this day how he still has a number of books left. This I doubt, but in any case he appears to have recently printed yet another edition to swell his remainder stock. General Zia told my father the book sold 25,000 copies in Pakistan. That was, of course, the pirated edition. My publisher regularly returns the compliment by pirating

**RESTRICTED**

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important Pakistani books. A Singapore publisher also thoughtfully pirated the book, something I learned five years later.

Rs. 11,500 in 1982 sounds like a lot, but after borrowing Rs. 10,000 from my son's Childrens Savings Account to take time off to write, that wasn't such a good bargain. My friends at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses tried to cheer me up by saying Rs. 11,500 was more than all of them put together had managed on all their books since they began writing books. This is like your best friend saying "don't feel bad about being a 99% fool, because I'm a 100% idiot". It is not particularly comforting.

The current book has been financed by my landlord, Wing Commander B.M Malik of the IAF. He hasn't seen his rent in eight months.

Being tired of the abject poverty Indian intellectuals appear to find so necessary to prove their credentials, I swore not to write another book. Instead I borrowed Rs. 53 lakhs to start a business. The last I heard, the corporate bank account has Rs. 5 in it. (No, the zeroes have not been inadvertently omitted).

The problem was, of course, the vow was not kept. Reading Senator Cranston's speech on the Pakistan bomb, delivered in June, 1984 on the Senate floor, got me mad enough to write a book about the non-existent Pakistan bomb. That took a year because of the need to learn about centrifuges, and for some one who didn't pass ten grade math, that's not easy.

When writers work, they pay little attention to anything else. Suffice it to say that by the time the book was written, the company was doomed. The Rs. 53 lakhs had become as mythical as the Pakistan Bomb. This proved mildly depressing, so I wrote off another three books. The problem with getting all these published is that revision and the typing for various drafts (I normally prefer at least

**RESTRICTED**

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three, better five) takes up much time.

When you're busy scrambling to earn enough to pay the grocer and the electricity department and the motorcycle repair man and the rent and the doctor, there is no possibility of getting the peace and quiet needed to work. To say nothing of thousands of people lying outside the door meaning about their Rs. 53 lakhs.

This book was written in seven days flat. But the revisions took six times that much time. And even this was possible only because a kind friend loaned his word processor. This so simplifies the revision process that one wonders what people did before word processors. (I should know the answer to that they worked 12 hours a day and got nowhere at all.)

India, they say, has a philosophy that every thing runs in cycles. I can well believe it. 15 years ago, I was writing with one wife getting madder and madder because there was no conversation in the house, and with one infant rolling his Lactogen tins on the floor. The bills piled up and friends hid when I arrived to borrow money.

15 years later, exactly the same thing is happening. It's a different wife, it's a different infant, the Consumer Price Index is 350% higher but the same family rules India. The fir trees outside my Simla apartment are 15 feet higher. A lot of the older people don't to new seem be around and there's babies on the street. But that's about all: nothing else has changed.

A number of people have asked who the people named as the Little Family are. To save you the suspense, Gwendolyn is my wife, Trufflehunter is my elder son. Baby Leo is the person you see on the back cover of this book, and Cocoa and Polar are his Little Family. The Scooter who has been added to the dedication is not the two-wheeled variety, but my Number Two Son who is just as peppy. Beagle Bear is his Little Family.

**RESTRICTED**

7  
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Being, as usual, short of books and with many dedications to go, this book will have to be dedicated to several people.

First, to the Moggie Bears Gwendolyn, Junior Bear, Scooter, Bear, Leo and Gilroy. Cocoa and Polar Bears have gone off to greener climes in the States, but Beagle has forsaken Israel to come live with us.

Second, to Professors Gin Deshinkar and Bashir-ud-din Ahmed at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi, for getting me to look at the problem of the arms race between India and Pakistan.

Third, to Mr. Girilal Jam, editor of the Times of India for sending me to Mr. K. Subhramanyam at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses many many years ago, and for giving me many opportunities to express my view, though he seldom agrees with them, 'and rarely publishes anything except Letters to the Editor.

(My IDSA friends Will wonder why no dedication to Mr. K. Subhramanyam. That's because he gets his own book, the' one on how Pakistan does not have the bomb.)

New Delhi

June, 1988

Ravi Rikhye

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**RESTRICTED****INTRODUCTION**

When an army unit leaves the combat line to return to the rear, it shoots off all available ammunition to save itself the trouble of carrying it back. The ammunition belongs, in any case, on the enemy, not in rear area depots.

This book is the first salvo in the process of firing off. Having decided to return abroad, I see no reason to be polite any more, or to be cautious in what is said.

This is the story of the War That Never Was. it is not a story in the conventional sense, because the events leading up to the Zia Cricket Visit though dramatic are insufficiently extensive to rate a book.

Rather, the story is about how India,, despite its superior strength, lost the 1987 War That Never<sub>4</sub> Was without firing a shot.

It is a comparison of the strength of both sides, so that the reader can make his or her own judgment about the enormity of our surrender.

**A. THE AUTHOR'S PERSONAL BIAS**

In all fairness to the reader, it is necessary to explain the author's personal bias. This provides a clearer perspective to judge the worth of the author's position.

Equally important, when there is such a wide gap between the author's beliefs and those in general circulation, and an objective rather than a polemical work is sought to be presented, it is necessary to clarify his bias to avoid confusion.



The term “bias” is used in the sense of preferred beliefs, without “objective implications.

My belief is that India should, at the earliest opportunity, incorporate Pakistan into the Republic, followed by all the territories that composed the India before independence. This point is amplified later.

It is my belief that a combination of actors and circumstances led India to the point where the stage was set for a final war, but that the leadership chickened out at exactly the time it should have pushed forward to seek this final solution.

It is my belief that the Prime Minister, Mr. Arun Singh (then de facto Defence Minister), Mr. Natwar Singh (de facto foreign policy advisor to the Prime Minister), RAW, and General K. Sundarji were all, for their own separate reasons, trying to get a war with Pakistan going. Not for any final solution, not a last war that would reunite India and Pakistan, but for narrower ends these included the destruction of Pakistan’s nuclear enrichment facility at Kahuta, the recovery of as much as possible of Northern Pakistan Occupied Kashmir, and the detachment, if possible, of Sind from Pakistan.

While I very much want the final solution, I cannot support any partial solutions or any course of action designed to support narrower, more limited, more personal objectives. Either leave Pakistan alone and accept the consequences, which are wholly negative, or be of the necessary courage and strength and go for the final solution.

What the Government has in effect done is to make much more difficult a final solution. We will never again get another similar opportunity. And in as much as the Government is determined to believe in the non-existent Pakistan bomb, it is, in effect, ruling out a final solution. Because, obviously, no one is about to break up Pakistan or even risk war if they believe Pakistan is nuclear armed.

**RESTRICTED**

This half-baked approach to the problem of Pakistan, this wavering and indecisiveness, this inability to take the heat and remain cool when Pakistan countered, is to be unequivocally condemned. We need leaders who can make peace or who can make war. We do not need leaders who cannot decide which they stand for, who lack the courage of their own convictions, and who cannot fight for their country.

I do not accept the proposition that the events leading up to the mobilization crisis and the crisis itself can be explained in terms of the Government's ineptitude. In other words, that the Government did not intend war, but behaved so stupidly that war could easily have come.

Our leaders have always let this country down, and after each successive failure the security situation gets worse. This has happened despite our possession of strength far superior to our adversaries. The strength has been paid for by the silent sacrifices of two generations of Indians, hundreds and hundreds of million Indians but instead of the security to which they are entitled, instead of a nation the world regards as a symbol of just strength, the people of this country have been given lame excuses, weakness, and a growing insecurity.

Nowhere is this clearer than in the case of the Pakistan bomb program. Instead of doing anything about it, the Government has taken to bleating like a sick sheep, wanting everyone else to take the responsibility, everyone except those who have the responsibility in the first place, the Government.

The fact is that for all the power we possess, we are impotent. We cannot influence anyone, not even little Sri Lanka. (Our invited intervention in August of 1987 was possible only because of US acquiescence earlier, the Sri Lankas were happily defying India). We cannot stop the Chinese from intruding into our territory any time they

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feel like it. We cannot stop the Soviets from destroying Afghanistan. We cannot get the US Navy in the Indian Ocean to take us seriously. We cannot get Bangladeshis, or even the Nepalese, worse yet even the Bhutanese, to do what we want.

And if this were not bad enough, we refuse to protect the men that fight for this country. Hundreds of our citizens lie in Pakistani jails, sent by RAW to create favorable conditions for a Sind uprising, and captured during the course of their duties. The Government does not want to know anything about these persons.

It is this impotence of power that is wholly objectionable and what this book is about. In a larger sense, whether I am right or wrong about these three actors deliberately planning for a major incident is entirely irrelevant to the book. Because by backing down in the face of Pakistani pressure over a Brass Tacks designed to pressurize Pakistan the Government has shown itself as the bully that it really is. A bully who is stronger, more powerful, but the first to back down when the going gets tough. To be a bully is bad enough, to be a craven bully is even worse.

The time has come for all of us to ask: can we live with a system and with a Government that cannot assure our national security? Are we simply going to sit here while the defence budget escalates to astronomical levels and our insecurity grows and grows? Will we have to face crisis after crisis in which we shout and scream but never achieve anything except another humiliation for India?

I say that we cannot.

The reader must, after reading this book, confront his own conscience and make his own decisions.

**RESTRICTED****B. ON GENERAL SUNDARJI**

This book is not a defence of General K. Sundarji, the Chief of Army Staff. He developed the plan that would have been used in the 1987 War. And he would have led the Army had the political leadership shown the courage required to implement it.

General Sundarji explicitly refused to meet me, or to permit an update on certain aspects of the Pakistan Army. Even an hour's discussion would have been invaluable in getting up to date on various aspects of the opposing armies. In contrast, the General has met just about everyone else. For example, he gave Arun Poorie and Indarjit Bhadwar of India Today almost three hours. He gave Manoj Joshi of the Hindu an extra 2-1/2 hours after a scheduled half hour meeting to discuss Chequerboard.

It would be childish to pretend that being singled out in this fashion is not upsetting, particularly when no reason is provided.

This censorship makes a mockery of the General's display of openness towards the press. Clearly, what he wants is only an appearance, not an actual exercise, of openness.

Running into Mani Shanker Ayer I complained about the General's refusal. Mani, ever ready with a quip, said, "The Pakistanis the General can manage with ease. But you and the Pakistanis he cannot manage at all!" Mani's flattery does not, however, change the reality of discrimination.

The armed forces in India have a typically devious way of handling persons like myself. If after an enormous amount of work I manage to put together something a senior officer can agree with, it will be approvingly quoted to buttress his case. But if they don't agree, some error of fact, which could have been avoided with some of co-operation, to prove what an ignoramus I am.

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With the rarest of exceptions, no senior officer has told me I am wrong. The usual thing is to telephone the editor to complain how wrong Ravi is and why doesn't the editor write more balanced stuff? Any editor would, understandably, rather listen to a senior officer. The next time I write for the paper, the editor, already intimidated, politely excuses himself. This in itself becomes a form of obnoxious censorship. Why not get someone to write a letter to the editor so the matter can be thrashed out?

Once Arun Shourje, then editor of the Indian Express, asked if defence expenditure could be curtailed without compromising on combat capability. There is no armed force in the world that could not do with greater efficiency and rationalization. Ours is no exception. The piece I wrote provided a figure for the cost of each man in the Army. This was violently disputed by the Army, which complained to Mr. Shourje. He then refused another article because he feared my facts might be wrong. In vain I argued that if he performed a simple division, the cost of the Army divided by the number of men in the Army, he would see that the Army's objection was baseless. Mr. Shourje, and I cannot blame him, was unwilling to listen: he kept saying he was not competent to judge. There were no more invitations from the Indian Express.

In this context, Mr. Girilal Jam of the Times of India has extended his protection to me since he became editor, however much he may disagree with the thesis. This is what freedom of the press means, and not what General Sundarji thinks it means. Since there has been co-operation whatsoever from the Army, even in the matter of the smallest detail, the book can hardly make a defence of the General.

A typical question I had asked (in writing, as requested by the General's office) concerned the number of launchers in a Pakistan Army TOW anti-tank missile company. Would the heavens fall if some

**RESTRICTED**

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minor underling answered this? The quality of the analysis would have been greatly improved, and in any case I will find out, sooner or later.

Also I had requested historical information on force structures after 1947 to enable completion of a work for the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies. Even this was denied, though almost two decades earlier Lorne Kavic, a Canadian diplomat on study leave, was provided with these details for publication in a seminal work on Indian defence policy.

My personal feelings about General Sundarji, however, are irrelevant. His courage in having formulated so bold a plan must be appreciated. Even if the plan itself is faulty for military as well as political reasons, and never would have worked.

But at least he was prepared to do anything necessary to further the interests of the country. That he thirsted for personal glory is no bar to our admiration: when the search for personal glory coincides with doing the right thing for the country, we need not begrudge the valorous their due triumph. It is only when this search is conducted at the national expense that we must condemn.

But under no circumstances should we have let Pakistan determine our course ..of action even if no war was intended. The decision to fight or not to fight, to engage or not to engage, should have been purely Delhi's decision. That it was forced on Delhi by General Zia is a defeat by any logic.

### C. The Author's World View

Had the Brass Tacks/Trident plan been used we would have been defeated. Nonetheless, much could have been gained from a defeat.

The political leadership of this country has now Become so degenerate, so effete, so corrupt, that only the most massive defeat in

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war can provide the impetus for a real revolution.

We all dream of a revolution that will save and transform India. The majority hopes it will be peaceful and non-violent, led by a god emperor of infinite wisdom and strength. He will right all wrongs and lay the foundations of a new golden age. The minorities of the left and the right dream of a violent revolution, because only in the midst of such violence will come the opportunity to seize power.

But if we are realistic, we must concede that the repressive power of the modern state is too great to permit of revolutionary change, peaceful or otherwise.

And we must concede that it is not just our politicians that are corrupt, effete, degenerate, it is all of us.

Today we are the heroin or alcohol addict whose drugged haze shows a tolerable world. Only after sinking to the lowest depth will we be revulsed sufficiently to mount the first step in the long way back to health, happiness, and honor.

1962 was a defeat, but inadequate to force real change. Instead, Nehru collapsed, and with his death the last of the bulwarks against total degradation also collapsed, accelerating the process we see today.

It was insufficient because 1962 was, really, a small defeat by a country we could delude ourselves into thinking was much more powerful, so lessening the dishonor.

Had we been defeated by little Pakistan, however, the shock might have sufficed to set off the required process of self analysis, the realization that we had been humiliated beyond endurance. 'This realization is essential before the national consciousness can be reborn.

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People get confused about my position on Pakistan because no editor has permitted me free expression. They wonder how a self-professed hawk can defend Pakistan. To avoid such confusion, may I politely—but firmly—suggest my readers peruse the following paragraphs.

It is typical of our muddled ways of thought that being a hawk must require a shrill, hysteria on Pakistan. Any calm, rational analysis of Pakistan must mean, ipso facto, an apology for Pakistan. Such inane thinking is tedious to refute... Suffice it to say that without objective analysis on Pakistan or any other matter, we will succeed only in defeating ourselves instead of the enemy.

It is my contention that if India does not expand to fill its natural borders, then the centrifugal tendencies inherent in the situation get the upper hand and the country starts disintegrating inwards.

The chaos engulfing us today is no accident: once India was partitioned, then the process of disintegration began and will continue till reversed.

The natural boundaries of India encompass the present-day states of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Our geo-strategical imperative requires a subordinate Sri Lanka, Burma, Nepal and Bhutan, and a buffer Tibet and Afghanistan. It demands that the Indian Ocean be just that, an Indian ocean.

The British understood this and so controlled everything between Suez and Malacca as a means of holding India.

The rulers of independent India, on the other hand, have all concentrated on giving away as much as possible of what was called the Indian Empire, in the days when empires were fashionable.

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Mediocre little men, afraid and unable to rule this vast and turbulent land, they cut the country into sizes appropriate for their listless talent.

If, when my grandfathers were young, you had talked of an India ruled not just from Delhi, but from Islamabad, Dacca, Kathmandu, Thimpu, Sri Lanka, Rangoon, Beijing and Moscow, they would have marvelled at your naivete, or laughed at your madness.

But it all came to pass. So much so that 99.99% of all people in all these diverse states now accept the situation as normal and laugh in their turn at those who suggest that one day—perhaps even 20 to 50 years from now, these nine or ten capitals will become fifteen or twenty.

But this too will come to pass.

Unless.

Unless someone takes the initiative to begin this process of reversal, or reintegration.

This has nothing to do with the theories of a Hindu Man Sabba or some equally farfetched politico-religious concept. There have been five great Indian empires: two created by Hindus, one by a man who later espoused Buddhism, one by Muslims, and one by Christians. It is hardly material or germane as to who creates the next Indian Empire.

All people have the right to peacefully lead their own lives as the' see best. But this is best done in a powerful grouping; it is least well done by fractionating into ever smaller states. Today, as always, the most prosperous and most happy are those existing within large federations, as in the United States or in Western Europe. India can never be a Sweden or a Switzerland, so the happiness or other wise of these small states is of no concern to us.

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To permit fractionation is to deny people their chance of peace and security.

This has nothing to do with dream of a false glory, of India as a superpower. If the world is to survive, it must conglomerate, first into a handful of powerful states, and then into one world.

Only then can mankind transcend its petty quarrels and take the first real steps into our endless universe.

Strong empires have disintegrated in the past, and the world as a whole has survived. So should we worry?

India has survived five millennia. Long after the world has swept the dust of America, the Soviet Union, Europe. Japan, yes, even China into history's dustbin there will be India. So why should we worry?

Surely we should concern ourselves with more than just bare survival. Surely we should use our advances of the last five millennia to dampen the swings towards integration and disintegration, instead of seeing them accentuated. And today our ability to harm ourselves is greater, by several orders of magnitude, than was true even half a century ago, so that the down swings will be all the more precipitous, more dangerous.

No matter what the cost, we must start the process of reintegration. The later we put it off, the more the eventual cost.

Because Pakistan is second only to India in terms of wealth and power, the reintegration process must start with that country. Once Pakistan returns to the fold, the combination of the two countries is such that the other states will return at a fraction of the cost and effort.

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Reintegration can be conducted either peacefully or by war.

The only reason I advocate war is that war is, after all, a much easier proposition. We already suffer from a total insufficiency of leadership. Peace requires the very highest qualities of leadership which are in such short supply today. Peace will, besides, require many years to achieve the needed ends. War will require perhaps a year or two. War, of course, leaves a thick debris for ingestion, and this takes time. On balance, however, the case is stronger for war than for peace.

It is for this reason I regard myself as a hawk.

Being a hawk does not mean what it is taken as by so many Indians a blind condemnation of Pakistan, a continual projection of India as a victim of Pakistan, a non-stop paranoia and abuse.

This is playing childish games, neurotic games.

And the sad truth is that today no one outside India and many even within India, are interested in this public display' of our neuroses, It is regarded as illegitimate, unnecessary, and unworthy of a country that aspires to superpower status.

Even the Soviets find us boring for long they put up with us because they wanted certain things. But now—and this part of our story—they are sick of our cant, hypocrisy and hair-splitting, self-serving logic.

The cranky bitchiness w~ display is a sign of weakness, not of strength.

A person's patriotism cannot be the decibels he generates on abusing Pakistan.

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Realistic action on Pakistan requires a dispassionate understanding of its, and our, limits and capabilities. . Understanding Pakistan is not arguing Pakistan's case but an essential first step in bringing Pakistan back.

This book is a first step towards understanding Pakistan's, and our, military capabilities and limitations.

For various reasons that will become apparent during, the course of the book, it was thought expedient to wait till General K. Sundarji retired before publishing the book. The book itself was written by June 1987. All data relating to force structures and deployment is as of January 1987, when the mobilisation crisis took place.

Later I received information that the Pakistani deployment was somewhat different from that given in the book. The differences however in no way alter the argument.

**BRASS TACKS:**

**EVENTS LEADING UP To**

**INTRODUCTION**

Before getting into the details of the background to the crisis of 86/87, we need to cover some basic points.

A. **TUE BASIC THESIS**

The basic thesis is as follows

(1) Imperatives of domestic policy led to a situation in which an incident with Pakistan was necessary to divert attention from the growing chaos at home. It had to be Pakistan because we are too scared to do anything against China.

(2) That though we prepared to create an incident, when the time came, we let the Pakistanis outmaneuver us and backed down.

(3) That this backing down displayed only our impotence despite our much greater military power vis-a-vis Pakistan, and that it is a familiar pattern we have displayed consistently for the last 40 years.

For the purpose of this analysis, we term the incident Operation Trident/Brass. Tacks. Trident called for an attack on February 8, 1987 at 04.30 hours, with Skardu as the first objective and Gilgit as the second. The operation was expected to last two weeks, within which time the Northern Areas under Pakistani occupation since 1947-48 would be recovered.

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If Pakistan chose to keep the conflict limited to the Northern Areas, this was fine with India. But suppose Pakistan wanted to retaliate and escalate, say by attacking Punjab. Then Brass Tacks, which was originally planned as a gigantic strategic deception to focus Pakistani attention on the Sind while we went for Northern Areas, would have been converted into an actual operation with the aim of reaching Mirpur Khas within three days and Hyderabad City (Sind) within seven.

The reader must be warned that between December 1986 and February 1987 the Indian Army went through several contingency plans, each aimed at different areas. The plans were discarded, modified, or cancelled as the situation changed.

So if the reader has heard about another operation scheduled to be mounted at another time, she or he should not assume that that was the definite operation and there was no such thing as Trident. There were many operations floating around and our information is about the Trident/Brasstacks combination.

It is not important what the specific operation was, because none would have worked within the parameters set for them, which was a rapid strategic victory. Our detailed discussion of Trident! Brassacks is as suitable for a case study supporting our main point as any other. And, in any event, Brassacks was to be the knockout punch.

If this all makes it sound as if India was determined to go to war on one pretext or another, and that any pretext was sufficient, it is because this is exactly what the situation was. Those in charge wanted war at any cost.

Now, why are we not focusing on this aspect, which to many would make a more interesting story? Because I don't find it interesting at all, and I am writing the book. My position is that we should have gone to war and am concerned that we didn't. So the warmongering tendencies of some of our leaders don't concern me I

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wish there were more leaders like General Sundarji and Arun Singh.

Was an attack on the Pakistan uranium enrichment pilot centrifuge at Kahuta one contingency ? It appears that at least in December 1986 a strike against Kahuta was on the cards but cancelled. In my book *The Fourth Round* I had postulated the start of the war as an Indian attack on, Kahuta. The book had Pakistan making the major thrust in the Kashmir Northern Areas, and India attacking in Multan, rather than Sind as was planned in

Should one be flattered by the semblance of real life to one's fiction? Possibly, but I am not flattered because I don't think the Government's plan would have worked. It's obvious that if the book had any impact on the Government, the planners did not read through the book. They would understand why India cannot win in two weeks, why no solution in a short war is possible, and why Sind is not the place to attack. I am impressed, nonetheless, by the Northern Areas plan. Of course, it wouldn't have worked either. That's another story we shall discuss later in the book.

B. **A CAVEAT**

To understand what happened in the winter of 1986/87, we must now freely plunge into treacherous waters. Decent persons, and this includes the editors that have already in large numbers refused to publish this book, would prefer us not to take this plunge, but would rather wait for more facts. These persons would concede our thesis, about to be expounded, has varying degrees of merit, but would feel that many elements are speculative, and that we should wait the emergence of more details.

But this is exactly what we will not do, for the following reasons.

(1) We have already deferred publication from March to November 1987, an eight month period, and are personally no wiser,

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barring a whole host of minor details that have been filled in. But we could sit here and fill in minor details for the next 100 years without altering the broad outlines of what we knew in February.

(2) Later events tend to overshadow previous ones in the mind of the public and interest flags over time, no matter how vital the matter under analysis. The writer must strike when the iron is hot if he is to hold the public's interest. Are you, for example, prepared to expend your money and your time reading my thesis that the events of 1971 cannot be understood unless we realise India master-minded the 1971 War and struck first, and the Enterprize incident had to do with deterring India in the West, and not with events in East Pakistan? Some may be, but to most, this is ancient history, and will produce nothing but big yawns. And the impact of the thesis has been substantially reduced by leakage, in bits and pieces, of its main elements. In 1972, publication of the thesis would have served a useful purpose for the public; 'in 1987, when the facts are indisputable, no purpose other than historical is served.

(3) When a plan is carried out—for example. Mrs. Gandhi's attack on Pakistan in 1971—it becomes possible to be definite even if the Government has expended effort to keeping secret motives and the sequence of events. When, however, an action is planned but later cancelled—as happened in the winter of 1986/87—no matter how long we wait, we will not get much closer to the truth. This particularly so because people have time to rearrange their stories to suit current wisdom, as has happened with our politicians and generals involved in the events of 1971.

(4) If a Government is given to some frankness, so that within a reasonable time we could expect detailed versions of what happened in the winter of 1986/87, waiting for more details is purposeful. But Indian governments are not given to any sort of frankness. Neither General Sundarji nor Arun Singh is about to write his memoirs, the next couple of years telling us what they planned to do—particularly

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since they failed to do anything. Twenty five or thirty years from now we will see no publication of memos (if any exist) discussing plans and alternatives.

(5) The author is not a decent person and sees no reason to be bound by existing conventions on the matter. It is more important that the country understand that the Government has once again displayed its impotency, once again let down the country, once again put fear and its own interests above those of the people, than that we are right on every point.

When there is no coordinated decision-making in the Government, when every actor on the stage is free to pursue his interests independently of the others, there can be no one course of action agreed on by consensus, and there can be no one explanation for what happened in the winter of 1986/87. This is bound to be unsatisfactory for, the reader, because we must separately examine each strand in the skein of events. Each strand raises more questions, and some of the interests and trends are contradictory. Rather than deal with this, many readers will (as has already happened with persons reading the manuscript) find it easier and more convenient to dismiss the entire thesis. I think that would be a pity.

At no point in this exposition are we making the claim that this is a complete and satisfactory explanation of events. It is all too incomplete and entirely unsatisfactory. But I suspect that later information will serve mainly to corroborate the thesis, not to contradict it.

C. **A NOTE ON SOURCES**

From the very start it must be made plain that I do not enjoy any access of any sort to any special sources. No one leaked anything or encouraged me to write about recent events. This is not said to protect

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supposed sources: my modesty does not extend to putting myself down just to protect sources.

All is fair in love, war, and academics. Any one familiar with my work knows I freely exchange information and keep nothing to myself. This does not make me a good person to leak information to: I do not believe even in holding on for a short time to get cut my story, but will discuss anything I have been told or have deduced for myself. There is a practical reason for this: if you share what you know with other persons, they will share with you, and every one is better off.

The trick is to be so familiar with your subject, so close to it, so totally immersed in it, that the slightest shift of a straw in the wind should alert you to what is happening. This is like knowing from the way that your wife or girl friend is applying her make up that she's becoming interested in another man. You must know her every gesture, her every habit, her every pattern, that something is up. Once you know something is up, it's easy to work out the rest.

This requires an enormous intuition, and it is one of the everlasting paradoxes of life that you cannot deal with facts unless you use intuition. Having seen that slight shift, having employed your intuition, your expertise and store of knowledge should then be sufficient, with a few additional inputs, to get 80% of the truth. Since presumably only the Divine can know the whole truth, I am satisfied at 80%, and elated at 90%.

**THE BACKGROUND**

In 1984, the Indian Army mounted a unique operation. It sent seven divisions into Punjab and Haryana, not to fight the Pakistanis, but to flush the Golden Temple of extremist Sikhs. Over 250 men and officers were killed, and twice that many seriously injured.

The divisions of its strike forces were to be found not in readi-

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ness to fight Pakistan, but deployed to fight Indian citizens.

Later, when much of the North Western India exploded into a~orgy of communal rioting following the murder of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the Army was to deploy a third of its strength on internal security. Of course, not all of the eleven divisions equivalent involved were there because of the rioting. Two divisions were engaged on the usual counter-insurgency operations in the Northeast. And many formations in Jammu and Kashmir were there for internal security.

Delhi itself saw the equivalent of three divisions installed. The citizens of this illustrious city were treated to the truly enlightening spectacle of BMP-I infantry combat vehicles from 31st Armored Division, based in Central India, chasing rioters in the streets of the old town and across the Jamuna, instead of fighting Pakistani armour on the border.

Putting these bare statistics in perspective is educative.

Lt Gen gajit Singh Arora took East Pakistan with equivalent of seven divisions. Thirteen years later this was required to hold down Haryana and Punjab for Blue Star.

Before the Chinese war in 1962, the Army had ten divisions.

Western Command staged its 1965 counter offensive against Sialkot in retaliation for Pakistan's attack at Chhaamb/Akhnur, with 3 divisions, the same number used to pacify Delhi in November, 1984.

The story of Bhindranwale and the events leading up to the Golden Temple battle are well known. When Bhindranwale began to spread his message of hate over Punjab, the Pakistanis saw their opportunity to step up pressure against India. They began seriously training Sikh extremists, just a handful. Later, with thousands of Sikh youths fleeing to Pakistan, they trained more, but still a limited

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number. So anti-Pakistan a journalist as Inder Malhotra has estimated the total at about 200.

The Pakistanis, canny as ever, had learned from the disastrous attempt to create an uprising in Kashmir prior to the 1965 war. They now aimed for quality and not quantity. With no illusions about the ability of the separatists to succeed, they hoped merely to exert pressure.

Indian attempts, mainly by the Research and Analysis Wing, to infiltrate the Pakistani terror training network proved largely unsuccessful. The Pakistanis weeded out Indian intelligence agents masquerading as disaffected Sikhs. Pakistani methods were barbaric but effective. When alleged runaways are systematically tortured and beaten over a period of weeks and months on the slightest suspicion of their non-genuineness, very few agents will survive this test.

Why should Pakistan want to aid the ferment in Punjab?

Well for some years previously India had been aiding sep4ra-tists in Sind. In 1983, at the height of the Sind agitation, our Prime Minister actually made a statement saying that Sind would soon be free. An extraordinary thing to say, because there were no parallels at all between East Pakistan in 1971 and Sind in 1983. Many of these infiltrators languish in Pakistani jails, victims of cruel torture that has destroyed their mind and their bodies. Officially these men do not exist. We are so good, so pure, so truthful, so open, we haven't sent anyone to subvert Pakistan in Sind. Unofficially, too the Government of India finds it convenient to forget them. Some of them are not particularly savory they consist of the murderers, criminals and smugglers that populate the Indo-Pakistan border. But still, whatever tie antecedents, they fought for their country, and have in return the reward reserved for all patriotic Indians: torture and oblivion, while the traitors flourish, fatten and grow rich.

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Reagan, hateful though he may be, at least risked everything to save a few wretched American citizens kidnapped by Islamic militants. That he had larger purposes in no manner diminishes his courage in trying to do something for his people.

The terrible punishment meted out to those Indians that were caught in Shad is, of course, no unique characteristic of the Pakistanis. We do the same to their people caught on our side. It can be of no comfort to those sent to the Amritsar interrogation centre, but Indian citizens accused of treason who are taken to the Red Fort suffer worse than the Pakistanis.

Pakistan has been sending men into Punjab because we sent—and send—men into Sind. We send men to Sind because the Pakistanis send men to Kashmir. They send men to Kashmir because we aid and comfort the separatists of Baluchistan and the NWFP, generally thanks to our most active and most excellent embassy in Kabul, which at least does some work as opposed to the norm in our other Embassies. We send aid and men to the Baluchis and the NWFP because, again, Pakistan sends men to create trouble in Kashmir. And so it goes.

This is part of the game of nations. However dirty and barbaric the business may be, it has existed since nations existed, and will continue till nations end. Here we are in no way trying to attach blame to any side. We are merely pointing out that the genesis of the present crisis lies in Pakistani support of Sikh separatists.

But surely 200 separatists can be no threat to India. Punjab is a state of 13 millions, which makes it among the most populated countries of the world. Can 200 men do anything?

Obviously no. For all the newspaper writing on the daily toll of terror in Punjab, we must dispassionately keep two things in mind. First, many of those being killed are victims of mundane, sordid crime

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cloaked in lofty slogans of religion and subnationalism. Second, the Punjab, in common with parts of Rajasthan, most of UP, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, is exceptionally violent. Murders take place over the most trivial differences, and entire families, women, children, grandparents, the old, infirm, blind, are routinely wiped out in these massacres.

The attention to Punjab reflects in great degree the proximity of the State to the national capital, and to the fact that human beings (i.e. Punjabis) are being killed. Every day worse massacres take place in Bihar, but that doesn't really matter, because as everyone knows, Biharis of the lower caste are not really people, even if we kindly concede they may not be really animals either.

A comparison worth keeping in mind: the entire grisly toll in Punjab in the last three years is exceeded by the casual one day's work of the Nellie murderers in Assam.

So if we all yawned when Nellie came on the scene, and gawped in obscene voyeurism at the India Today pictures of babies with their bellies split open, why do we worry so much about Pakistan and the 200 separatists?

Because we have a visceral reaction to anything Pakistani.

Precisely because the Pakistanis support to the separatists is so amorphous, so limited, it becomes impossible for India to deal with it. You cannot make a massive raid in the style of Israelis against the Palestinians. You cannot launch an Operation Peace for Galilee, because there is no issue here worth provoking a war. We have been doing to them what they do to us.

The normal thing would have been to grin and bear it, and step up our own infiltrations. But oddly, because Pakistan is so much smaller, we cannot grin and bear any provocation it commits.

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In the winter of 1986/87 the Indian Army was to hold its triennial series of maneuvers, this time called Exercise Brass Tacks. By mid 1986 an idea began jelling in the minds of our decision-maker?. Why not make the exercises bigger than ever before? And why not introduce calculated ambiguities into the exercise to make the Pakistanis sweat a bit?

Brass Tacks like exercises must, perforce, be far and few in between. The Indian military as a whole, not just the Army, has an old-fashioned commitment to maintaining a large number of formations. It can maintain these formations only by equipping them at reduced, standards, and by cutting back on what the Americans call Operations and Maintenance.

None of this, matters in a sense because the other side, Pakistan and china are seven in worse shape. They are even worse equipped.

But if we are to cut back on Operations and Maintenance in' preference or a. larger number of formations, exercises too must be limited,

The 1986-87 exercises, then, presented a unique opportunity to pressurize Pakistan, to remind, it of its vulnerability to India's superior might. The eventual aim get it to rethink' its policy of supporting separatists, however limited.

Somewhere along the line, however, new imperatives began to take over. The pressure began to build up for converting the exercises an actual provocation of Pakistan in the hope 'that it would attack India, leading to a war.

**THE FOUR ACTORS FOR WAR**

There are four separate actors on the stage, each with its own interests and constraints. Sometimes these interests may converge with one or two of the other actors, sometimes they may diverge. It is

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the interaction between the four that led to the risk of a real war.

**A. THE RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS WING**

The Research and Analysis Wing is India's equivalent of the Central Intelligence Agency. It has both research and operational functions. Unlike the CIA, it is heavily involved overseas and also at home. This latter role is denied to the CIA by American law, domestic operations being the province of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, on which our own Central Bureau of Investigation is modeled.

RAW is a sinister agency not because it does anything that other intelligence services do not, but because it is solely an executive arm. Parliament has no oversight rights. And there is no question whatsoever of letting the press explain or expose any aspect of the RAW. Even within the executive, it is intended to be a tool of the Prime Minister.

Given RAW's working set up, inevitably it has become a power in its own right. The Prime Minister has little real idea either of the scope of its operations or any real control.

Our RAW, in fact, has much greater freedom than even the Soviet KGB. The KGB exists as one of three competing centres of power in the Soviet Union, the other two being the Red Army and the Communist Party. Since any two of the three can team up to destroy or limit the third an ultimate control exists over each single body. It may not resemble the Westminster model of parliamentary democracy, but in a peculiarly Russian way, it works.

By contrast, RAW is limited only because we are not an unlimited police state and so RAW budget is restricted. But within its budget it is free to do exactly what it wants. And it does.

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As a relatively compact agency, RAW avoids the factional splits that characterise the much larger CIA. Moreover, the CIA is only one of eight or nine American intelligence agencies working overseas. It becomes possible, therefore, to talk of a "RAW line" in a manner not applicable to the CIA. And in any event a CIA line does not automatically become a national line. RAW however, is supreme in its field, so it becomes possible to characterise its thinking as an Indian intelligence line.

When concerning Pakistan, in theory three separate agencies are involved in intelligence operations: RAW, the Army's Directorate of Military Intelligence, and the Border Security Force. They all, for example, perform signal intercept and run agents.

In practice, however, the BSF is much more important than the Army for the simple reason it occupies the border and lives there day and night. The Army, located further back, has less opportunity to do its job.

And the RAW is much more important than the BSF and DM1 combined, because these two have no opportunity to do more than border intelligence. It is really RAW that delivers: detailed political; military, economic and scientific/technical information on Pakistan, and its ties with other nations.

Intelligence people tend to be very hawkish for a variety of reasons outside the ambit of our discussion. Perhaps their existence on the front line of intrigue, plots, and lies colors their view. Perhaps their closed world prevents consideration of less extreme opinions. Perhaps the need to justify ever increasing budgets forces perception of ever more extreme national security threats. Perhaps the kind of person willing to go into intelligence is more patriotic in a hard sense.

Be that as it may, RAW is very hard line indeed on Pakistan in particular, and our neighbors in general. Doubtless Pakistani

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intelligence reciprocates.

For some time now RAW had been pressing for India to attack Sind to retaliate against Pakistan's actions in the Punjab and to avenge the death of Mrs. Gandhi. This formed the first side of the triangle that wanted to lead India to war.

The RAW thesis assumes both that Pakistan is the dominant factor in the Punjab problem and that it was involved in the late Prime Minister's murder. A complication would be the Raighat incident of October 2, 1986, where a lone assassin failed to kill Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and other prominent leaders: RAW is convinced of Pakistan's hand in this attempt.

For every attempt coming to the public's notice there will be ten that are never revealed. Similarly, there will be enormous but never disclosed masses of data convincing RAW of Pakistan's involvement in the Punjab. Because these issues are never widely debated, we cannot say if RAW is right or is feeding its own prejudices, biases, and paranoia. But that is entirely irrelevant to the matter in hand: we are concerned with RAW's perceptions and beliefs, not with objective reality.

Also, it is not our concern that many in RAW will not necessarily share these views. RAW is not a democratic university, where differences are openly aired and debated, and a consensus reached. Like any other Indian corporate body, the juniors tell the seniors what they the seniors want to hear, and the seniors tell the boss what Ito wants to hear. The world view that prevails is usually that of the head of the agency.

To RAW retaliation in Sind is logical. It has invested heavily in subversion in that province, has enrolled an extensive network of agents and anti-Government elements, and is convinced that with a little push, the province will revolt. Then with help from India it should

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successfully secede. Should this happen, Pakistan will be finished : it would be comparable to India south of the Vindhayas seceding.

The Sind project has been crucial for RAW for several years. It is beyond the scope of discussion to detail why RAW has picked on Sind : suffice it to say that Sind is restless, and wants, at the very Least, a substantially greater autonomy than it presently enjoys. Whether all its grievances add up to a potential for secession is another matter. The agitation of 1983 was serious, and the tension present today was amply demonstrated by the ethnic riots in late 1986/87.

But Sind cannot secede on its own. The federal government handily succeeded in suppressing the 1983 troubles. Even in East Pakistan, where the Pakistanis were almost 5000 sea kilometers from home, and where the population was half that of the entire country, the revolt was suppressed with less than 100,000 regular and paramilitary troops. Secession would have been impossible without India's help the Pakistanis moved so swiftly that before the end of three months the revolt was crushed. In 1972-76, Pakistan had put down the Baluch insurgency, a particularly bloody and vicious affairs about which little is known in India.

The only thing that would work is an uprising, followed by appeals for Indian intervention and then a swift attack as conceived by General Sundarji.

**B. GENERAL SUNDARJI**

The second actor was the Chief of Army Staff.

In 1985 General K. Sundarji became Chief of Army Staff. A Mahar Infantry Regiment officer, he has been responsible for developing the armor organisation and doctrines the Army use to day.

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As in the pre-World War 2 German Army, it has been left to an infantryman to bring Indian armor into the 1980s. The German cavalry officers, the natural predecessors of the tank corps, were too conservative to accept the new ideas of mechanized war preached by Liddle, Hart, Martel, and Hobart. It was infantry-men like Guderian, Rommel and Manstein who pushed and implemented the new concepts. Ironically, it was these German admirers of the British theorists that used these ideas best the British proved too, cautious to take their own concepts to a logical conclusion.

The Indian armored corps inherited the doctrines of the World War 2 British Army. In fact, students at Wellington, India's staff college, are still taught tactics and strategy with which any British World War. 2 general would feel entirely comfortable.

But the armor is particularly conservative and has consequently failed to contribute decisively to any battle since 1947. This is a pity, because without the armor leading the way, there can be no rapid decision. It is precisely this General Sundarji wants to change.

General Sundarji has formidable accomplishments to his credit in his push to update armor concepts.

He raised the Mechanized Infantry Regiment as a way of creating a corporate pressure group for mechanized infantry's interest and of focusing attention of this new—for India—arm.

He assiduously pushed for integration of army-related helicopters into the new Army Air Corps, a long discussed innovation that was successful only under his leadership.

He introduced the combined arms battle group a compact all-arms battalion sized formation, for greater flexibility and more rapid results on the battlefield.

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He introduced new—for India—tactics emphasizing speed of movement, firepower and maneuver, rather than the older concepts of slogging from one objective to another with lengthy pauses for consolidation, elimination of all resistance, and securing of flanks and line of communications. The object, again, being to force a decision rapidly.

General Sundarji is unique as an army chief in that he has no combat experience, but is an intellectual. He has been trained in the United States and is very highly thought of by his instructors. He has spent much time on the implications of nuclear weapons and the army.

On a personal level, he is exceptionally ambitious, proud and sensitive.

The manner in which he went about creating the M.I.R. provides a unique glimpse into his character. Abroad, when an infantry battalion is mechanized, its regimental identity is kept intact. For example, when the 1st Welch Fusiliers serve as a mechanized battalion in Germany, they become the 1st Welch Fusiliers (Mechanized). Similarly, the 1st Battalion, 6th United States Infantry Regiment, a mechanized formation, is known as 1/6 Infantry (Mechanized). But when General Sundarji created the M.I.R., he took the most famous, the most heavily decorated battalions of the Indian infantry, wiped out their individual identities, and incorporated them into the M.I.R., for example, the 1st Sikhs, the unit with the most Victoria Crosses, became just another bland, numbered battalion of the Mechanized Regiment.

The mechanized arm in the Indian Army dates back only to 1970, and the regiment itself was formed only in 1976. Yet it became, overnight, the most decorated regiment in the Indian Army.

It would have cost nothing, and would have preserved historical continuity, if the Mechanized designation had merely been added to

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the battalion number. If problems of training arose, a single, junior regiment could have been designated as a mechanized regiment. General Sundarji's own Mahars were a logical candidate for this.

Now that a much larger number of mechanized battalions exist than can be handled by one regimental centre, General Sundarji has, indeed, taken up an entire regiment for conversion. Not surprisingly, it is the Brigade of Guards, the most glamorous of the Army's regiments, and which itself, when it was formed after independence, took three of the most famous battalions of the Indian Army as its nucleus.

Another insight into his complex personality is provided by the designation of 54 Infantry Division as 54 Air Assault Division. As usual, the General saw no need to discuss this innovation with his sister services, particularly with the IAF.

More important, though this powerful, catchy designation was given to the division but it remains an infantry formation. Only very recently has the Indian Army officially asked its US counterparts for all information pertaining to air assault divisions, the US being the only army in the world that has one, the 101 Air Assault Division. The US proceeded through a series of logical steps initiated in the early 1960s, starting with the famous Howze Board that investigated every aspect of airmobile operations and the formation of a number of units to test new concepts it then formed the 11 Air Assault Division as a test unit, and later incorporated the lessons into the 101 Division which was air mobile tested for several years in Vietnam.

But here the division has first been named, and even identified to the press (the fact of an air. assault division existing, not the number), while it is still an infantry unit and before any clear idea of what it should look like exists. And before any helicopters for it have been ordered.

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Even the US Army, with its Rs 50,000-crore annual procurement budget, has been able to afford only one such division. Yet, General Sundarji's Long-term plans as approved by the Government, call for two air assault divisions. Personally, I would love to see the Indian Army get air assault divisions. The potential for reaching Lhasa in Tibet or to Hyderabad (Sind) in one jump opens up mind-boggling possibilities. Each division, however, will cost not less than Rs. 2500 crores to form. The sum suffices to create another six armored and mechanized divisions (if existing armored brigades are used as the nucleus), and one wonders if that is not more important than giving the army a glamorous divisional sized force when we haven't even tried out an airmobile brigade, leave alone an air assault brigade.

As of 1987. India has been at peace for sixteen years, a longer period than any Post Independence. The young officers of World War II not only got five years of combat, but also led important formations in four subsequent wars. The brigadiers of 1971 are now retiring as three star generals. If peace continues for another five years, even the battalion commanders of the last war would have retired.

There is not much chance, then, to try out the ideas long discussed and long nurtured.

And for the really ambitious, there is no chance for a Field Marshal's baton.

General Sundarji's ambition is well known. Long before he became Chief, he had visualized a Brass Tacks type of operation, where the armor would be let loose 'on the broad expanses of the un-fortified desert, to impose a final solution on Pakistan. As GOC Western Command, he had led the '1983 exercises, the predecessor of the present ones.

The General is not alone in his hard line views; there are others, for example, Lt Gen. P.N. Hoon, recently retired GOC Western Command which controls the two strike corps and one of the other two

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corps that would be employed in desert war against Pakistan. As GOC XV Corps, he was one of the persons responsible for getting the Government to adopt a hard line over Siachin, a little war which continues today.

A war with Pakistan would have suited General Sundarji very well.

**C. ARUN SINGH**

The third actor was the de facto Defence Minister, Mr. Arun Singh.' He is that most dangerous of persons honest, a dreamer, and a man of very strong convictions held since childhood.

Since the age of eleven (we have no information from before that) he has dreamed of a greater glory for India, a glory, to be won by force of arms. As a teenager he would dispose imaginary fleets and armies over the Indian Ocean and the Western Plains and the Northern Mountains, and these fleets and armies would defeat all adversaries to make India victorious.

Sensitive, introverted, and a voracious reader, he would consume everything available on the subject of war, be it history or the characteristics of aircraft.

It doesn't takes much to imagine what would happen if such a person were made the Defence Minister, and if simultaneously his Army Chief of Staff were the handsome, intelligent, ambitious and dashing General Sundarji. Put the two together and fusion reaction is certain.

My naval readers will, at this point, be quick to underline that Admiral Ram Tahiliani is also handsome, intelligent, ambitious and dashing, so why wasn't he a bad influence on Arun Singh?

Because fundamentally the Admiral is besides those other things, a very practical person (could it be his Sindhi heritage?). He knows

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the essential unreality of going to war for the sake of going to war. So he concentrated, instead, on getting—successfully—an enormous naval expansion out of Arun Singh. He would rather have a larger fleet than a pointless war and an extra medal.

And where did the handsome, intelligent and dashing Air Chief, Dennis La Fontaine, fit into all this? Nowhere. For one thing, he is a fighter pilot and happy simply to be air chief and alive. He is not ambitious. He doesn't want to fight anyone, nor does he want the world's third largest air force. For another, the Army may not talk to the Navy, but it tolerates that service. The Army neither talks to nor tolerates the Air Force. So the Air Force was not involved, nor was it particularly interested in going to war with anyone.

D. **THE PRIME MINISTER**

The fourth actor on the stage was the Prime Minister.

Our assertion may seem unfair, because anyone in the know knows that actually the Prime Minister

(1) most of the time had no real idea what Arun Singh and General Sundarji were planning;

(2) put the brakes very firmly on Arun Singh and the General when matters threatened to get out of control; and

(3) is characteristically peace-loving and not for solutions involving violence

But nonetheless he is an actor because

(1) There was the Defence Minister and it was his failure to exercise firm control over his deputy Arun Singh that was the root of the problems

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(2) The may not at any point have consciously wanted war, may have in fact been revolted at the thought of war, but a crisis short of war would have suited him very well..

Beset with ever increasing difficulties at home and abroad, perceived increasingly as an ineffective, naive tyro unfit to govern this vast and troubled land, rapidly losing all the enormous goodwill with which he was elected just two years ago, an external adventure would have offered a chance of diverting attention and of bailing him out of a very difficult situation.

Till the Fairfax, submarine, and Bofors affairs, there was a rule in the Indian media: attack any one, any time, any where, but do not attack the Prime Minister. This is by the dispensation he himself has granted to the media, a wider one than ever given by his mother, who would countenance no criticism direct or indirect. Excepting a minority of the intellectuals. Indians feel that attacking the Prime Minister is not really a legitimate activity, no matter what may be said in personal discussions. We all need someone to believe in India this becomes the Prime Minister. If we do not believe in the Prime Minister, there is no one else and we are in trouble.

One can, however, state facts or assumptions without attacking or defending a person, particularly when these are required to tell a tale.

Among the Prime Minister's many problems was that V.P. Singh, his Finance Minister, was slowly closing in on him. Ostensibly, Mr. Singh was after, among other persons, the Bachchan brothers, Ajitabh and Amitabh. But given the close relationship Amitabh enjoys with the Prime Minister, any assault on him is, most directly, an assault on the Prime Minister.

Bhure Lal, Mr. V.P. Singh's dreaded chief of the enforcement directorate had, as early as September 1986, requested Mr. Singh's

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permission to begin investigation of twelve eminent political figures, including (as nearly as we have been able to tell) Amitabh, Arjun Singh, and Kamlapati Tripathi. This permission was given.

An American investigative agency was hired to begin the process of assembling data from abroad. By an odd coincidence (or perhaps it is no coincidence at all) this is the same agency retained ostensibly by newspaper magnate Ramnath Goenka to investigate Reliance Industries Limited. Doubtless there is more to this story than is presently known, and the public may look forward to more revelations.

Be that as it may, Mr. V.P. Singh had to go, and fast. Simply asking him to resign or transferring him was no solution. He had already indicated he would resign rather than be shifted, and that could prove embarrassing. Equally counter productive would be a demand for outright resignation because that would only confirm the public's suspicions that the Prime Minister was trying to protect himself.

Why was Mr. Singh so adamant about pursuing Amitabh and the trail no matter where it led?

Partly because he had on a number of occasions said clearly that no one, no matter how high, was above the law. By jailing respected and eminent persons like Kapil Mehra, S.L. Kirsloker, and L.M. Thapar, he had not just shocked the country, he had put himself out on a very thin limb of a very shaky tree. If he was now to ignore persons like Amitabh, he would open himself to charges of selectivity and hypocrisy. Mr. Singh had backed himself into a strategy that called for all or nothing: he either held his course with remorseless logic, or everything would collapse like a pack of cards around his head.

But also because Mr. Singh was playing for higher stakes; with Amitabh pulled down, the Prime Minister himself would be easy prey. And with a compromised Prime Minister, Mr. Singh becomes the logical

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choice for a successor. The issue is not whether he has a base in the party: he would, in effect, render meaningless the politics of the Congress party machine and go to the people. Here he had, before his replacement as Finance Minister, a respect only marginally less than Rajiv's and now probably greater.

V.P. Singh, though the most pressing problem, was only one of a series of misfortunes plaguing the young Prime Minister. By mid-1986, most of the goodwill he had begun his term with was gone. He was under attack from every corner of India. from within his party, from the intellectuals. As a vote-getter he was proving to be a liability after his stunning performance in the 1985 general elections. Having lost three states, he was preparing to lose three more in the 1987 assembly elections. The portents were all bad. And in India you get to be Prime Minister only because you are a vote getter. In the presidential system you serve out your term, well or badly depending on you. In the parliamentary system, your existence as a Prime Minister can be ended overnight.

A diversion was needed, and it was provided by Brass Tacks and the fake mobilization crisis, The Government wasted no time in getting rid of Mr. Singh in a manner he could not but' accept no patriotic person can refuse the Defence Ministry in what was supposed to be India's hoar of need. And it could hope that as always in the past, a crisis, atmosphere with the evil Pakistanis breathing fire and brimstone down the neck of the pure Indian maiden Would divert attention from d9mestic issues.

When it was originally suggested that the mobilization crisis had been, created ,to replace Mr. V.P. Singh, this theory was dismissed because great many persons could not believe that the Prime Minister would go to this extent simply for political convenience. - Now, with the raids on the Indian Express, the arrest of its correspondent and his associate, the use of lie detectors and other pressure tactics, and the interrogation of Mr. Bhure Lal, and the events leading, up to Mr. V. P.

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Singh's resignation from the Cabinet, the seriousness of the crisis is' apparent. And how much worse would it have been had Mr.. Singh been allowed to continue and had begun to add to the hard evidence he had already collected It is no longer possible to dismiss the original assertion.

There are precedents of this line of thinking that maintains the Prime Minister w~1s deliberately aiming for a crisis atmosphere.' Mrs Indira Gandhi in 1971 won a huge majority because of the East Pakistan civil war and the resultant crisis. We can wonder what, would have 'been her fate after 'a totally mediocre five-year rule that saw unprecedented drought and inflation. In 1984 she was, again 'faced with the prospect of getting no more than 200 seats in the next selection. Wiser by far than in 1977, she embarked on the Siachin and, Sri Lanka, adventures as a way of diverting attention from the country's growing problems, hoping that 'these would muster' sufficient popular support behind her to swing the extra seats she needed to stay in power.

**FOUR CAVEATS TO OUR THESIS**

Having stated our thesis, which will outrage some, a must others, and generally bore most, let us attach four caveats.

(1) At no point are we implying that some kind of plot was hatched or clear-cut decisive action was decided on by the various actors. They appear to have been guided by their own compulsions, taking advantage of each other when their paths and interests coincided, parting company when their interests diverged. The Brass Tacks/Trident adventure is not to be compared to the Soviet Politburo meeting in August 1979, making a consensus decision, swiftly implemented, to invade Afghanistan to protect Soviet interests.

(2) it is not even clear if the individual actors were at all times single-mindedly hell-bent on war. They each appeared to blow hot and

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cold, inwardly convinced of the need to do something, but often failing to face the logic of their own assumptions. This was a process of drift, but by hard liners. This is a different kind of drift from that usually seen in this country, normally by soft liners.

(3) Each of the actors, though convinced of the rightness of their logic, obviously were unsure of their ability to convince the others. So they did not try. It is not as if RAW got together with the Army, Arun Singh and the Prime Minister, made its case, found that the others had been thinking along the same lines, and helped achieve a consensus decision for war. Each played their own game.

(4) The different actors would have been satisfied with different outcomes, all short of all-out war:

- RAW would have found wholly acceptable a situation in which India aided Sind to secede, including and up to a situation in which an Indian Army expedition to Sind became unavoidable.
- General Sundarji would have been delighted with a decisive armored warfare victory over Pakistani forces in Sind itself; but would have been satisfied with a Northern Areas victory. There is no reason to believe that he was wholly focused on any long term strategic objective such as demolishing Pakistan once and for all.
- The Prime Minister would have been happy with an air of total crisis, but could have done without any actual fighting.
- Arun Singh had large strategic objectives as his primary focus. These included the destruction of Pakistan as any kind of threat for all time, and laying the foundation for an Indian recovery of its territory occupied by China. And even for Indian predominance in the Indian Ocean on the lines that the ill-fated Shah of Iran once wanted for his country.

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**RESTRICTED****THE ISSUE OF POLITICAL CONTROL OF THE MILITARY**

The military in India is firmly under political control, even if the intelligence is not always so. The second actor, General Sundarji, was bound by his political masters. His ideas and plans would have counted for little, had he not obtained the concurrence of the young de facto Defence Minister, Mr. Arun Singh.

Does this mean that Mr. Arun Singh, a relatively' junior minister, connived with his Chief of Army Staff to make a war without Cabinet sanction? We simply do not know.' Some sources have alleged that the Prime Minister was very much involved from the start, but so far our investigation indicates that while the Prime Minister was not averse to a crisis atmosphere he had no intention of starting a war. It is possible that Mr. Arun Singh, egged on by General Sundarji, was acting to create a situation in which Pakistan would be compelled to attack. But to reiterate: at' this point we do not know enough about what happened to indicate whether Mr. Arun Singh was acting on his own. General Sundarji 'is, of course, technically in the clear because he was acting under orders of the civilian authority.

And again, though this may be of interest to others, it is of no interest to me. My problem is not that Mr. Arun Singh or anyone was acting without cabinet sanction, but that he failed to push through the logic of his own convictions.

**THE LACK OF A CAUSUS BELLI: IT TAKES TWO TO TANGO**

While war might have been to the advantage of these four and other unseen actors, the problem of a causus belli remained. The actors suffered from the following problems in implementing their plan.

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**RESTRICTED****A INDIA WANTS TO DANCE**

(1) Given India's political softness, no Prime Minister can take the cabinet into his confidence and argue logically for the need for war. We are entirely hemmed in by our own self-professed love for peace and respect for international norms.

(2) However haltingly, Indo-Pakistan relations had been improving over the years, not deteriorating. The Pakistanis, in particular, were determined to have better relations with India. This does not necessarily reflect any intrinsic love of India on their part as the smaller power they have no choice except to use diplomacy to mitigate their military inferiority.

(3) The country's mood was not for war. Pakistan does not evoke the same Pavlovian salivating response that it once did. After 1971, a great many Indians are readier to see Pakistan realistically, as a smaller, defeated power that cannot be a real threat to India. That this attitude co-exists with the same old verbiage about the Pakistani threat is no negation of our thesis. Cursing Pakistan has become a long, familiar, comfortable habit. People do not any more believe their own curses. Very significant segments of the decision making process would absolutely oppose the course of action mentioned above: they would not support the process of Pakistan baiting. This is true of the Government itself there are many more doves on Pakistan than there are hawks.

(4) Our Prime Minister in particular is very seriously handicapped in any outright, blatant attempt either to go to war or to provoke Pakistan to attack. He has built up an international image as a person of peace, disarmament, negotiation and good sense. He cannot, then, simply go and clobber Pakistan.

(5) The three major outside powers that impact in the sub-continent, the United States, the Soviet Union and China, are all resolutely against any change in the status quo and would under

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no present conditions permit a war situation to arise, either by indifference or by deliberation. Idly stand by or. Incredibly, Pakistan has at this time no less than three major powers interested in ensuring its survival.

- (a) China will do everything possible to prevent India from becoming more important at Pakistan's expense. Any military confrontation ran the risk of seeing Pakistan humbled and India's stature reaffirmed. This is unacceptable to China.
- (b) The United States interest in Pakistan is overt and plainly stated. Pakistan is important because of Afghanistan, as a friendly country in the sub-continent, and as an important contributor to the stability of the troubled Gulf.
- (c) The Soviet Union has no desire whatsoever to complicate the situation in the subcontinent at a time it is in deep trouble over Afghanistan. It has, for the last 25 years, tried to improve its relations with Pakistan and get into the same kind of role that the US plays vis-a-vis Egypt and Israel, and Jordan and Israel. Of course, till now it has always backed India whenever the chips are really down. But it does not want to jeopardize unnecessarily its improving relations with Pakistan. Nor does it want to be forced into backing India at a time the US is backing Pakistan, thus running the risk of an escalating conflict.

**B. BUT PAKISTAN DOES NOT**

A causus belli is not particularly difficult to manufacture. But curiously, none of the three actors seemed able to produce one. Much of this was due to the fumbling, frightened manner in which our foreign policy is conducted. No one was willing to take the bull by the horns. This was because no consensus existed even among the three main

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actors. They were like thieves hanging around a rich man's house in the night, too frightened to raid the house and too greedy to forget about it. Contradictions cannot, then, be avoided.

It is the worry about a lack of consensus that probably led Mr. Arun Singh and General Sundarji not to take into confidence the Navy and the Air Force, something that was to lead to credibility problems. The lack of credibility from all sides crippled any chances of getting a war going.

Contrast this bumbling, schoolboyish ineptitude with Mrs. Gandhi's professionalism. India's hand in the East Pakistan uprising need not be discussed here. If India exploited the longstanding grievances of the East Pakistanis it is hardly to be blamed. Rather, it should be congratulated. The outbreak of civil war inevitably created an exodus from East Pakistan. Mrs. Gandhi cleverly made this out to be a Hindu exodus, whereas it was really an exodus of the poor from the border areas. A number not exceeding 4 million came to India, hardly 6% of the population. (We may contrast this with the 33% of Afghanistan's population that has led the Soviet occupation). But by controlling access to the refugee camps, Mrs. Gandhi made out that India was inundated with refugees and that the total would reach 20 million, a movement unprecedented in history.

She manipulated the Indian and the world press which put out long stories of West Pakistani brutality and India's suffering. She created a series of escalating border incidents that at least convinced the Indian populace that the country was under attack. She repeatedly provoked the Pakistanis into reacting more and more fiercely.

Before she attacked Pakistan, she went on a world tour -to explain her position and to garner support. So effective was her diplomacy that she completely outmaneuvered President Nixon and his wily Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, at each and every step.

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Ultimately, no one was fooled by what was going on.’ But she did her job so effectively that when the time came, no one raised a hand when India attacked Pakistan.

Mrs. Gandhi took her time about generating her *causus belli* a full eight months elapsed after the success of her policy to ignite East Pakistan (itself a lengthy process) and the Indian Army’s crossing of the East Pakistan border on 21/22 November, 1971. She knew exactly what she wanted, and she got it. That she could not, or did not, go further and settle the issue of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir is no bar to our admiration.

Particularly when we are witness to the totally inept manner in which the current leadership has conducted matters.

In a curious way, the positions of the Indian and the Pakistani leaders are reversed in 1987. In 1971, Mrs. Gandhi backed by a galaxy of brilliant advisors, kept a politically naive and inept Field Marshal Yahya Khan dancing to her tune. In 1986/87, it was an astute General Zia backed ‘by some of the best advisors Pakistan has ever had who kept the current leadership dancing to his tune.

General Zia is a man of iron self-control. He responds to every humiliation the Prime Minister seeks to inflict on him by further gestures of charm, patience, and understanding. He has the measure of his stronger adversary and plays him like a master fisherman playing a powerful shark one wrong move and the shark will destroy the fisherman. But with cunning, guile, and an enormous moral strength, the fisherman can defeat the shark. And this is exactly what General Zia has been doing.

Pakistan, as the weaker power, sees its only chance in attacking first and hoping that quick foreign intervention saves it from the punishing Indian counter-offensive. It cannot expect to absorb an Indian offensive and then attack, because the Indian attack will be so powerful that the chance for a counteroffensive may never present itself.

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Yet, to attack first and then not have foreign intervention to bale you out, is also to court certain disaster. General Zia' can never be sure of friendly intervention Pakistan's history is one of being let down by allies.

Among General Sundarji's provocation was a refusal to spell out till late December what' exactly were the aims of his alleged exercise. This despite frantic calls not just by the Pakistanis but by every embassy in Delhi wanting to know what was going on. Other provocation included putting the maximum force he could at battle readiness, deploying his troops in dispositions that would lead Pakistan to believe he was about to attack, and then, of course, the 'famous disclosures to the press in January that Pakistan was behaving in a mala fide manner.

The problem became that the Pakistanis were not getting easily provoked. They continued with their exercises and stayed mobilized.

The first attempt by General Sundarji and Arun Singh to create a suitable war scare failed on December 18 a very extensive briefing was provided for national editors and the wire services, complete with a trip to the Army operations room. The gist of the briefing was that though India had finished its exercises, Pakistan was still mobilized, and that too despite having largely finished their exercises as well. Therefore, Pakistan's intentions were suspect and the country should be prepared for the worst.

This briefing aroused a serious protest from the Ministry of External Affairs and the other two military services because they had not been informed. The MEA in particular was angered because both nations were officially at peace. Both sides were staging 'legitimate military exercises under the watchful eyes of the other. MBA saw no reason for what it' considered a senseless escalation of tension between the two countries. Understandably enough, because it knew

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nothing of what was really going on.

But it knew something that the others appears not to have considered both the superpowers were absolutely opposed to any Indian adventure. The US opposition was serious enough. Unlike in the past Indo-Pakistan conflicts, because of the Afghanistan problem, the US would not have kept out of a new war. But worse was the Soviet opposition. Moscow had started to make progress in its plans to involve Pakistan in an Afghanistan settlement, and to woo Pakistan away from the American and Chinese clutch. The last thing Moscow wanted was the process of normalization in Afghanistan and with Pakistan disrupted. India is vital to the Soviets, but Moscow has never let Delhi determine its foreign policy in the region.

Pakistan responded to this stepping up pressure by starting concentration of the Southern Army reserve, 1 Armored and 37 Division, which had been exercising near Rahim Yar Khan, to opposite Punjab.

Pakistan's motivations in this are obvious. It cannot afford any war at all. If war should come, it knows it will lose ground in Sind against the sort of onslaught India is capable. It has to be prepared to let India come into the Sind, and save its retaliation for the Punjab.

Pakistan did not conduct this regrouping of its forces in any rush. About 12 days was taken to re-deploy a corps-equivalent force about 500-kilometers, its Southern Army Reserve was, of course, already lying very close to its battle area 6 Armored and 17 Divisions are based at Kharian.

That General Sundarji knew about this development well in advance is obvious from the quality of the intelligence given the Army by various sources, including RAW, the Border Security Force, the Air Force and its own sources. The General boasted, quite justifiably, that the movement of every Pakistan Army unit and troop train was known

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to him. But he chose to stay silent about the Pakistani shift till twelve days after it began. On January 22 he informed the Government, on January 23 the Cabinet met, hit the panic button, and mobilization was ordered on the next day.

We are faced with a discrepancy which we cannot explain. That Arun Singh and General Sundarji might withhold information because they were trying to create an incident is consistent with our thesis. But RAW provides the bulk of the intelligence on Pakistan, and RAW reports to the Prime Minister. It is impossible to believe that RAW did not identify the movement northward of 50,000-- troops and that it did not inform the Prime Minister. So why, then, did the leadership panic, just as a good *causus belli* looked like a genuine possibility? This question must be left for another time, when we have more information.

All the talk of mobilization obscured some vital details. General Sundarji had, under the cover of Brass Tacks, already moved almost everything the Indian Army possessed to war areas. The mobilization consisted of rushing HQ III Corps and 57 Division from the Northeast to the Punjab, 9 Division from Meerut into the Gurdaspur area, the 23 Division out of Ranchi to Amritsar, the 24 Division from Bikaner to Ferozepur area, and elements of 54 Division from Secunderabad-Hyderabad to the desert. In as much as 9 Division is already earmarked for the Punjab, and 23 and 57 Divisions were shifted because of internal security considerations, the only real mobilization was that of 24 Division which logically should have been part of Brass Tacks, and 54 Division, hardly 7% of the forces eventually on or near the border.

So the mobilization was really only in name. Now, because the Government and Army was in a total panic, the Air Force and Navy were very much involved and began preparing for war that might still come, particularly if Pakistan pre-empted by attacking first.

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A cuasus belli should now have been very easy to provoke. After all, Pakistan was now deployed opposite Fazilka-Abohar, and opposite Gurdaspur-Pathankot. It was theoretically in a position to attack first and cut the Pathankot Corridor, isolating Jammu and Kashmir from the rest of India, and to make a pincer movement to capture the Punjab. In such a tense situation we could easily have struck first without anyone being much the wiser.

But nothing at all happened. . Instead of war, there began discussions; to disengage, and then a sector by sector disengagement.

**WHY THERE WAS NO WAR**

The reasons why there was no war fall into three groups: one, since much of Brass Tacks was intended partly as a strategic deception trident, the attack in the north, was not ready to be activated. Two, infirmities in the Indian position, and three, Pakistan counter mobilization opposite the Punjab.

**A. TRIDENT NOT READY**

We are, of course, assuming that Trident was part of the scenario from the start, not that Brass Tacks was the primary operation and Trident activated only that Brass Tacks failed to roll. Either way this does not make much difference to our argument, which is that India, even though it had everything going for it, could not start a war to finish Pakistan.

The essence of Trident was the recapture - of the Kashmir Northern Areas. Superiority of force is very difficult to achieve here if long warning times are available the terrain is so difficult that the absolute number of troops that can be inducted by either side are very limited, so if the Pakistanis had sufficient warning they could have neutralized our build up. There was no opportunity, therefore, for a liesurely build up as we were doing with Brass Tacks. If Trident was to

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succeed, forces would have to be switched to the Northern Kashmir Line of Actual Control at the very last minute. These forces were not in place when the mobilisation crisis took place, so Trident could not have been launched.

But why couldn't India have gone to war anyway, letting Brass Tacks roll? A rapid reinforcement of the Northern Line of Actual Control should have been much easier with Pakistan firmly locked in battle with India on all fronts and with its options reduced because all its reserves would have been tied down. Later we will show that actually Trident would have had a better chance had Brass Tacks been allowed to go. The point is, however, that there were other problems with India's strategic position.

**B. INFIRMITIES IN INDIA'S POSITION**

(1) The Rajiv Government had no credibility whatsoever! with its public. Unlike in 1971, when the whole nation was behind Mrs. Gandhi before she went into East Pakistan, no one was with the Government in January 1987. The public was no reason to go to war, nor did they see Pakistan as a threat. Public support in case of a war could not be counted on, and certainly few would have believed that India was entirely innocent in the matter. Ordinarily, to a strong ruler, none of this would matter much. He would go ahead and do what he considers right. But in India we have no such rulers. The situation arose because in the first, place there was no consensus for war: with war just a stone's throw away, while Arun Singh and General Sundarji might have reason to be pleased, the Prime Minister and the rest of the leadership would be nothing except highly alarmed and wanting to defuse the situation.

(2) Rajiv's credibility with the press, already low, sank further because the Defence Ministry had failed to make a convincing case for a crisis in its earlier briefing. By now the press widely knew about the protests of the MEA, and the other services. The Venketeswaran

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episode further eroded Rajiv's credibility. And possibly what provided a final blow was the shifting of Mr. V.P. Singh to Defence from Finance as part of the mobilization announcement. Though later people were to say that Rajiv could hardly have created the mobilization crisis as a way of getting rid of Mr. Singh, at that time the announcement aroused a storm of skepticism. It is also not as easy to fool the press on defence issues as was the case some 15 years ago.

(3) General Sundarji's failure to obtain a consensus among his military and intelligence colleagues on Pakistan proved fatal.

In one sense, the lack of trust between the Army on the one hand and the Navy and the IAF on the other, was of no consequence to the conduct of a possible war. There was no particular need to inform the LAF, as it was on high readiness anyway, due to the exercises. It had only to activate its Forward Base Support Units, a matter of hours, to be ready for war. And the Navy was also, in any event, more or less deployed for war because of the big amphibious and general fleet exercises it was about to mount.

The IAF was, however, hardly to be expected to cheerfully go along with so important a plan of action when it was not kept in the picture anyway. As for the Navy, General Sundarji did not see it as relevant to his equations. -

(4) When no military consensus existed in the first place, and when the Prime Minister had already achieved his objectives, going for a war proved impossible. As far as the Prime Minister was concerned, the country was diverted, a huge increase in defence expenditure could be swallowed without a murmur, and the obnoxious bloodhound, V.P. Singh was now safely in the Defence Ministry, away from the sensitive Finance Ministry where he could cause great harm to the Prime Minister.

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(5) The Soviets refused to cooperate. When asked for satellite photographs of Pakistan's dispositions, they provided the needful, as they are bound to do under the terms of various agreements with their Indian allies. But they made it clear they were uninterested in any adventures. To a Government incapable of moving without Big Brother's warm, comforting hand tightly clasping our own, the Soviet position would have proved fatal to any, venture even had the Prime Minister been capable of it.

Just in case India failed to get the message, the Soviets found reasons not to replenish the dwindling stocks of special fuel used by the Mig-25 strategic reconnaissance aircraft of No. 102 Squadron. This fuel is entirely imported, and without it the MiG-25 fleet, of crucial importance in providing tactical and strategic reconnaissance, was grounded. The IAF, of course, nonplussed, trundled out its ancient Canberra PRs and did its best to provide, the needed information, but this was not the same thing as having available the Foxbats, which can cover any part of Pakistan or Tibet with impunity. Without the Foxbats, we would not know exactly what was happening on the ground and deep inside Pakistan and Tibet, making that much harder the conduct of a war.

(6) No one was able to develop a convincing rationale for what such a war was supposed to achieve. Nonetheless, we will present below a composite of the thinking of various factions.

(7) We are ruled by- a Prime Minister who finds India too narrow a canvas for his self-expression. Instead he has chosen the world stage on which to perform. He sees himself as a truly international leader, dominating the global affairs and inexorably leading the world to a better tomorrow. A war started or even provoked by India would have put paid to all the assiduous propaganda natured abroad about his position. A sad fact of international life is that wars started by you are always necessary, and just, wars started by others

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are always unnecessary and unjust.

**C. PAKISTAN'S COUNTER MOBILIZATION**

But even had the Government still had any inclination to provoke a war, the Pakistan concentration opposite Punjab totally unnerved Delhi and sent it jumping to reassure the Pakistanis that no war was in prospect.

To understand this we have to see that according to RAW, Khalistan was supposed to be declared from the Golden Temple on January 26, 1987, and that a Pakistani attack on the Punjab, however limited in success, would provoke a general uprising- of the Sikhs in the Punjab. Khalistan, the Government feared would become a fact.

We are not concerned with this fantasy: it suffices to say that the Government accepts it and is accordingly motivated. That is why. 23 Division went to Amritsar, and 57 Division to another location in the Punjab, and not- to fight the Pakistanis. There was a genuine fear in Delhi that in the event of a Pakistani attack on the Punjab followed by a Sikh uprising, with the strike forces away in the desert, there existed a real possibility the Pakistanis could have made it to the capital.

Had Pakistan become even more alarmed and pre-emptively attacked India, General Sundarji's aims would have been achieved. But the Pakistanis, having taken all the precautions they could possibly, given their limited resources, preferred to wait and see what the Indians would do.

Their intelligence of India, even to the highest levels, has always been excellent, and it is to be assumed that while they were alarmed by the moves of the hawks, they were reassured by the lack of preparation for war among other sections of the leadership.

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But while there was no war, the result of the mobilization crisis was an unmitigated disaster for India because in this all-too-serious game of shadow boxing, Pakistan won.

It stalemated what should have been the war of 1987 on favorable terms before a single shot was fired.

It is to be said to the credit of Arun Singh and General Sundarji that even after the mobilisation: panic they at least stuck to their guns regardless of what was, happening with the Government. They set in motion the plan- for Trident but were defeated at the last moment by a variety of factors which we shall discuss.

At any rate, now the Pakistanis managed to convey an image of graciousness and reasonability. This crisis was not created by us, they appeared to proclaim (quite correct) and yet we are prepared to JO everything to resolve it, even to the extent of refusing to stand on our ego and insisting that since India started it India should finish it, and nothing was required from Pakistan's side

The first round of talks were conducted in Delhi during the first week of February 1987 in total secrecy. The secrecy was at India's instance. Pakistan did not care either way. This in itself tells us that India wishes to keep from its own public unpleasant facts. If the talks were to result in some diplomatic victory for us, India would definitely want that publicized. The silence means only that India knew it was going to concede on important points, and wanted to avoid the embarrassment.

Chiefly what India compromised on was the duration and size of Brass Tacks 4. A curtailment, described as marginal was imposed. This in itself may not be significant, but the dispatch northward of the 1 Armored and 24 Divisions and an accompanying infantry division would have seriously impaired the scope of the exercise. Since the

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main exercise was conducted, India could claim to the world it had proceeded exactly as planned. But actually it was some 30% smaller than originally planned, was oriented in a north-south direction instead of the original east west, and there was no amphibious landing.

Next, to increase its credibility with the rest of the world, the Government invited foreign military attaches, including the Pakistani, to attend the exercises. This provided extra assurances to Islamabad that India's intentions were not mala fide. The Pakistanis may not have succeeded in their aim of disrupting the exercises entirely. But they secured themselves against the possibility of an actual invasion. India had to give all sorts of assurances. The international community was involved. The word of the Prime Minister and thus the people of India is now at stake. The Government can now hardly make a volte face and attack Pakistan.

Worse, actual troop disengagement was conducted between Akhnur and Pathankot on our side, and from Marala to Narowal. on Pakistan's. As usual in- our dealings with. Pakistan, we come out pretty much for the worse. In this case, India has sent its 6 Mountain Division out of Bareilly back, and that it is a long way back. Pakistan gets to keep all the forces it normally deploys in the area, and it sends back its 6 Armored and 17 Infantry Division (its Northern reserve) to bases at Kharian and Gujranwala, just a few hours pleasant drive away from the front.

Following the second round of talks in Pakistan in early March, 1987, disengagement began in the desert sector south of the Brass Tacks Exercise area, south of Hindumalakot. The Brass Tacks forces are, at the time of writing, slowly returning to their home bases, but the disengagement is not total, as both sides are keeping a wary eye on each other. Last to follow was the Punjab sector. Till the last week of March Indian forces in the Punjab were still on full alert. But then the requirements of mobilising for the northern crisis with China took over and no one had time any more for the Punjab.

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With disengagement complete, everyone went home, Pakistan heaved a sigh of relief and everything goes on as before. The public has lost interest because matters of greater import, notably Bofors and China, have come up. Even among the media the questions, the doubts, the alternative hypothesis have ceased because the media too has fresh stories to cover.

Only the odd person will continue worrying at the problem, trying to get to the bottom, but then even he, after a while, will have to turn to other matters. Later, if the entire truth does come out, no one will be particularly concerned because it will have happened so long ago.

Just as no one cares that India lost the wars of 1947-49, 1962, 1965 and 1971, no one will care that India lost the war of 1987. The War That -Never Was.

In previous wars, at least the Government tried to win. In this last one no one was put to the test except the highest leadership, and it failed,

**DISCREPANCIES ABOUT BRASS TACKS**

The reader will find it useful to look at Brass Tacks itself.

Ostensibly Brass Tacks was an exercise involving six divisions and two corps. As such, it was a big exercise compared to any staged in Central Europe, the most heavily militarized piece of real estate in the world. In Central Europe units from more than six divisions and two corps do sometimes take part in exercises, but this was a case where six entire divisions were involved.

Nonetheless, there was every military justification for such a large exercise, unusual as it was.

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In independent India no commander has had the experience of operating two or more corps together in a single command. In 1965, Lt.-Gen. Harbax controlled three corps (XV, I, and XI) during the war. In 1971 Lt.-Gen. K.P. Candeth had the same three corps under his command. In both cases, however, the corps operated completely separate with no coordination between them. Three separate corps battles were fought with three separate sets of objectives. In 1971, Lt.-Gen. J.S. Aurora controlled three corps (II, XXXIII, and IV) in a drive that eventually aimed at one objective: Dacca. Nonetheless, this too was an example of three separate corps each fighting its own battle:-

Brass Tacks type of exercises are essential to train army commanders in running two or more corps together. It can, of course be argued that as many corps as necessary can be exercised without involving the complete divisional complements and all the corps. But even this is essential in India because (1) the concept of using several armored/mechanized divisions together is new and untried and (2) the mobilization arrangements are so complex that only a large-scale test suffices to provide the needed experience.

So the exercise was entirely justified. And it sufficed adequately to convey any desired message to Pakistan. Six divisions including three armored and mechanized, concentrated at one location is a grouping that Pakistan can never hope to match. It is a formidable mass, and placed opposite Sind, is sufficient to sober the most hard line Pakistani.

The problem became that actually the entire Indian Army, excepting the forces committed to China, and minus 9, 23 and 54 Divisions, was shifted to the border. The divisional dispositions will be discussed in greater detail in the appropriate chapter. For now it suffices to note that the army has 35 divisions plus an ad hoc armored division that will soon be regularized, for a total of 36. Of this total, nine (including 23 Division) are normally located in the east. Of the remaining 27, all but two were deployed to the west by January 1987;

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and elements of one of the remaining two were involved in the exercises. The- last division, 9, is at Meerut and so can be swiftly deployed to its war station.

When you put virtually everything available on the border, that too after a long, laborious build-up extending over three to four months, you are obviously not doing just an exercise. When this deployment involves moving up live ammunition and every tank and fighting vehicle that is running, regardless of the need for routine or periodic maintenance, then the aims are larger than an exercise. -

When the adversary reacts to your total mobilization by his own mobilization, and you seek to create an atmosphere of crisis without even involving the sister services, by refusing to divulge to your public the scope of your own build-up and instead focusing on the adversary's, when you try and imply that war may be imminent, then your motives extend beyond a simple exercise, even if it is the largest you have planned.

Incidentally, the head of the Chiefs of Staff committee at the time was Admiral Ram Tahiliani, so effectively what the de facto Defence Minister, and Army Chief of Staff were doing is bypassing the committee. Why? Did they perhaps have doubts about the other two services and the Ministry for External Affairs going along with the attempt to provoke a crisis?

Why did the Government not simply come out with the truth of Brass Tacks? Giving the partial truth implies an attempt to mislead, and an attempt to mislead is generally associated with mala fide motives.

Brass Tacks and its associated exercises was to involve twelve divisions plus the Air Assault Division which was to be brought in at the appropriate time, for a total of 13. As nearly as we have been able to determine, the two corps that the Army talks about were only the

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strike corps, and that too they had at least eight divisions between them. To the north of the Brass Tacks area X Corps from Bhatinda would also be involved, and the new Southern -Command corps Which we call V Corps, would be involved from the Bhuj side.

Now perhaps in a very narrow sense these other two corps were not in Brass Tacks proper. Perhaps they were covered by other exercise code names. Perhaps they had merely been told to be on alert. But when you have 13 divisions milling around Fazilka and points south while insisting that you have just two corps and six divisions in the exercise, and when you're moving up all your reserves of ammunition and equipment, then you're misleading everyone except of course the people you should want to mislead, the Pakistanis.

Consider for a moment the major annual NATO exercise, Autumn Forge. This is actually a series of six or seven exercises extending from Norway to Turkey, over a period of several weeks.

It runs to a total of about 120,000+ troops. If we look at Brass Tacks by itself, as involving close on 300,000 men, it is already far larger than the entire NATO major exercise. When we add up the exercises in the Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir (all routine) extending over a period of some months, something like 500,000 troops would be involved, which may be the largest series of exercises ever held anywhere in the world since 1939.

It may be noted that half the manpower of the Indian Army, and 75% of its divisions, were involved. NATO has perhaps 2.5 million men under arms before mobilization, perhaps double that after mobilization. Even if we consider the total before mobilization, if NATO were to repeat General Sundarji's feat, it would have to exercise one and a quarter million troops over 14 countries. The Warsaw Pact would have to exercise about the same number.

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Nowhere would anyone dare to term such hypothetical exercises "routine" as the Government of India has tried. And to call our exercises "routine" is to insult the intelligence not just of the world, but worse, of Indians.

3  
**THE PAKISTAN ARMY**

Readers will notice discrepancies between these figures and those commonly used, for example, in the International Institute of Strategic Studies' Military Balance. Readers are assured that the figures given here are more authentic but nonetheless, not 100% accurate.

1. **PAKISTAN ARMY IN OUTLINE**

This was the position in January 1987  
Manpower: about 535,000 men

Organisation:

- 2 armored divisions
- 17 infantry divisions (two more to form)
- 5 armored independent brigades
- 5 infantry independent brigades

Of these, one division (12) has six brigades, and two (15 and 23) have four each. Otherwise infantry divisions have three brigades each; armoured divisions have two brigades; and India front corps usually have an independent armoured and an independent infantry brigade each.

Because both India and Pakistan do not duplicate numbers for armored and for infantry divisions, we will not identify infantry divisions as such, but will use the number only. The United States has; for example, a I Infantry Division, a I Armored Division, and a I Marine Division. Pakistan, on the other hand, has a 1 and 6 Armored Division. It has no infantry divisions with that number. Similarly, India has a I

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and 31 Armored Divisions but no infantry divisions with that number.

## II. **DEPLOYMENT**

The Pakistan Army was deployed as follows in January, 1987:

North Kashmir: Force Command Northern Area with four brigades, subordinate to I corps.

West Kashmir: X Corps with 12, 19, 23 Divisions (total 13 brigades), 111(1) Brigade and one independent armored brigade.

Sialkot: I Corps with 6 Armored, 8, 15, and 17 Divisions plus 1 (I) Armored and 54 (I) Brigades.

Lahore IV Corps with 10 and 11 Divisions, plus 3 (I) Armored and 30 (1) and 2.12 (I) Brigades.

Multan: 11 Corps with 1 Armored 14 and 35 Divisions, plus 1 ~ ~1) Armored Brigade.

Karachi: V Corps with 18, plus 2 (1) Armored Brigade and 31 (1) Brigade.

Peshawar : XI Corps with 7 and 9 Divisions.

Quetta: XII Corps : 16 and 33 Divisions.

This leaves .37 Division in Army Headquarters Reserve. Based at Gujranwala, this division was deployed with Strike Force South as a companion to 1 Armored Division during the Brass Tacks crisis.

## III. **PAKISTAN ARMY BRIGADE LIST**

This brigade list has been corrected with the help of Col. R.G. Sawhney (Retd.) formerly of the IDSA. Any duplication must

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acknowledge this. It holds good for the end of 1986.

FCNA:      62    Bde (Skardu) 80 Bde (Astor)  
              80    Bde (Astor)  
              323   Bde (Gilgit)  
              ?     Bde (Khappalu) (for Siachin operations)

X    Corps:

12 Division

IAK   Bde   (Dubail)  
 5 AK Bde   (Gujra)  
 6 AK Bde   (Bagh)  
 26    Bde   (Aliabad)  
 32    Bde   (Kel)  
 75    Bde   (Mandra)

19 Division

2AK   Bde   (Rawalkota)  
 3AK   Bde   (Kotli)  
 7AK   Bde   (Jari Khas)

23 Division

4AK   Bde   (Bhimber)  
 20    Bde   (Chaamb)  
 28    Bde   (Mangla)  
 66    Bde   (Tanda)

1Corps:

6 Division

7Ad   Bde   (Kharian)  
 9Ad   Bde   (Kharian)

8 Division

14    Bde   (Sialkot)  
 24    Bde   (Sialkot)

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124 Bde (Sialkot)

15 Division

10 Bde (Sialkot)

101 Bde (Sialkot)

114 Bde (Sialkot)

313 Bde (Sialkot)

17 Division

77 Bde (Kharian)

207 Bde (Kharian)

315 Bde (Kharian)

IV Corps: 10 Division: 22 Bde, 103 Bde, 104 Bde | (all Lahore)

11 Division: 21 Bde, 52 Bde, 106 Bde |

14 Division: 23 Bde, 74 Bde, 105 Bde (all Okara)

1 Corps: 1 Division: 4 Ad Bde, 5 Ad Bde (both Multan)

35 Division : 25 Bde, 53 Bde, 57 Bde (Bhawalnagar/  
Bhawalpur)

XI Corps: 7 Division: 6 Bde (Khar), 27 Bde (Landi Kotal), 102 Bde  
(Peshawar)

9 Division : 73 Bde (Thal), 116 Bde (Miran Shah),  
117 Bde (Kohat)

XII Corps: 16 Division: 34 Bde (Chaman). 70 Bde (Khuzdar),  
61 Bde (Quetta)

33 Division: 29 Bde (Zhob), 205 Bde (Quetta)

V Corps: 18 Division :51 Bde (Malir), 55 Bde (Hyderabad),  
206 Bde (Rahim Yar Khan)

37 Division: 88 Bde (Gujranwala)

7 Bde

7 Bde

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Independent Brigades : 30 (1) Lahore, 31 (I) Malir, 54 (I) Sialkot, 111 (1) Rawalpindi, 212 (1) Okara, 2 Ad Bde (Malir), 3 Ad Bde (Lahore), 8 Ad Bde, 10 Ad Bde (Multan), 7 Ad Bde (Rawalpindi)

IV. **ARMOUR**

A. **TANKS**

40 regiments (total)  
10 Patton regiments (including 4 M-4SA5)  
24 T-59C regiments  
6 Recon regiments (M-4, M-41, T-60)

Assumed disposition:

6 Corps Recon Regts (all except X Corps)  
10 Regts with two armoured divisions  
10 Regts with five (I) armoured brigades  
14 Regts with infantry divisions training

Estimated total holdings:

300 M-4, M-41, 'f.60  
500 M-47, M-48  
1200 T-59C

Total : 2000 tanks (including 1 SOO medium)  
52 The War That Never Was

B. **MECHANISED INFANTRY**

Estimated 8-10 battalions  
700 M-113  
50 UR-416

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Note: If, after 1984, Pakistan has changed to three armored brigades per armored division, there will be 10 mechanised battalions (six with two divisions, four with four brigades) ; otherwise there will be 5 battalions (four with two divisions etc.)

**V. ARTILLERY**

The striking thing about Pakistan Artillery is the degree of obsolete equipment. Pakistan has about 150 field, medium, and heavy regiments, and perhaps about 35 anti-aircraft regiments.

About 150 tube artillery regiments of which

10 medium self-propelled	(M-109A2)
8 medium towed	(M-198)
3 self-propelled heavy	(M-110)

Rest with obsolete Chinese, American, British equipment (25 pounder, 100 mm, 105 mm, 130 mm, 155 mm).

35 anti-aircraft artillery regiments (40 mm. 37 mm, 23 mm plus others).

The bulk of the 150 regiments are obsolete post-1981 acquisitions from the US have sufficed to equip only about 20 regiments, including ten self-propelled medium (M-109A2), eight towed medium (M-198) and three self-propelled heavy (M-110). The medium guns are 155 mm bore and the heavy 203 mm.

The rest of the artillery has the Chinese/Soviet medium towed 130 mm, a few old US towed 155 mm, and a large number of old 88 mm (25-pounder), 100 mm (Chinese) and 105 mm (US). This is a horrendous mix for a poor country and it is surprising that Pakistan has not undertaken the manufacture of a 105 mm piece to modernize the artillery-

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Pakistan has purchased about 16 TSQ-36 and -37 artillery mortar radars. Presumably it has introduced new computerized fire-control systems, which can be quite cheap if top-of-the-line equipment is not specified.

Some further limited modernization may be expected to take place under the second US arms package. But given Pakistanis insistence on high-value items like AWACS and the F-16C fighter, there may be no more money available than was the case in the first arm; package.

The anti-aircraft regiments are all equipped with what by Indian standards is obsolete equipment: Chinese 23 mm and 37 mm guns, and the ubiquitous 40 mm in various configurations. There has been a limited modernisation with the introduction of 144 Bofors and perhaps 100 Stinger shoulder-fired launchers. -

**VI. ANTI-TANK MISSILES**

Pakistan has selectively improved its anti-tank defenses. Each division appears to have a TOW anti-tank company of 24 launchers. At this time we do not know if these are corps assets, are independently assigned to divisions, or have replaced some of the 106 mm recoilless rifles in the Reconnaissance and Support Battalion of each division. One corps, presumably II from Multan, has a company of TOW M-901 armored vehicles. The M.901 has sophisticated optics and aiming systems, along with automatic loading enabling TOW to be fired under armour protection. As the number of TOW systems gradually increases, it may become possible for an anti-tank battalion to be attached to each corps, or perhaps a company to most divisions. The Cobra ATOM, which Pakistan had in service prior to the 1965 War, may still be in service.

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**RESTRICTED****VII. ELECTRONIC WARFARE**

Pakistan knows full well the importance of electronic warfare and within its limits has provided for the army. Each corps has an electronic warfare company. Electronic warfare assets are the easiest military equipment to hide, because they are only black boxes and antennae. Pakistan's resources are limited, but given the importance of this new field, it would be safe to assume that Pakistan has kept a surprise or two up its sleeve.

**VIII. AVIATION ASSETS**

Pakistan Army aviation shows the same selective approach to minimum needs buying as every other program. Nonetheless, a relatively large quantum of resources is devoted to this important arm.

Pride of place is with the AH-1S Cobra attack helicopter, twenty of which are available, presumably in two squadrons of eight each plus reserves. The small number indicates that Pakistan will keep these as last-ditch anti-tank reserves, to block a corps-sized armor thrust that is about to make a fatal breakthrough.

Vertical lift includes about 50 medium helicopters, including 30 Pumas and 20 Mi-8s. This is about half the lift available with the Indian Air Force (excluding the new Mi-26s) and is remarkable considering the very much smaller area Pakistan has to cover. Pakistan's long counterinsurgency in Baluchistan undoubtedly influenced its decision to build up this arm.

The MF-17 Mushak light monoplane is the Pakistan Army's standard AOP aircraft. Manufactured in Pakistan, it is a typical reasonable compromise. Whereas India long ago replaced its fixed wing AOP squadrons with helicopters, because the former is much cheaper to buy and to operate, Pakistan has kept to fixed wing

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aircraft. There appears to be one light aircraft squadron per corps, which is on the same scale as India.

There are some Bell Huey UH-1s and Alouette helicopters to round out aviation assets.

Two OV-1 Mohawk surveillance aircraft with Side Looking Airborne Radar are available to the Pakistan Army. These have a range of about 110-kilometers. Depending on the equipment fit, as there are several infrared surveillance can also be conducted. The US had suggested a minimum of four aircraft; because of the expense the Pakistanis had asked for one. The US replied that as the system is very complex to maintain, one plane is insufficient. The compromise was made on two.

This shows Pakistan's approach to its equipment requirements. Lacking sufficient money to meet even reasonable requirements, it buys absolutely the minimum possible and tries to make do the best it can.

- 20 AH-1 attack helicopters
- 30 Puma medium helicopters
- 20 Mi-8 medium helicopters
- 100 MF-1 17 fixed wing (AOP)
- 10 UH-1 helicopters
- 20 Alouette 3 light helicopters
- 2 OV-10 surveillance aircraft

**IX. RESERVES**

Of late the Balance has taken to mentioning 5003000 reservists for the Pakistan Army, which is causing confusion among even our experienced analysts. A bit of reasoning wily show that this figure is fictitious.

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The Pakistan Army is a professional army like ours. Taking 14 years as the typical length of service for jawans (officers will serve at least 20 years) it is apparent that about 35,000 men are being discharged every year on a base of 5,25,000 men. If we assume a theoretical reserve liability to age 50, we get 5,00,000 reservists. But surely no one can expect a jawan in the combat arms to be of much use after age 35.

On the same basis. India should have 1 million reservists, which is manifestly incorrect.

In the recent exercises, Pakistan called up 10,000 reservists. Since Pakistan was virtually fully mobilized, this is more representative of its reserve capability. A total of ~0,000 reservists is a reasonable assumption.

An equal objection to assuming half-million reservists is the availability of equipment. Most armies give their reserves equipment discarded from first-line units. The Soviet Union is an example of this. Armies like those of Israel, Sweden, and Switzerland give first-line equipment to reservists because they are mobilization armies. In peacetime they utilize small cadres, and in wartime mobilize to full strength. Switzerland, for example, goes from a peacetime 11,000 to a wartime 6,25,000. In such a situation reservists handle virtually all the first-line equipment. The United States provides an example of a large standing army that also gives first-line equipment to its reserves. For example, its active 3 Armored Division uses M-1A1 tanks, and so does the reservist 49 Armored Brigade.

In Pakistan's case money for equipment is a prime constraint the force structure. When 25-pounder guns from half-a-century ago are still first-line equipment, what is left for reservists?

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It is said that new equipment from the United States will enable Pakistan to equip reservists with equipment replaced from first-line units. More likely the equipment will go to raise more first-line troops. Take, for example, the tank force. Pakistan should have a minimum of 48 tank regiments (six each for three armored divisions, three each for three independent armored brigades, one each for each corps reconnaissance regiments, one each for 15 infantry divisions) whereas only 40 exist at best. It is short of 400 tanks at least, and it also needs greater reserves, about 15 per regiment. So something like an additional 900 tanks are required. If Pakistan gets another 200 in the second military sales package from the United States, there is hardly enough to meet the existing requirement, leave alone form new units or provide tanks to reserves.

**X. PARAMILITARY AND MILITIA FORCES**

Pakistan has three major paramilitary forces, excluding a fourth, the Coast Guard.

Most important among these is the Frontier Corps of about 65,000 troops. Our own Assam Rifles are a close analogy to the Frontier Corps. It is regionally recruited but commanded by regular army men. A group may have two or more wings each wing is equivalent to a large battalion, but the supply of heavy weapons and vehicles is restricted. The discipline enforced takes into account the tribal laws from the group's recruiting area. Generally the group serves in its own area.

One exception to this was the dispatch of several Frontier Corps wings to East Pakistan in 1971. Many of the brutalities perpetrated allegedly by the Pakistan Army were actually the work of these tribals. Later, they were given the numbers of Pakistan Army infantry battalions and effort to inflate Pakistani strength for the benefit of Indian intelligence.

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The primary mission of the Frontier Corps, as with our own Assam Rifles, is to ensure internal law and order in the tribal areas. But in as much as these groups are composed of seasoned men led by regular Army officers, they have an excellent contribution to make in local defence of isolated regions.

Frontier Corps groups operate in Kashmir, the NWFP, and Baluchistan. Punjab and Sind cover their borders with the Pakistan Rangers, about 20,000 men, and exactly similar to our own Border Security Force. The Range groups are named after the river area that they patrol, for example, the Chenab Rangers and the Indus Rangers.

It may be noted that the three Frontier Corps are groups operating in north Kashmir, the Northern Scouts, the Gilgit Scouts, and the Karakoram Scouts, were in 1976 amalgamated- into, the Northern Light Infantry, a new infantry regiment of the Pakistan Army.

This has precedents in India after the 1962 War, the heroic performance of the 7 and 14 Jammu and Kashmir Militia in Ladak led them to be regularized as battalions of the Jammu and Kashmir Regiment. Later, in the 1980s, India regularized the Ladak Scouts into their own regiment.

The Frontier the third group of Pakistan paramilitary troops. About men, it is primarily a law-and-order force, having only as much potential for defence as our own Central Reserve Police Force.

The Pakistan militia forces are a fascinating subject. Unfortunately, because of the total non-cooperation from the Indian Army in the writing of this book, we are not able to provide as many details as we would like, in the next war, I suspect that the militia will play an extremely important role, It is likely that had war come in 1987, most of the defence of Sind would have been left to these units.

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The parent body of the militia appears to be the National' Guard. Within it the most important constituents are the Mujahids and the Janbaaz Force. These troops are organised into battalions, and are responsible for local defence. They are the successors of the little-known Local Defence Units which the Pakistan Army used to such effect in the defence of Lahore. There appear to be at least 100,000 militia troops, which would equate to over 100 battalions, with perhaps an equal number to be added.

Militia are usually lightly armed troops drawn from the area in which they live. The lack of heavy weapons like tanks and artillery, and the lack of a regular army structure is more than offset by the militia men's intimate knowledge of the terrain and their motivation.

In war, terrain is everything, and troops wholly familiar with it have a great advantage over outside attackers. The importance of motivation cannot be over stressed. In Pakistan's case the motivation springs from the usual determination of the local levy to defend his own home area, but also, importantly, from ideology.

Pakistan has always enjoyed the advantage of a greater fanaticism than India because it sees itself as the inheritor of the Islamic martial tradition. In past wars the fanaticism may not have helped it to win, because, except in an unusual case like Iran in the Gulf War, fanaticism cannot substitute for military professionalism. Nonetheless, it has a definite role to play in the defence of Pakistan particularly today because,

Its 1971 defeat which has increased its perception as a beleaguered state surrounded by mortal enemies and which has given it a thirst for revenge.

The revival of Islamic fundamentalism worldwide, with its continual emphasis on sacrifice.

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The eight-year war in the Gulf, which has shown what fanatically motivated, lightly equipped, minimally trained levies can do. It is only to be expected that a resource short Pakistan has seriously studied the Iranian example and acted accordingly.

The Iranian levy system has not received a modicum of the attention it deserves, but we cannot cover it here. There is no implication in this work that we can compare the Iranian levies with the Pakistan militia: the two are quite different because the psychology of the two countries is quite different. But there are some similarities, and should the Pakistani militia perform even marginally as well as the Iranian, India could have problems in a short war.

Pakistan tends to form ad hoc combat teams using regulars, paramilitary, and militia forces to perform a multitude of duties and relieve the pressure on regular troops. For example, it will take a company of regulars, two of paramilitary, plus a company or so of militia, and use them to delay an Indian advance in less important sectors, permitting the Army to keep the regular forces concentrated for a counterstroke. Or this mixed force may provide screening in a wide sector, where using the regular.



4  
**THE INDIAN ARMY**

I. **OUTLINE**

Indian Army manpower: 1.1 million

The Indian Army was composed of the following major formations in January 1987

- 3 armored divisions (one ad hoc)
- 1 mechanized division
- 3 RAPID divisions (party mechanised)
- 11 mountain divisions
- 17 infantry divisions
- 4 (1) armored brigades
- 1 parachute brigade
- 8 (1) infantry brigades (including one mountain brigade)

II. **DEPLOYMENT**

The permanent deployment before Brass-Tacks was as follows:

Corps HQs

I	Strike Force	HQ Merrut
II	Strike Force	HQ Ambala
III	Eastern Command	HQ Dimapur
IV	Eastern Command	HQ Agartala
X	Western Command	HQ Bhatinda
XI	Western Command	HQ Jullunder
XII	Southern Command	HQ Jodhpur (forming)
XV	Northern Command	HQ Srinagar
XVI	Northern Command	HQ Nagrota (near Jammu)
XXXIII	Eastern Command	HQ Siliguri

The deployment of the divisions before Brass- Tacks was:

Kashmir XV Corps, with 3, 19, and 28 Divisions, 68 (1) Brigade.  
Jammu : XVI Corps, with 10, 25, 26, 29, and 39 Divisions, 3 and 16 (1)  
Armoured Brigades, plus an ad hoc armoured brigade and extra  
brigades for cops and army reserves.

Punjab: XI Corps, with 7, 9, and 15 Divisions, plus 23 (I) Armored  
Brigade and an (I) infantry brigade.

X Corps, with 16, 18, and 24 Divisions, plus 6 (1) Armored  
Brigade.

Gujarat: XII Corps with 11 and 12 Divisions, plus an (1)  
infantry brigade.

Sikkim: XXXIII Corps with 17;20 and 27 Divisions

Arunachal: IV Corps with 2, 5, and 21 Divisions

Tribal States: 111, Corps with 8 and 57 Divisions

Strike Corps: I and II with 1, 31 and Ad Hoc Armored, 33  
Mechanised, 14 and 36 RAPID, and 4 Divisions and one (I) infantry  
brigade

Reinforcement reserves: 6 and 23 Divisions

Army HQ Reserves; 54 Air Assault Divisions

The battalion count was:

60 tank regiments

25 mechanised battalions

400 infantry battalions

30 Territorial infantry battalions

260 field artillery regiments

( ) AD artillery/missile regiments

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## III. Armour/Mechanised infantry/SP artillery

16 T-72 regiments

44 T-55, Vijayanta (plus one PT-76) regiments

25 BMP-I. SKOT mechanised infantry battalions

2 SP 130mm medium regiments

11 SP 105mm regiments

2 SP SAM-6 regiments

4 SP Quad 23mm AD regiments

IV. **ARTILLERY**

The artillery includes 4 Bofors 1-55 gun regiments (end September 1987) and uses the 75/24 mountain by the 88mm gun (25-pounder) the 100mm field gun (being replaced by the Indian Field Gun 105mm), the 130mm medium gun and the 5.5" medium gun (both to be eventually replaced by the Bofors 155mm medium gun).

There are S AOP squadrons with' Cheetah helicopters (one AOP squadron to a corps).

The air defence artillery consists mainly of the 40mm gun (L-60, L-70). The new SAM-8 missile is entering service. The SAM-7 is used also, but to provide close-in defence for self-propelled air defence artillery groups with the strike corps.

**RESTRICTED****5****HOW INDIA LOST****ALL ITS WARS**

The proposition that we have lost all our wars may seem incredible. Everyone knows that 1947-48 was a favorable stalemate, 1962 was a loss, 1965 was a favorable stalemate and 1971 was an outright Victory.

The problem is, how do we define "victory"?

Is it by the number of enemy killed? Then the Americans won in Vietnam, because they killed ten times as many Vietnamese as the Vietnamese killed Americans.

Is it by the amount of equipment destroyed? Then the Germans must have won World War 2, because they destroyed more tanks, ships, and aircraft of the allies than the reverse.

Is it by amount of territory captured? Then the Arabs lost the 1973 war because Egypt's gains across the canal were more than offset by Israel's gains against Syria and in its counterattack across the canal.

Now clearly none of these propositions is correct. The Americans lost in Vietnam, the Germans lost World War 2, and the Israelis were defeated 1973.

Victory has to be defined not in terms of casualties or territory but in terms of a favorable strategic outcome- Where there is no such outcome even an Ostensible stalemate can actually imply a defeat.

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Take 1947-48 first. What was India's strategic aim? There seems to have been none, but a reasonable strategic aim would have been the recovery of our territory in Jammu and Kashmir and the elimination of Pakistan as a strategic threat.

Before the war started, we had all of Jammu and Kashmir. We are told that Jammu and Kashmir's legal ruler, Maharaja Hari Singh, signed a treaty acceding to India.

Here we should not worry about little things like did the Maharaja really sign, or are the documents forgeries or did he sign of his own free will, after due deliberation of his and his subjects' best interests, or wouldn't it have been fairer to give the inhabitants a free vote. Defending northwest India once adversary is sitting on the Indus is tough enough, defending once that same adversary is also sitting astride the Chenab at Ravi is impossible. Nehru was wrong to have agreed to partition, but even he had the sense to see that Kashmir could be let go.

(A very minor point. My critics often say the reason I demand the reunification of Pakistan and India is that I hanker after the loss of West Punjab, where my family comes from. Well, I was 8-month old when I left West Punjab, so it is difficult to see what I would be hankering after. My question is, why do we not question the determination of the Government to hold onto Kashmir in terms of the hankering of the Nehru dynasty after their homeland? Why dying for Kashmir is reasonable, but dying for West Punjab, Sind, Baluchistan and the NWFP is not satisfactorily explained. Perhaps if a Punjabi had been India's first Prime Minister he would have given away Kashmir and kept West Punjab. Perhaps if a Southerner had been the country's first Prime Minister would have given away both: Punjab and Kashmir. Who can tell?)

We started with all of Kashmir as legally acceded to India, but

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when the war ended, on December 31, 1948, somehow we found ourselves with just all of Jammu, two-thirds of Srinagar, and one third of the northern districts.

That doesn't look like a stalemate<sup>1</sup> it looks like a defeat.

Unless of course we confront the thief in the night, and tell him: "I have saved all my gold, most of my silver, and you have raped only two of my three daughters, so I must reckon that neither of us has gained anything".

Far from Pakistan being eliminate<sup>4</sup> as a strategic threat, its victory in capturing substantial parts of Kashmir has given it the strength to grand and to continue fighting for the next 40 years That's no mate.

About 1962 there is no dispute: we lost, and that's all there is to it. A third of Ladakh came under Chinese occupation. The Chinese took over 403 Indian troops prisoner, largely from 4 Infantry Division. They had the Indians running to the plains, and then magnanimously made a unilateral withdrawal, making India look like total incompetent fools in the eyes of the world, worse, dependent on Chinese charity and goodwill to get back their territory in the Northeast.

1965 appears to be a fair case of a stalemate: if the Pakistanis had made some headway in Khem Karan, then we had made equal headway in the Sialkot sector. Later I will-explain why I account 1965 a defeat, and let the reader judge.

Surely 1971 was a great victory, but was it?

Consider the course of events post 1971.

We certainly defeated the Pakistani Army in East Pakistan and took 93,000 prisoners, the largest bag since World War 2 for a single multiple corps action. But did we weaken Pakistan in any way? No.

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Rather, we aided Pakistan by getting rid of its turbulent Eastern Wing, which would have seceded some day in any event.

Suddenly Pakistan became more-compact, more homogenous, surer of its identity. With its identity based not just on the amorphous appeal of religion, but also on a concrete, easily understood geographical territory, it became stronger.

During the Bangladesh crisis, scholars mightily labored to show how the western wing had thrived on looting the eastern wing. By that criteria, the eastern wing should be booming economically, and the western wing limping along, denied of its surplus revenue and foreign exchange. Instead the eastern component is known as the international basket case, and in the west prosperity has reached the degree that you need Rs. 800 a month, to get a servant 'in Karachi or even in most places in Pakistan. The Pakistani rupee in case anyone is interested in these minutae has the same black-market Value as the Indian rupee. So that is eight hundred real rupees, not what the government says is a rupee.

Pakistan should never again have been a military threat, but somehow it had, by 1973, eroded the margin of superiority that we enjoyed prior to the war. Of course, India has recovered that margin, even increased it, but that has been by spending much more on defence.

Pakistan not only survived another 16 years after the 1971 war, but continues to thrive. And soon, one day, when it gets the bomb, its survival will be ensured for another 50 years.

We should have had a pleasant neighbor in Bangladesh, instead the level of hostility between the new nation and India is as high, if not higher, than was the case between the two wings of Pakistan. Then the energies of the Pakistan Bengalis went in hating the West Punjabis. Now their energies go in hating all Indians.

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In 1971, before the outbreak of the civil war, East Pakistan' had one four-brigade division of the Pakistan Army. That was, the extent of the threat we faced. Today Bangladesh maintains five divisions and 14 brigades against India.

In 1971, before Pakistan's second partition, the politics of the east were tied with the politics of the west. Now that the east has become an independent actor, we find another player in the sub-continental nations against India. That, however, is not the full extent of the damage caused to India. Earlier, the US and China had a single chance to influence Pakistan; now they have two chances, twice as many opportunities because Pakistan is now two.

Can this be called a victory?

We liberated 70 million Bengalis and gave them their own country. But we liberated not one Indian under Pakistani occupation, nor one square mile of our territory under China's occupation. That is a defeat and no arguments about it.

Nor can we console ourselves with hairsplitting logic about how we never intended to do this or that. In the game of power, all that counts is your results. Your intentions are there simply to keep you warm and pious when actually you have lost. So saying we never intended to liberate Kashmir is a big lie: nothing that General K.P. Candeth did in 1971 on the western front makes any sense at all unless we accept that liberation of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir was his aim.

The difference between what happened to General Candeth and to General Aurora is simple. In the latter's case, the Americans had no interest in seeing East Pakistan survive, and the Chinese had no strength to help Islamabad. In General Candeth's case, the Government of India did not have the courage to stand up to the

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United States and liberate Pakistan occupied Kashmir One General had the backing of his government because it was put to no great test. The other was let down because backing him required great courage, and this the Government lacked.

Now lets take a look at the four wars from a slightly different perspective than is usual in India.

**A. 1947- 48**

In 1949, India planned to recover its losses in Kashmir. We had over 400,000 men under arms at this time, three times more than Pakistan, as well as clear superiority in the air. It had taken our generals 16 long months to get the hang of things. But nonetheless not an unreasonable period considering the experience of other armies and hardly surprising seeing as the Indian Army at independence had only three brigadier rank officers with command experience.

The critic can say that Pakistan was even in worse shape, so how did it manage to hang on to meat it had seized at the start? India, at least, got more or less divisions complete and most of the logistics and training bases of the joint Indian Army. If we had three experienced brigadiers, Pakistan had none, and not even a division with any semblance of completeness. That Pakistan had to rely so much on its undisciplined, murderous tribals is probably less a reflection of its clever strategy to show the world it was not informed and that genuine native tribals were doing the fighting than a realistic appraisal of its army's limits.

The army's performance, or lack of performance, is irrelevant to our analysis. Our point is, simply, that given its numerical superiority and the advantage of a long war, the Army would eventually have prevailed and won back all of Kashmir. The spring offensive would have open launched in April 1949 and probably by September or October of that year the issue would have clinched irrevocably in our favour.

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Can we imagine our world without the all pervasive, all encompassing problem of a divided Kashmir? No, because we have lived with this wound for so long that we have come to look upon it as our natural condition.

With all Kashmir in our hands, the history of post-independence India should be different.

Alas, it was not to be, and a cease-fire was rung down.

Why?

Because Pandit Nehru that great and lovable leader of our nation, gave in to his need to maintain his internationalist image as a man of reason, a man of peace, a man open to negotiate any issue, even the territory of his country.

Nowhere did he think that the division of Kashmir perpetuated would cripple India in the years to come, physically and emotionally.

The need to maintain his image must take precedence over the nation.

**B. 1962**

In 1962 India lost. But it could have won. How?

Simply by refusing to accept the Chinese unilateral cease-fire. Simply by uttering the words "The Government of India is determined to go on fighting till every inch of its soil is freed from enemy occupation."

But would that not have prolonged the war? A war that we could not have won because we were already defeated ?

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No. Because with the onset of the hard winter, the Chinese would have had to retire. They could not maintain their troops on the snowy southern side of the Himalayas as they had outrun their communications in their rapid advance into India. Their entire winter policy for Tibet, to this day, calls for leaving the bare minimum forward. and withdrawing the rest to warm, permanent bases' till the spring. Even in the warm weather they maintain only a third of a unit up a regiment will post a battalion forward, and the rest will remain in comfortable quarters till required.

There was no way in which China could have maintained 20,000 troops inside India through the winter relying on a couple of temporary one-ton roads for supply.

A setback is not a defeat. The Russians retreated one thousand kilometers across their own country suffering the heaviest casualties in the history of war. But they managed to stabilize the front and returned to take Berlin.

A defeat is in the mind if you do not give up, you can never be defeated.

The fighting for Thagla Ridge began in September 1962. By the time of the cease-fire, over 36 infantry battalions were in the theatre, the equivalent of four divisions. The Thapar plan for the defence of the Northeast, formulated in 1959, required three divisions for a sure defence of this sensitive area. Now India had the equivalent of four, plus the equivalent of an independent armored brigade waiting on the south bank of the Brahmaputra in case the Chinese crossed into the Indian plains.

The Chinese had perhaps the equivalent of four regiments (one and one-third divisions) against India along the western axis (Bomdila), and elements of a division against the eastern axis (Walong). A Chinese division was much lighter in terms of engineers,

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transport, artillery than its Indian counterpart.

Most important, India had a very fine air force of 500 combat aircraft, totally outclassing anything China possessed or anything it could operate out of Tibet.

Even though we had superiority on the ground, we gave in. And the air force was never used. Why? Because the Americans told us that we should not provoke the far superior, totally nonexistent, Chinese air force. Our Hunters, Gnats would have ripped the Chinese MiG-15s and MiG-17s to pieces, and our Canberras would have pounded his attack into the ground. Every ton of fuel and ordnance required by the Chinese air force had to be brought across 2000-kilometers of mountain road. We operated from large well-connected bases in Eastern India. How long could the Chinese even flown against us, leave alone fight?

Our magnificent air force, however, was stood down, and the army milled around putting more and more troops into the northeast will, within a year, there were eight large divisions in place.

We are not trotting out all the old, well-justified criticisms of the Army and the higher command, about how they failed India before the attack and how they bungled the defence of Towang. This has all been thrashed out before.

We accept that everyone did a bad job before the war and when it broke out. Our point is simply this: even after all the setbacks, all the disasters, India could have made a realistic assessment of its adversary, his limits, and our strength. We had only to keep our nerve, or at least recover it after the initial setbacks.

Had the Army been told to go on fighting, it would have done so. After all, death is all a soldier faces, and for a soldier there are fates a lot worse than death.

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The Army, however, was not told to continue. The Air Force was not ordered into action. No one ordered the bombing of Lhasa, Gyanste, Shigatse. There was no Lt. Col. Doolittle on our side, to make a symbolic—but what a symbol—raid on china. No one determinedly, got together a naval task force to sail off Canton and to lob a few shells at that city. Nothing was done, substantial or symbolic, except a grateful acceptance of the ceasefire by a wholly shaken leadership, and by a Nehru so destroyed that he was broken and dead not long after.

**C. 1965**

The 1965 war, we are told, was a draw. I had, earlier, even gone as far as to say that actually it was a victory, because Pakistan wanted to take Kashmir, or at least a substantial part of Indian Kashmir, whereas India wanted only to defend itself. So Pakistan failed and we succeeded. They were defeated but we were victorious. Or so I believed for a long time.

Sometimes it happens that a piece of information in your possession is later assessed very differently, because you are looking at the entire matter from a different perspective. Talking to the Army after the 1965 war, I learned that troops at the front had noticed that Pakistan's firing rates for its artillery, and its air forties, had started to fall off a few days before the cease-fire. This information was not correctly assessed at the time, because no one really studies the Pakistan-US military relationship, or knew how the US dealt with its smaller allies to prevent them from dragging it into a war mot of its choice. It was obvious that the firing rates were falling off at a time India was threatening Lahore and Sialkot because Pakistan's ammunition was running out.

The United States had embargoed military supplies to both countries on the outbreak of war. As Pakistan was at least 70~ equipped with American arms, this was a very severe blow. As India

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had perhaps 5% American arms, this was of absolutely no consequence. So no fresh supplies were reaching Pakistan with the possible exception of some minor, clandestine shipments from Iran.

It was the Americans' practice to give its ally the capability of resisting an enemy attack for about two weeks. After that, should it be deemed necessary the US would arrive with its own forces. Its allies were, in effect, to maintain just trip-wire forces.

With the Pakistanis running out of ammunition, but with India just getting into its stride, this was the time to press the attack and go for broke. The first of the mountain divisions from the northeast had come up. 23 Mountain Division out of Rangia and its lead brigade had just entered action on the outskirts of Lahore. Whereas Pakistan's strength was declining, ours was increasing.

Instead of stepping up the offensive, we again accepted a cease-fire, this time pressurized by the Soviets. And brave little Shastri, the man who surprised the Pakistanis by crossing the international frontier in retaliation for attack of Pakistan 7 Infantry Division at Chhaamb-Akhnur, went to negotiate with Ayub Khan at Tashkent.

Shastri had no particular need, like Nehru and his successors, of being seen as a man of peace. He was not addressing any international community. But he was an Indian. And the one thing you can count on is an Indian giving up when he is ahead:

An English sports commentator once said that the Indians were unique in the world in that they could always be counted on to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory

There is something about being an Indian that enables us all to make the most heroic of sacrifices, and then, when our goal is just within actual reach, we collapse all over the place.

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Have you ever seen a street argument in india? Say two scooter drivers are involved in a collision with each other, but neither is hurt It may clearly be the fault of one, but the inevitable crowd that gathers from i3owhere will, after listening in great detail to the arguments of both sides, insist on a compromise. The man who is right may not see the need for a compromise, but should he persist in refusing one, the crowd will turn hostile to side with the guilty party.

Whatever happened leading up to the accident, whoever was innocent or guilty, there' has to be a compromise, you have to compromise 0' you're violating the tacit rules that we Indians live by -

This is why it's so easy to talk us into compromising, even when we have no reason to compromise, when doing so is against our own interests. India cannot go that last extra mile, grit their teeth and may to hell with everyone, we'll do what's right for us. It's so much easier to simply punch the other guy in the nose, break his tooth in retaliation for the bloody nose he has given you, to make your point, assuage your wounded ego, and then go home to brag about how you defeated the other, than to stand there and slog it out till he falls.

When we realize how close we were to victory in 1965, then what we suffered was a defeat.

I am perfectly aware that the Pakistanis on their side feel betrayed by Ayub Khan. They feel that they were going to win and that there was no need to go for talks.

When we say India was going to win, it is because of objective ana4sis, not because we wish to boost India.

At that time, Pakistan had its 12 Division in Kashmir, 7 Division in Chhamb, hastily raised 6 Armored Division and 9 Division as reserves located in the Sialkot sector, 15 Division at Sialkot, 10 Division at Lahore, 11 Division at Kasur along with crack I Armored

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Division nearby, 8 Division in Sind, and 14 Division in East Pakistan. The 11 Division, like the 6 Armored, had been hastily raised. The two armored divisions on strength belied the reality that Pakistan had actually converted its 106 Independent Armored Brigade into a division by breaking out reserve tanks without US permission, by diluting tank crews in other regiments and by incorporating its self-propelled tank destroyers into new armored regiments. This hodge podge arrangement meant that Pakistan's armor was much less effective than a seasoned armored division and an independent armored brigade.

Pakistan 7 Division had to be pulled back to the Sialkot Lahore sector when Indian XI corps crossed the international from tier in the Punjab Pakistan had to forget its plan to reach Akhnur and cut the Jammu-Akhnur-Poonch road. Its 6 Armored Division and 15 Infantry Division were opposing the advance of Indian I Corps from Kathua-Samba. Its 10 Division was opposing the advance of Indian 15 Division out of Amritsar. Its 8 Division was opposing Indian II Division in the desert, plus an independent brigade. That left its reconstituted 7 and previously uncommitted 9 Divisions as reserves, and the 1 Armored and II Infantry Division opposed by Indian 4 Division and 2 Independent Armored Brigade.

Because Pakistan had almost reached Akhnur and because it had made a shallow penetration at Khem Karan, it could delude itself it was winning. Particularly since its Navy had just smacked the nose of the much more powerful Indian Navy by shelling Dwarka, and its compact, efficient air force had inflicted disproportionate casualties on the larger, more diffuse, and still under raising Indian Air Force.

But now lets look at the line-up from the Indian side.

In the north we had our 3 Infantry Division out of Leh, which could spare two brigade to attack the Pakistan norther' areas. In Kashmir we had our larger 19 and 25 Divisions compared to just one large division for Pakistan.

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In the stretch between Akhnur and Pathankot we had no less than five divisions, equal to half of Pakistan's entire army. These divisions were 10 Division (Akhnur), 26 Division (Jammu) and I Corps with 1 Armored, 6 Mountain and 14 Divisions. Plus Jammu held the 3 Independent Armored Brigade. In the Punjab we had three divisions and an independent armored brigade under XI Corps; 15 and 4 Mountain Divisions have already been mentioned, plus we had 7 Division at Ferozepur. But another division, 23 Mountain, had moved up and was entering action. And Pakistan had virtually lost its 1 Armored Division at Khem Karan. India had nine divisions including one armored and two independent armored brigades between Akhnur and Ferozepur Pakistan had left six divisions including one armored.

India also had the equivalent of another division in loose brigades, one under formation, and seven mountain divisions in the east. Of these seven, at least one, 8 Division, could have been spared without weakening the Northeast defenses. Whereas in 1959 three divisions had been postulated for a firm defence withdrawing S Division would have left India with six divisions.

This would have given an effective one armored and ten infantry divisions, plus one armored brigade (leaving aside 2 (I) Armored Brigade which we deduct on account of casualties, as we have deducted Pakistan 1 Armored Division). On Pakistan's side there were 1 armored and five infantry divisions.

If we 'assign an infantry division a value of 1, an armored division a value of 3, and the independent armored brigade a value of 2 (as being more than half as strong as an armored division) we get a total of 15 for India and 8 for Pakistan. Using Lanchester's equation, we square each side's combat power and get 225 for India and 64 for Pakistan, or a 3.5 to 1 superiority.

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Assume further that after another two weeks of fighting India loses the equivalent of three infantry divisions and an independent armored brigade, whereas Pakistan loses two infantry divisions and half its remaining armored division. (India's losses would be greater because we were attacking.) Then India's combat power reduces to 100 and Pakistan's to 20; or a five to one superiority. In the next two weeks this would have meant the end of Pakistan.

Our crude model supposes India attacks equally in Sialkot and Lahore sectors. But if India had concentrated its forces in one, the favorable outcome would come sooner than the four additional weeks of war we have estimated.

It is true that by the end of the three weeks fighting we were running low on ammunition. But Pakistan was in worse shape because it started with only two weeks stocks. So we were better off relative to Pakistan. And because we had much more force to begin with, a downward slide in efficiency due to losses, ammunition shortages and inadequacy of equipment would hurt Pakistan more than us.

Meanwhile, the Navy could have made its attacks against Pakistan. As for the JAF, the greater number of aircraft it lost was of no consequence we had over 500 combat aircraft to Pakistan's 170. Every single Pakistani aircraft lost was irreplaceable, but we had plenty more in stock. By the time the numbers became something like 90 to 350 for India, Pakistan would have lost the air battle.

Yes, none of this was going to happen overnight. The two countries had been at war for a little over two weeks, and probably another two weeks would have been required for the state of attrition described above to come about on land and in the air. So give another two weeks after that, say six weeks in all, and Lahore and Sialkot would surely have fallen.

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But of course, when we barely managed to psychologically hold out in a two-week war, with an extra few days added for the initial defence of Chhamb-Akhnur, then there was no question of a six-week war.

Analysing the 1971 war presents special problems because we have no access to the actual strategic plan used for the west.

Consider, nonetheless, the situation in the west as of December 16, 1971 while the cease-fire in the east was being signed.

Pakistan had 12 divisions in its west, disposed as follows:

Uri—Tithwal sector	:	12 Division (over strength)
Poonch—Akhnur sector	:	23 Division (over strength)
Sialkot sector	:	8 and 15 Divisions, 2 and 8 (I) Armored Brigades, elements of 6 Armored Division
Lahore sector	:	10 and 11 Divisions, 3 (1) Armored Brigade
Sind/Multan	:	18 and 33 Divisions
Southern. Strike Force	:	1 Armored and 7 Division
Northern Strike Force	:	6 Armored Division (—) and one third of 17 Division.

The Northern Strike Force was held up trying to slow the Indian drive on Shakergarh town and was not free for action elsewhere. One brigade of 6 Armored Division was already engaged on the Basanter River against 16 (1) Brigade, a clash between several squadrons on each side, wrongly described by an over-enthusiastic Indian press as the biggest tank battle since World War 2. 17 Division had already

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given up brigades to 23 Division for the Chhamb assault and to IV Corps (Lahore) to strengthen the defences there. It had only one uncommitted brigade left. Since the Indians were grinding forward by sheer force, not only would all of the remaining Northern Strike Force become committed, troops would have had to be pulled down from Kashmir and up from Lahore to hold the Indian attack once Shakergarh fell.

Pakistan's only free reserves at this time were in the Southern Strike Force. The 1 Armored and 7 Divisions were fresh and uncommitted. Nominally, 33 Division was also under this force, but it had detached a brigade for Sind, to aid 18 Division, and another was reinforcing the Multan sector defences, held primarily by 105 (1) and 25 (1) Brigades from Sulimanki and Bhawalpur respectively.

Now consider India's line up

North: 3 Division at Leh, with two brigades to spare

Uri—Tithwal : 19 Division, almost equal in size to Pakistan 12 Division  
Poonch—Rajouri—Mendhar: 25 Division (over strength) Two other brigades on the line north of Akhnur.

Akhnur—Jammu: 10 Division (over strength) and 26 Division, 3 (I)  
Armored Brigade

Sialkot: 36, 39, 54 Divisions, with 2, 14 and 16 (I) Brigades

Amritsar—Ferozepur: 7, 14 and 15 Divisions plus ad hoc armored  
brigade

Fazilka: (Foxtrot Sector: 1 Armored and (—) Division plus three  
brigades

Desert: 11 and 12 Divisions plus two brigades

To summarize, we had 15 divisions of which one (3 Division out of Leh) was partially oriented towards China, to Pakistan's 12. Pakistan's Southern Strike Force was intact, and it was slightly better off in that our answer to the strike force, 1 Armored and 9 was not a homogenous or a cross trained force. HQ 1 Corps, which controlled

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the two Indian divisions on the date of the eastern cease-fire had actually come back to the west after having spent the better part of the year in Eastern Command, preparing for, and then participating in the Bangladesh campaign. 9 Division was normally based at Ranchi as a counter to Pakistan's 14 Division in the East.

Against that however, India's Foxtrot Sector held more than a division's worth of troops. We still digress slightly here to make the point that a lot of India's strength just does not show up as divisions, but it is viable combat strength anyway.

The Indian Army has always obtained fewer divisions for a given number of men than Pakistan because (1) our territory is larger, implying more line of communication troops and (2) we tend to have an enormous number of less than division sized units, such as independent brigades, independent battalions, and ad hoc task forces.

For example, though officially India had four armored brigades during the 1971 war, actually it had 5, because (as mentioned earlier) one ad hoc brigade was constituted from spare odds and ends. These were available to us because we had more armored regiments than Pakistan.

Similarly Foxtrot Sector was actually a division plus, though it did not appear as such because it was not given a divisional flag. In the western armies it would have been given a divisional number so that at least the Army would not confuse itself.

The GOC Foxtrot Sector was a Major General. He had under his command or available to him 67 (1) Brigade at Fazilka, 51 Parachute Brigade at Ganganagar, and 163 Brigade out of Leh at Suratgarh. Additionally he had an ad hoc force consisting of three engineer regiments and two infantry battalions at Abohar (though General T.P. Candeth says it was one, not two infantry battalions). This is not a recommended use of engineers, a scarce and precious commodity in a

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shooting war, but being fully trained' as infantry, in emergencies they can be so used.

So Foxtrot Sector was actually equivalent to an over strength division, and. We should not be surprised 'to learn one day that there were even more troops available, floating around somewhere or the other.

If we had examined the map on the outbreak of war the way the Army would want us to look at the map, we would have seen the odd brigade or two and our I Armored Division in the Fazilka Abohar area, whereas of Pakistan's side was its full II Corps out of Multan with I Armored and 33 Divisions. So the situation would have appeared much to our disadvantage, particularly because the front here is wide open to large-scale armored movement.

During the war, when Pakistan 7 Division failed to appear in the J and. K sector, its normal War station, there was' alarm in Western Command: this division could have moved southward to join. Pakistan II Corps, to make a powerful force for an attack, against Fazilka south Ward, thus neutralizing our Sialkot push.

We have noted that 'equality on the' ground existed before 7 Division actually moved' southward. The Army, which appeared to be taking a risk in leaving such a vital area of Punjab/Rajasthan so lightly covered, was actually not risking anything. A K'

Now consider the way events in battle wreck the best' laid plans. 'With 7' Division joining Pakistan II Corps, we were at a definite disadvantage. 'But when Pakistan learned of Indian 12 Divisions proposed attack towards Islamgarh and Tanot,' it faced a serious problem against India's desert force of two divisions and two independent brigades it had available only one division out of Hyderabad.

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It's 16 Division was earmarked as a reserve for this vast sector, but 16 division was in East Pakistan sent there in March 1971 to help stem the revolt. 33 Division had been hurriedly raised in a period of six months to replace this division. It had, however, to do dual duty as a reserve and as a partner of Armored Division. A brigade from it was detached to throw off the attack of Indian 12 Division. Then a brigade went to reinforce Pakistan 18 Division which was slowly giving way against Indian 11 Division's advance along the Khokrapar-Naya Chor axis.

So we may guess that Pakistan 7 Division, trained for years to operate in Kashmir, had to be sent southward to face Foxtrot Sector. The Army may not have wanted the Indian public to see a division on Foxtrot Sector, but Pakistan GHQ saw it and a vital reinforcement for Poonch was diverted. This had its repercussions in Poonch sector where, it will be recalled, the Pakistan Army failed to break through despite much effort. 7 Division' would have made the difference between stalemate and victory.

This microcosm of deployments and counter deployments is illustrative.

First, when the Indian Army tells us that it had a bare equality in the west, 13 divisions to Pakistan's 12, this was only partially true. By December 16, 1971 the 'actual situation on the ground after the induction of HQ 9 Division and three brigades from the east, was more like 16 divisions to 12, and we are avoiding the complications of analyzing the over strength formations in Kashmir which would put the matter more in india's' favor.

Second, because of India's habit of keeping so many independent formations and ad hoc headquarters, its declared strength is lower than its true strength. This, incidentally, gives' the corollary that the troop-to-tail ratio is actually 'more favorable than generally believed.

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Third, looking at Foxtrot' sector gives us a flavor of what: might have happened here in 1987, when the area again became very important.

To return to the main argument: at the time of the eastern cease-fire, India had a clear superiority in the west, partially because it had started moving troops' from the eastern to the western theatre. Thus, India was quite capable of continuing the war.

Further reinforcements would have come if required: chief among these were 4 Division and 6 Division. (4 Division has always been part of the general reserves available to the Indian Army and 6 Division, while nominally assigned to the western UP border, is always available to the west because the terrain in its area is so extreme that a single independent brigade can protect the area.)

Additional to these two divisions were two more: 8 and 57 Divisions, the Northeast counter-insurgency formations, which had participated in the war as part of IV Corps 'on East Pakistan's easternmost flank.

Undoubtedly time was needed to shift them to the west. India did a fairly efficient job of rapidly transferring about 20,000 troops from HQ II Corps, HQ 9 Division, three brigades, plus tank and artillery regiments. At most three weeks would have been required 'for shifting four additional divisions.

With the equivalent of 20 divisions to Pakistan's 12 the war in the west could have been over in the short order.

It can be seen that we had superiority on the ground. What about at sea and in the air?



The Indian Navy's raid on Karachi had, we know from subsequent Pakistani accounts, totally demoralized the Pakistanis. A simultaneous raid on Gwader, Pakistan's main submarine base, was called off even as the attacking task force was underway, partly because of the loss of INS Khukri to a Pakistani submarine. Had this raid been reconstituted, and later perhaps two-infantry battalions landed in Pakistan's extreme west, its demoralization with regard to its sea flank would have been complete.

Similarly, the Indian Air force. The true count for our losses was over 95 compared to 72 all types for the PAF. That still left us 700 combat aircraft and additional reinforcements available from the Soviet Union.

Pakistan was reduced to about 250 aircraft. Its reinforcements, from Jordan and Libya, were insignificant: ten F-104s from the former, and 5 F5A~ from the latter. Saudi Arabia sent perhaps two C-130 transports 'To this day no satisfactory explanation exists for Col. Gaddafi dispatch of the F-5As. Not being a PAF type, the transfer was pointless. A few of his Mirages, on the other hand, would have been most welcome.

India had an enormous reservoir of military force available to destroy Pakistan,

What was missing was the will.

D. **1971**

It is my belief that the 1971 War had three vital objectives, of which only one was the liberation of East Pakistan. 'the other" two were liberation of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir and the destruction of Pakistan's war potential for 20 years, thus establishing India's supremacy once and for all.

It is my belief that with the liberation achieved, the Government abandoned the other two objectives because of American pressure, and that the pressure itself was a bluff.

My evidence comes from a variety of apparently disconnected facts, but which yield a connected pattern on closer examination.

Consider some of them.

The Army had budgeted for 40,000 casualties, easily three times those incurred in two weeks of fighting. Obviously a longer war was expected.

Lt.-Gen. K.P. Candeth's entire plan for the Sialkot sector, where India deployed five infantry divisions and three independent armored brigades, makes sense only if we assume that he intended XI and XV Corps to eliminate the entire Sialkot salient, prior to turning north to outflank Pakistan Occupied Kashmir. In conjunction with frontal attacks by 19 and 25 Divisions in Kashmir, this would have cracked the front and POK would have fallen.

The Kashmir divisions more or less stood by defensively, letting the Pakistanis do the attacking. This makes no sense unless the idea was to let the Pakistanis expend their strength before India launched a counteroffensive.

Southern Command launched a large, corps-sized force into Sind. Its objectives were exceptionally clear to cut the line of communication between Karachi and Lahore at two points, Hyderabad City and Rahim Yar Khan. The secondary objectives which we must not mistake for the primary ones, were to draw down Pakistani reserves from all over Pakistan, thus easing the task of Indian troops advancing in other sectors, and to occupy as much of Sind as possible, to exchange for possible losses elsewhere.

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Indian XI Corps defending Punjab, with greater strength than the opposing Pakistan IV Corps, contented itself with a defensive role, making no move to attack Pakistan. This makes no sense unless we again say that the objective was to conserve our strength before attacking the enormously strong Lahore defenses, allowing breakthroughs to be made at other points, namely in the north by I and XV Corps and in the south by Southern Command.

Negotiations to end the fighting in the east were being mooted by Farman Ali, East Pakistan's governor, as early as December 10, after the fall of Jessore. By December 12 the process was in full swing because it was clear that Pakistan could not hold out. The cease-fire was signed on December 16. Yet every single major Indian formation from Ferojpur to Uri and its counterpart on Pakistan's side was getting ready for major 'offensives on December 17 and 19. As the war in the east wound down, both sides planned to step up the war in the west.

Pakistan had reduced its air sorties to the minimum required to defend its air bases. It had, from the start of the war, kept four squadrons in reserve. Now it even shipped air craft to Iran to protect them from the war ranging Indian marauders. Concurrently, it avoided committing, its two armored divisions. Clearly, it was conserving forces for an anticipated long war.

Even as Washington was demanding assurances that India had no territorial objectives in Kashmir. India, while quite willing to reassure Washington it had 'no designs on Pakistan, steadily refused to provide any guarantees on Kashmir and limit our options there. Considering that we took the possibility of American and Chinese intervention very seriously, our refusal to 'defuse this point' with Washington, which had accepted that we would detach the eastern wing, makes no sense unless we had plans to recover Pakistan Occupied Kashmir.

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What is the Army reaction to my thesis?

Consistent rejection on the senior flag officer' level, and a "makes sense, but no one tells us anything reaction from other Officers.

Senior military men and civilians refute my contention as follows:

India's strategy was offensive-defensive. This means that we had strategic defensive goals—the defence of our territory— and nothing else. Towards this end, we launched limited counter-offensives to (1) keep the adversary off balance and (2) gain territory for the inevitable exchanges during subsequent negotiations. We cannot let him hit us first because that gives him the initiative, and we cannot stop him from taking some ground somewhere- Thus the offensive-defensive strategy.

Our grand strategy was strictly limited to liberating East Pakistan.

We continued fighting in the west and planning for a continuation of the war only to prevent Pakistan from undertaking any last minute adventure in the west in retaliation for the loss of the east wing.

As we had no wider aims, there was no question of giving in to American pressure. in fact, American claims that we had objectives in the west are so manifestly untrue that Washington must have had other, male fide, objectives in sending the Enterprise, such as helping the Pakistan Army in the east, or at least, covering a withdrawal. If America did not ultimately intervene it was because we

—moved too fast

—the Soviets deterred the 7th Fleet

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—Washington had the good sense not to intervene or some combination of the above.

The counter explanation sounds reasonable, in the quiet, low-key, intelligent manner that Indian decision-makers like to be perceived.

Our reply is:

If we lacked objectives in the west, why did we act in a manner calculated to make the Pakistanis believe that we were about to attack there? India had crossed the international frontier in the east on November 21, 1971, without provoking a Pakistani attack in the west. Pakistan had, after all, realized right from 1947 that it could not defend its eastern wing without a counteroffensive in the west. So why did this counteroffensive not come on the 21st November? Clearly, that the Pakistanis, at least, were willing to separate the issue of war in the east and a possible response in the west.

We know this kind of separation has been a recurring theme in Pakistani strategic thought.

—In 1947-48, both sides limited fighting to Kashmir

—In 1965 Pakistan attacked Kashmir, again assuming that India would, on previous precedent, keep the conflict confined and would not cross the international frontier. Pakistan proved wrong on one hand, because India attacked Sialkot and Lahore. On the other hand, however, it proved correct India made no move against East Pakistan, despite the nine divisions available to Eastern Command compared to Pakistan's single division out of Dacca.

—In 1971, the involvement of Indian armed forces, mainly BSF and Army, in the rebellion in the east became overt from about May, but Pakistan did not retaliate, for example, by sending infiltrators into

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Kashmir or making probes in the desert.

Thus war in the west was avoidable. Clearly Pakistan hoped to avoid war, remaining quiet for 13 days while several Indian brigades established strong positions inside East Pakistan.

The notion of a sectorial war is rather silly, unless you are the weaker power hoping to limit the scale of hostilities. A stronger power has no incentive for the sectorial approach. By fighting across the board, it prevents the adversary from lightly defending low threat sectors and concentrating in high threat ones.

Pakistan's hope of limiting the war were certainly belied. Our point is that Pakistan, after having sat quietly for a crucial 13 days, had had no interest in attacking first in the west, that too in such impulsive and ineffectual fashion, unless it aimed to preempt an Indian attack in the west.

There was no need to attack in the west just to prevent reinforcement of the east. Pakistan GHQ had already refused General Niazi's requests for two more divisions when the tenor of India's build-up became clear. With only 12 divisions left in the west, including two (17 and 33 Divisions) raised in extremely hurried fashion, for Pakistan to further weaken the west by reinforcing the east was to tempt India into attacking. Further, the naval blockade of East Pakistan was already in place in November. Reinforcement from the air could have provided only troops with their individual weapons. And, had India found it necessary, it would have mounted an air blockade of the east after the war began on November 21. Remember, Pakistan was outnumbered about ten to one in the air in the east, which contributed significantly to the rapidity of our victory.

If our strategy was offensive-defensive, then why did we not also attack in Kashmir and Punjab, instead of limiting our offensive to the Pathankot sector ? This requires further amplification.

It may be easily accepted that we have to preempt Pakistan by attacking Pathankot. The 50-kilometer deep corridor is too shallow to absorb a Pakistani first strike. Equally acceptable is the proposition that India must attack in the desert to obtain territory for further negotiation and to force dispersal of Pakistani reserves.

But then why did we not attack from Chhamb? Chhamb is so hard to hold that only an immediate, swift attack towards Marala can protect it. Just as We cannot prevent Pakistan from gaining some ground wherever it attacks, Pakistan must lose ground wherever we attack. An offensive-defensive strategy requires us to attack all across the front.

Similarly, why did we not attack in the Punjab, particularly from Fazilka, and thus pre-empt the considerable Pakistani gains made by its 105 (1) Brigade? The insufficiency of force argument does not wash we have already seen that Foxtrot Sector held the equivalent of a reinforced division. In any case, Pakistan, with fewer troops, saw no reason to hold its hand and attacked immediately.

If our intention was offensive-defensive, when we had presented the Sialkot sector in massive force, why did we continue attacking? After having advanced 10-kilometers we could have simply dug in and let the Pakistanis base their heads against us, as happened to them in Lahore in 1965, and to us in Khem Karan and Fazilka in 1965 and 1971 respectively.

Why did we not launch the armored division into Pakistan instead of waiting for Pakistan to launch its I Armored Division, thus conceding the initiative? The argument that using our strategic reserve would have left nothing to counter his Southern Strike Force is incorrect. If we were worried about this strike force, better to attack first, forcing its dissipation in defending his territory, then to wait for him to do the same to us. Besides, we had an armored brigade available to defend against his armored division had our attack by I Armored Division gone

seriously wrong.

It is senseless to say we must keep our strike force idle because we have to wait for Pakistan to strike, otherwise we won't be able to hold off his strike force, and then assume Pakistan is not similarly constrained. The surest way of ensuring his strike force does not attack us is to attack first.

In short, it is clear that India was not following an offensive-defensive strategy

In Sind we followed an offensive-defensive strategy.

In Multan/Punjab we waited for Pakistan, to attack and bog itself down before moving. This was defensive-offensive.

In Sialkot, we had to attack no matter what strategy was involved, but we continued attacking even after ensuring the security of the Pathankot Corridor. This was offensive-offensive.

In Kashmir, we were letting Pakistan show its hand before striking. This was defensive-offensive.

There was, thus, no question of an offensive-defensive strategy.

To reiterate our most important point, had we not intended offensive objectives, we could merely have played along with the Pakistanis and continued lying passive in the west, something that also suited them.

Possibly this is insufficient to convince the skeptical reader who will demand a higher standard of proof. This reader will insist that as we had no intention to make strategic gains in the west, our failure to achieve these gains is no evidence of a defeat for India.



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To meet these objections. we have to switch our argument.

We have been discussing a failure of Indian nerve as the explanation for our failure to push the 1971 war to a logical conclusion. Those who disagree say we had limited objectives which we achieved, the war did reach a logical conclusion and that our analysis is superfluous.

If this is correct, then our strategic objectives were clearly faulty and that in retrospect, even our success ended up as .a failure.

How can we justify 15,000 casualties, a war that could have gotten out of hand had the superpowers intervened, and the sacrifices demanded of our people merely to help the Bangladeshis achieve their independence while our own nationals labor under enemy rule in Kashmir?

How does it make sense to fight the same opponent for the third time in 25 years, especially when he is inferior to you, and leave him with his war potential intact so that he can hope for a fourth round?

The argument that we had to fight in order to create conditions for the refugees to return is fallacious. We ourselves have always told the world that such matters should be settled by negotiation. This has been our consistent stand on Pakistan's problem with the Afghan refugees. That there were not 20 million refugees is now history: probably there were no more than 4 million after subtracting for the hordes of Indian poor who landed up for handouts.

The failure to include the recovery of POK in our objectives is itself a confession of weakness. And surely we must be unique in using force to help a neighbor, but refusing to use force to help our own people and attain our own objectives.

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And inasmuch as Bangladesh is today hostile, and Pakistan stronger than in 1971, even our limited objectives failed. It is instructive to remember that Pakistan had one division with four brigades against Eastern India. Bangladesh feels it necessary to have five divisions and 14 brigades. Only financial stringency prevents Bangladesh from raising this to seven divisions. There was one PAF fighter squadron in the east, and an insubstantial and transient naval presence. Bangladesh has three times as many fighter planes and a permanent naval presence. Just like Pakistan, Bangladesh plays the Chinese and Americans against us, while remaining on good terms with the Soviets. We can hardly object to this last, because officially Bangladesh is a friend.

This sad history of wrong strategic decisions, missed opportunities, and serious lack of will in the highest leadership is bad enough, but there are three other examples where hesitation and confusion at the top has led to incalculable consequences.

In 1975, Sheikh Mujibur Rehman was assassinated. Though Mrs. Indira Gandhi first considered intervention and though the Army alerted three divisions, in the end the Government hesitated and the moment passed. The result: our chance to keep Bangladesh in our camp vanished. India would have been fully justified in intervening under the same doctrine that lets the Soviet Union intervene in Poland and Afghanistan and the Americans, intervene in Nicaragua and Grenada. In 1984, Mrs. Gandhi had decided on intervention in Sri Lanka. Troop ships began loading out 54 Division from Vishakapatnam for the sea borne invasion, and 50 (I) Parachute Brigade was ready for a combined parachute and air landed insertion. Mrs. Gandhi hesitated, again losing the moment. Later, problems in the Punjab and her death put to an end all hopes for an effective Indian intervention. The result: escalating ethnic violence, increased foreign intervention on our borders, a real possibility that Sri Lanka will break up, and an increase in the tensions in Tamil Nadu in particular and the south in general.

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While she did go through with Operation Meghdoot, the Siachin operation, it was a side show, kept localized for fear of escalation, and resulted in nothing' except an endless drain of resources and an average of 60 casualties a month for the last three years.

In 1986, a small Chinese troop detachment intruded into our territory in the Sumdruchung Valley. A few months later we panicked at the possibility of Pakistani intervention in the Punjab, here an actual Chinese aggression had taken place. But did Delhi want to hear about it, talk about it, do some thing about it? No. Delhi is doing its best to sweep the whole thing under the carpet. in October 1986 a brigade with the rest of a division behind it was concentrated to evict the Chinese. Since the Chinese positions cannot be defended, probably their troops would have evacuated had we politely asked them to leave. Instead, the attack was postponed repeatedly, until finally it was given up altogether. All the wrong signals have been conveyed to Beijing. China knows it can push us around, and the betting is that this is exactly what it plans to do, come the spring thaw.

We have already made some general comments about India's inability to make that little extra effort to ensure success. Aside from the lack of will, however, in all the security crises mentioned, there have been very serious misperceptions of adversary behavior. Why do we go on repeating these mistakes?

Because we lack a Red Team.

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### **THE LACK OF A RED TEAM**

In strategic crises and in war games, the Red Team plays the opponent. This follows a convention which uses blue markers to identify friendly forces on maps, and red markers for the enemy. Obviously the Soviets don't do it this way, saving red for themselves and using blue or black for the bad guys.

Abroad, particularly in the west and in the Soviet Union, no one waits for a crisis before waking up at the last minute and flapping around. In a variety of institutions, games are played repeatedly, using gaming professionals and actual decision makers. The games are used to analyze every situation, contingency, and course of action. Training in crisis management is provided. The strengths and weaknesses of both sides are closely examined.

At my father's International Peace Academy in New York, for example, a game for diplomats is played. A small country is invaded by a neighbor over a border dispute. The neighbor's ally intervenes, there is a mess up, the United Nations steps in. What is to be done now?

Games bring out fascinating aspects of crises. For example, I am told that when tactical nuclear weapons are assumed available, no NATO wargame lasts long without nuclear release in the face of a Soviet attack. And that whereas male decision-makers try to avoid or postpone the nuclear option, female players are very ready to escalate to ultimate doomsday.

#### **A. THE RED TEAM**

The Red Team must be composed of better personnel than Blue.

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It is easy, after all, to play your own side as you are entirely familiar with your own conditions. But it's much harder to play Red. Not only do you have to be conversant with every aspect of his forces, operations, intelligence, history, politics, geography, national characteristics, psychology and so on, you have to be so thoroughly Red that you must avoid all the biases that automatically creep in because you were really born and bred Blue.

Not only do we lack a Red Team, we simultaneously play both sides of the board: ours and the other side too, from our side.

This is as futile as it is misleading.

It is our tendency to play both sides of the board that gives rise to tortured explanation of adversary behavior.

Take, as an example, the following line of reasoning from the recent crisis.

1. Pakistan says it mobilized because of India's exercises.
2. But India's exercises have ended and Pakistan is still mobilized.
3. Therefore Pakistan must have ulterior motives.

No mention is made that the exercises may have ended, but Indian troops are still on alert all along the border, and that in any case the biggest exercises have yet to begin. It costs more money to send men back and then recall them again in time for the next exercises than to keep them on alert in the first place.

Another example:

1. We accept that Pakistan is alarmed about Brass Tacks.

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2. But surely Pakistan doesn't imagine we will attack Sind.

3. So its motives must be mala fide.

But why make assumptions about Pakistan's ability to see through our motives, especially when we have not been entirely clear and when there is a four decade record of mutual distrust between the two adversaries?

Why not constitute a Red Team and see where it leads us ?

One Indian institution uniquely placed to develop a Red Team is the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi.

Contrary to popular belief, the place actually holds exceptional talent of a high level of sophistication.

But it is also the prime exponent of the Brahmanical mode of thinking. Some entirely irrelevant point is taken, and square meters of arguments are produced to prove it. The most incredibly tortured arguments and reasoning is produced, favourable facts are meticulously recorded and squeezed dry to support the assumptions, unfavorable facts are simply ignored, or cavalierly dismissed in the "Obviously This Cant Be So" mode, when it is obvious to no one except the person making the argument.

The IDSA is specifically mentioned because it writes so much, and because it is a microcosm of the Indian elite. It has civil Servants, military officers retired and serving, economists, historians, scientists, geographers, international relations specialists and so on.

If you have the patience to go through IDSA's writings, you will learn everything you didn't want to know and nothing you wanted to know. You will never read anything explaining why someone acts the way he does. You will never find anything written from the perspective

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of the adversary, coldly analyzing his motives, compulsions, capabilities. Always there is a mass of opinions pretending to be facts, and justifications of why we are right and everyone else is wrong.

This is all very well as propaganda. But propaganda is of no use in an eyeball to eyeball confrontation, when you need to know how the adversary will react if you initiate a particular line of action.

There is no intention here to single out IDSA : its faults are those of all Indians.

The biggest obstacle in the creation of effective Red Teams is our ethnocentricity. We are positive we are so clever, there is no requirement to study anything. Our superior intellect reveals all needed knowledge instantly, somewhat like Superman's x-ray vision used on Lois Lane.

In India everyone is an expert on anything. So why study Pakistan, or China, or the Soviet Union, or the United States? When packaged wisdom on everything from Star Wars to ethnic riots in Karachi is available to us as our divine right, why waste time studying anything?

Some of Ibis attitude comes from intellectual laziness.

But much of it has to do with the illegitimacy of dissent. In India to differ from accepted modes of thought is to be unpatriotic.

Familiarizing yourself with Red's way of thinking and arguing that Red will take a particular course in a given situation is seen as tantamount to defending Red.

My wife studies Mandarin Chinese. Commonly, she will be asked why she wants to study the language of an enemy. Her reply is that we need to understand the enemy better than we understand ourselves.

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But that otherwise intelligent persons should ask this question is itself a damning indictment of the Indian system. Incredibly enough, it is impossible to get a doctorate in the Chinese language in India. For such an elementary study a scholar has to go abroad.

The state of our Pakistan studies program is revealing. In short, there is no Pakistan studies program. There are isolated individuals trying to do their best against a huge inertia compounded equally of indifference, arrogance, and laziness. One of these individuals is Samuel Baid of the United News of India. His job is to read the Pakistani press. But since he is at a news agency, no one takes him seriously. Another person is Rajinder Sareen, who runs a series of newsletters on South Asia with the collective and peculiar acronym POT, for Public Opinion Trends. He lacks funds to obtain competent Urdu translators because no one is willing to subsidize such an important undertaking.

In 1977 I wrote a paper for IDSA Journal assessing the re-equipment needs of the Pakistan armed forces. It was a modest effort at quantifying Pakistani arms requirements and how these might be paid for. Immediately the accusation was made that the Americans had planted the article. It is still unclear to me what relevance the comment had. Are we or the Americans going to fight the Pakistanis? And if it is us, isn't it necessary to at least ask these questions? Where do the Americans enter into the picture, and what interest could they have in planting such an article?

When the basic thinking of a nation is twisted, then the output produced by its intellectuals will also be twisted.

The sad truth is that the Government of India has no time for objective analyses on any subject. You either support the party line, in which case you get a pat on the back but no real reward, or, you get left out in the cold.

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Many years ago, William Proxmire of the United States Senate held hearings on waste in American defence. Among other issues he zeroed on studies done for the Defence Department on witchcraft in Zaire.

There are two points to consider. One, can we imagine our own, Research and Analysis ~1ing commissioning, say, studies of South West American shamanism as a way of understanding America better? Two, perhaps Senator Proxmire was wrong to consider this a wasted study.

My father served with the United Nations in Zaire, then called the Congo. As a child, I heard a story told by a colleague of his. The colleague's jeep had been stuck in mud on a remote road of the vast country. No help was in sight. Suddenly, a witch doctor emerged from the jungle, with four men who moved as if in a drugged trance. Seeing the U. N. officer stuck, he beckoned to the men, who quietly picked up the jeep and deposited it on firm ground. The group then disappeared into the jungle on the other side of the road.

Here is a phenomenon worth studying. If with the use of native drugs a man can be put into a trance and can then lift a load of half-a-ton, then there are obvious military applications.

It is a safe bet that should you need information about some obscure tribal group in India, the best experts would be sitting not in India but in the US or the Soviet Union.

The essence of objective analysis is open academic interaction. In the United States, the Government openly recruits the best available talent from university campuses. But here—well, consider this story.

A cousin returned after studying Russian for five years in Moscow. I suggested she consider RAW as a job. Now, my reader might know that you do not just apply to the U.P.S.C. for a RAW job

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this great agency has to approach you.

A dear friend at IDSA is married to a RAW officer. That his wife is in RAW must be known to everyone who knows him. My friend tends to be absent-minded. I told him about my cousin, and he promised to speak to his wife. As I walked away, he came running to stop inc. "Oh, Ravi, of course I'll do your work, but you know the organisation that you mentioned my wife works for? Well, actually she doesn't work for that organisation."

This appeared to be just another amusing eccentricity of my friend, only to later learn that if you work for RAW you are not supposed to mention it to anyone. Understandable for an operational officer, but for an academic?

For two years I have been trying to get a grant to go abroad to study centrifuge technology. My position on the Pakistan bomb is that we are swallowing American propaganda and that Pakistan has nowhere near mastered this technology. The institutions that might be prepared to give such a grant, for example, the Centre for Study of Developing Societies or the Centre for Policy Research, lack the necessary resources. The Government has the money. But why should it fund a dissenting outsider?

The Government could fund an insider. But why should any insider bother with such an obscure subject? He has his secure job, his annual increments, his promotion grades. He must worry about his Dearness Allowance installment, his son's school admission, getting a hospital bed for his grandmother. How can he spare time to study the Pakistani centrifuge?

And even the insider cannot speak objectively: he too must follow the party line, or suffer.

The Pakistanis display the same emotional limitations as their

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Indian brothers. But as the smaller power, fighting for survival, Pakistan is forced into a greater objectivity regarding itself and its adversaries.

There are other issues in Pakistan's superior ability to assess its situation. For example, the Pakistanis have a leader equal to the best we have ever had, and superior to any we have seen in recent years. The continuity of Pakistan's foreign policy and the ability of its diplomats is well known. In India, foreign secretaries come and go like temporary workers at the Maruti car plant.

But most important of all is that the Pakistanis take us seriously whereas we don't take them seriously.

So they win and we lose.

**B. SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT**

To summarize our argument so far.

1. India was hoping to create a situation in which going to war with Pakistan became possible.

2. We failed to create such a situation for many reasons, including Pakistan's refusal to oblige us by starting something. Instead of getting into a panic at India's clear indication that we were planning to attack, it countered by positioning its two strike forces at both ends of the Punjab, thus implying that it could retaliate for any attack on Sind.

3. Because India has no proper understanding of how Pakistan's limitations and our own capabilities, plus because we have a faulty strategy, we could not call Pakistan's bluff.

4. The Government believed that an external attack on the

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Punjab might be combined with an internal uprising that would make it impossible to hold the Punjab. This worry was a main reason for further preventing objective analysis.

5. The Government does not see the exchange of Punjab in return for Sind as a viable or a desirable option.

6. Accordingly the Government backed down and began re-assuring Pakistan that it had no intention to go to war.

7. The Government then did its best to cover up, including insisting on secret negotiations. As usual, it manipulated the press and its loyalists to claim that India was always on top of the situation and that the dastardly Pakistanis were busted.

8. That what happened is tantamount to a defeat in war for India, with consequences so severe and so far reaching that they can only be guessed at for now.

Our assertion is that the Government should merely have ignored the Pakistani counter-threat. If the Pakistanis were not forthcoming with., a *caucus belli*, we should have manufactured one.

To support this assertion, we have to show there was no threat from Pakistan to the Punjab despite its troubled internal situation.

This requires a most thorough analysis of the military balance between the two Countries. Obviously, we will need to concentrate most on the army, but will not ignore the navies and air forces.

## **SECTOR BALANCES**

In this chapter we will examine the balance of forces in each sector. This is the core of our analysis on which our entire argument about the events of the winter of 1986/87 are based.

Army formations usually operate in their assigned sectors, with little shifting between sectors during operations. Once reserves become committed to a particular sector, because of the short duration of operations there is little opportunity to reposition the reserves. The sector balance, therefore, tends to be fairly stable and allows of a static comparison of forces.

Shifting between sectors tends to be minor. In 1971, for example, 51 Parachute Brigade left Sugar Sector in Himachal for the Foxtrot Sector. 163 Brigade left 3 Division in Leah and also went to Foxtrot sector near Gangauagar. 33 Brigade left 39 Division in the Pathankot area for an area north of 10 Division at Chhamb. Admittedly, when the war ended there was a major shift of HQ 11 Corps, HQ 9 Division with two brigades, and 50 Parachute Brigade from east to west. But this is very unusual and is of significance only in a long war. Shifts like 4 and 6 Divisions from Central Command to Eastern Command occurred because these two divisions were part of reserves, and reserves can, of course, go to the required sectors.

## **NORTH KASHMIR**

We define North Kashmir to include the entire Northern Kashmir Line of Control from Ladakh to the Kishenganga River.

Before the build-up prompted by the Siachen confrontation which began in 1984, India deployed its 3 Infantry Division with two brigades out of Leah, and its over strength 121 (1) Brigade out of Kargil. In addition to these three brigades, there was a de facto brigade in the

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geographical 26 Sector, also called the Patparpur Sector, holding the bulk of the Ladak Scouts battalions. The third regular brigade of the division, as has been noted previously, was withdrawn in 1971 and never replaced, because tension with the Chinese reduced through the 1970s and most of the 1980s- At one time 3 Division had only four regular battalions, though additional assignments included two battalions of special high-altitude troops and Ladak Scouts of course, reinforcements from other sectors could have been made easily if required.

As 26 Sector and 121 (I) Brigade between them deployed over 13 battalions, it was only logical that one day a separate division be carved out for this area, and this is what happened with 28 Division out of Kargil.

Despite the atrociously high altitudes in the region, 3 Division has always been infantry because its area is high mountain plateau. There is no requirement for the specialized mountain configuration used in the east. 28 Division covers very rugged mountain terrain, which is why it is organized as a mountain division.

The Siachin area is covered by 102 (1) Brigade, further simplifying the command and control of formations in this vast area. It is rumored that this one brigade alone uses a logistical lift equal to that required by all of 3 Division. With fighting taking place all the way upto 20,000 feet, if nothing else, the Indian and Pakistani Armies are setting new records for high altitude warfare. The advent of the heavy-lift Mi-26 helicopter has dramatically altered India's supply capabilities: it carries as much as 5-tons to Daulat Beg Oldie, situated above 17,000-feet.

Because of the increase of forces in the area in terms of command formations and a more realistic definition of the size of brigades and divisions, there is a good case for the Army to set up a separate corps here. Controlling operations from HQ XV Corps in

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Srinagar cannot be a simple or a preferred solution.

Towards the western end of this sector an independent sector is located at Gujrat. Previously this sector was protected first by the paramilitary and later by regular battalion strength formations. But because of the Increasing density of troops on both sides of the border, one day there might be a division here. This division would deploy its main strength in the Kashmir Valley, becoming a reserve for XV Corps and taking pressure off 19 Division. If this independent brigade is tied to Srinagar, it should be discussed under 19 Division. We have, however, mentioned it here to clarify the deployments in the North, because for Pakistan the entire northern line is one sector.

Pakistan's FCNA came into existence after 1971. Up to the end of the war, Pakistan relied on the ruggedness of the terrain to deter any Indian large scale action, holding the entire line with only para-military formations. But both in 1965 and 1971 it lost ground on account of India's superior numbers and positioning. By the late 1970s FCNA had become a two-brigade structure, and by the early 1980s it had four brigades.

Of these, one is in Siachen, one at Skardu, and one at Gilgit. 111 (1) Brigade is in reserve at Rawalpindi, where presumably it can also serve as a corps reserve for X Corps. Surprisingly, Pakistan has not converted FCNA into a regular division : perhaps like India it wants to down play its actual strength.

While India can induct reinforcements into the sector in wartime, Pakistan may not be able to spare much because its army is much smaller. Nonetheless, compared to earlier wars, Pakistan is far better off in FCNA even allowing for land's reinforcements.

India might seem to have many opportunities to attack in this sector because of its superior strength. The problem is that the Indian line of communications runs very close to the Cease Fire Line. From

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Srinagar the road goes to Sonamarg, Dras, Kargil and then Leah, and a substantial number of troops get tied up just to protect the road.

The loss of the road itself would not be fatal because:

All formations have large reserve stockpiles of equipment to enable them to fight for many months.

Air re-supply is available on a considerable scale.

The Manali-Leh road, built for such an emergency, can be activated.

The problem is, rather, that if the road is cut our tactical position becomes difficult as all movement takes place along this lateral axis.

The location of the road and the need to protect it force India into some very predictable moves. For example, we always have to attack from Kargil and from Dras to push the Pakistanis as far back from the road as possible. This predictability limits our flexibility and prevents the achievement of surprise.

Despite the new induction's in the last ten years by both sides, the force to space ratio in this sector is very low. This is to say that given the length of the front, the number of troops is insubstantial. This should provide excellent opportunity for maneuver. The high mountains, however, impose severe constraints on which areas can be used for operations.

While India has good lateral east-west communications, Pakistan has good north-south communication through the river valleys. It is easier for us to defend than to attack: but the converse is true for Pakistan.

In the Fourth Round I had suggested that because this area is

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relatively thinly manned, and few fixed defenses exist, it should be possible for both sides to make major gains. My scenario where Pakistan makes a surprise takeover of the Nubra Valley is now inapplicable because the front is locked due to new induction's and room for maneuver is correspondingly limited. With fighting already going on in the Siachin area, no surprise takeover of the Nubra is possible.

The area is virtually unpopulated. So the ground is less politically important than in West Kashmir. Ultimately, however, the fundamental of every Indo-Pakistan war is Kashmir: Pakistan wants it to complete its claims on India, and India will do anything to prevent Pakistan this.

It is conceivable that we could take western Kashmir without affecting the situation in northern Kashmir, geographically a much larger area, because Pakistan's lines of communication from the NWFP would still be intact. So if we seriously plan to recover Kashmir, then this vital area needs a lot more attention.

Historically, the Only fighting that resulted in strategic gains in North Kashmir took place in 1947-48. A small number of Pakistani troops occupied the areas held to this day. There were no Indian troops in the area, and the few levies of the Maharaja of Kashmir proved ineffective. The area was considered inaccessible, though this did not stop the Pakistanis from capturing it India could not even spare a battalion as Army HQ was totally focused on Western Kashmir. This omission, however logical it may have appeared at that time, was to cost us dear, especially after the Pakistan China tie-up.

India started to worry about the area only in the late 1950s, when trouble with China began brewing. Then it was discovered that holding Ladak while simultaneously protecting the cease-fire line against Pakistan was a tough proposition, which it remains to this day.

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Both in 1965 and 1971 there were no strategic gains in this sector. Fighting took place for piquet's dominating the Leh road. In both cases India did better than Pakistan, possibly because Pakistan had committed few resources. We had large numbers of regular troops, Pakistan had none. In all fairness, however, we must note that the actions were all conducted by light infantry. The Pakistani scout groups on the other side were fully professional troops. They might even have performed better than Indian regulars because while the latter are rotated into the sector, the scouts stayed put. It might then perhaps be wrong to attribute India with any advantage on account of its regulars.

India's claimed advances in the 1971 War in the Patparpur Sector turned out to be non-existent with the arrival of the spring thaw. We never gained as much ground as originally thought; but at least for the first time a serious effort was made in battalion strength to go beyond the usual fight for piquet's and the ground was laid for the brigade-sized operations which the sector will see in a future war.

**WEST KASHMIR**

Western Kashmir falls into four sectors

West North Kashmir, consisting of Gurais, Tithwal, and Uri

West South Kashmir, consisting of Poonch, Meudhar, and Rajouri

Jammu, consisting of Naoshera, Akhnur, and Jammu

Pathankot, consisting of Kathua, Samba, and Pathankot

**(A) WEST NORTH KASHMIR**

This area is held by Indian 19 Division out of Baramula and its forward brigades at Tithwal and Uri, and reserve brigades at Baramula

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and Srinagar. There are a total of five brigades, while the independent sector at Gurais with a mix of regular and BSF battalions can be counted as a de facto sixth brigade of this large division. Each of its own five brigades has five regular and one BSF battalions.

19 Division is more akin to a corps, but the command and control problem is not as severe as might be assumed at first sight because virtually all formations are static. This is virtually a fortress formation rather than a conventional division.

Nonetheless, controlling upwards of 35 battalions plus reinforcements cannot imply the easiest of situations for GOC 19 Division. The 35,000 men under his command would be much better split into three divisions, one each at Gurais, Tithwal and Uri.

The Gurais division would maintain one brigade up and two in reserve in the Valley; the other two divisions would maintain two brigades up and one brigade in reserve in the Valley. With XV Corps made responsible only for West North Kashmir, a great deal of rationality would be introduced into the defenses of this vital area.

The route from Uri to Srinagar is, of course, the old road to the Valley before partition. You traveled by rail to Muzaffarabad and onward by road. There existed a mule track from Tithwal to Baramulla, which is why defending this route became the second most important task of 19 Division. Lastly, Gurais is the back gate entry to the Valley, and it is sensible for the Indian Army to have blocked this door.

If we conceive of this sector as the left half of a lady's Chinese fan, we see that the roads from the fan's hinge (Srinagar) to the periphery (Uri, Tithwal, Gurais) are excellent, but that the links along the periphery are inadequate or non-existent. Thus, reserves from Srinagar and Baramulla can be sent quickly to Uri, Tithwal and Gurais, but there can be no movement between these three sectors without first returning to the Valley.

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This creates the worst possible situation for a military commander: his forces are deployed as long fingers and no finger can support the other. Each sector must fight its own battle and must, then, be correspondingly self-sufficient in forces.

Pakistan, on the other hand, has excellent lateral communications and rail heads it holds a shallow part of mountainous Western Kashmir with the plains behind. So it can switch forces and concentrate at will at any point along the line between Jammu and Tithwal.

This gives it the initiative in the entire area.

19 Division has to be particularly strong compared to its counterpart to the south, 25 Division, because it enjoys no lateral mobility whereas 25 Division is somewhat better off, and because it guards the gateway to Srinagar.

Nonetheless, India holds one advantage not enjoyed by Pakistan we attack downhill, whereas Pakistan has to move uphill.

The complication in all the Jammu and Kashmir sectors is the political importance of the ground. No first strike can be countered without giving up some ground. In Jammu and Kashmir every square kilometer lost no matter what the reason is held against the commander with his superiors and their political superiors.

This unfortunate situation should have been corrected years ago. Our generals, however, cannot stand up to our politicians to explain giving ground is an essential tactic of war.

The only remedy then becomes to over-insure in each sector, and to maintain troops right on the line, holding every kilometer as closely as possible, even though this involves violating the principles of war

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relating to surprise and economy of force. There can be no economy or concentration of force because the enemy is aware of your compulsions to avoid giving up ground, and can, therefore, accurately predict your actions.

Presumably Pakistan faces the same problem, because its part of Kashmir is as politically important. Generally, however, the Pakistani leaders, perhaps because so many have been military men, have shown a greater coolness in surrendering ground for tactical or strategic reasons. And Pakistan is insured to an extent by its ability to switch forces. Economy of force, concentration, and surprise can all be maintained.

This, however, is only one of the two reasons why such large forces have to be mentioned in this sector. The other, seldom openly stated, is the perceived need to contend with a hostile domestic population in wartime.

The battle will, then, be on two fronts. This aspect will become crucially important to our analysis of why the Government backed down when Pakistan concentrated opposite Punjab in the middle of January 1987. Here we will confine ourselves to the / example of 161 Brigade. It has the usual five regular and one BSF battalion common to the other brigades. The Brigade commander, however, does not regard his forces as equal to 2/3rds of a division. He allots three infantry battalions, a normal brigade, to the front. And he allots the other three battalions to keep open his Line of Communications, with Baramula, 60 kms away.

So the commander, 161 Brigade has, from his viewpoint, only the minimum number of troops required for his job. Given the importance of the ground, we may speculate he would like a minimum of another regular battalion. And the Indian Army, at least, is no stranger to seven battalion brigades.

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In West Kashmir, offensive operations are normally conducted with each sector concentrating a two-brigade force along one axis. Thus, though six brigades are available to 19 Division, it will attack only along one of the three axes, at Uri, Tithwal, or Gurais, unless reinforced by at least one more brigade.

On Pakistan's side, Uri-Tithwal is faced by 12 Division out of Muzaffarabad, belonging to X Corps from Rawalpindi. Prior to the 1971 War, this division had 24 battalions. Despite the new raising of 19 Division, which has been inducted on to the line in Jammu and Kashmir as a third division, thus shortening the area of responsibility of the two divisions located there in 1971 (12 and 23), 12 Division has six brigades and we may assume it has at least 24 battalions. Pakistan 12 Division's sector partially overlaps Indian 25 Division in that one brigade is stationed at Bagh, in the Haji Pir bulge, and another yet further south. This accounts for its size.

**(B) WEST SOUTH KASHMIR**

This is protected by 25 Division and covers three sub-sectors Poonch, Mendhar, and Rajouri. Each sub-sector is held by a strong brigade and there will be at least one reserve brigade, presumably located (as was the case in the 1970s) at Srinagar. When, after 1971, 19 Division used to have 18 battalions (opposed to the 25 regular plus the Gurais brigade that it now features), 25 Division had 16 battalions. It may be possible that the division now has a fifth brigade.

Whenever we add the attached BSF battalions to the Army's strength, the inevitable objection is that the BSF cannot fight as battalions. So while similarly equipped and trained, it cannot be equated to a regular battalion.

Accepting for a moment that this is true, in the mountains a BSF battalion must be equated with a regular one because it frees the infantry from routine tasks like protecting the Line of Communications,

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isolated piquet's and manning positions up to company strength. The distinction between a BSF and an infantry battalion serves no purpose except to muddle calculations. Leaving the BSF under the separate control of the Home Ministry even if the operational control of battalions in vital border areas rests with the Defence Ministry only adds to the considerable confusion. In war a prime requirement is clear lines of authority and responsibility, if the BSF in these sectors is to live and fight with the army, surely it is more sensible to make it part of the army and be done. In the plains there are merits to having separate forces in that the BSF on our side and Rangers on Pakistan arc perceived as paramilitary and therefore as less provocative.

In line with the Ladak Scouts regiment for Ladak, a separate Kashmir Scouts should be created, taking in the 15-i-- BSF battalions in West Kashmir. Equality' with the Army in matters of service conditions, pay, training and prestige will go a long way towards resolving the problems which now exist between the two forces.

However carried away the Government may get by the Soviet model, it must remember this is not Russia. If the Home Ministry is to maintain a counter-coup force under it own control, absurd as such a force is in the Indian context, then let the force be separate and stationed where it is required, i. c., in Delhi, not with the Army along all the borders. In the Soviet Union there are certainly no regiments of KGB or MVD troops serving in the first line of Soviet Group of Forces Germany.

The West South Kashmir sector has the Akhnur-Poonch road running north to south as a lateral link. But the connections with he Srinagar-Jammu road have been bad because the spine of the Pir Panjal mountains separates these two roads. Now east-west cross links are being constructed at many places and old links improved. If the frontal road now gets cut, India can still reinforce its sub-sectors from the Srinagar-Jammu road, whereas previously this would have meant isolation for the sub-sectors. This also eases a previous

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problem earlier, the loss of Akhnur would have led to the isolation of 25 Division except for minor resupply through secondary roads, but now it can continue fighting.

But the availability of this lateral road also imposes a requirement to hold it along an almost 100-km sector between Poonch and Naoshera, followed by a further almost 70-km to Akhnur, the headquarters of the next division, 10 Division. Despite the presence of an independent brigade at Naoshera, in wartime additional troops must be inducted. For example, in 1971 Pakistan sent two brigades against Poonch and might have broken through except that India, luckily, anticipating such a move, sent 33 Brigade of 39 Division from Yol, Himachal Pradesh, to beef up the defences.

The defence of this sector is, however, much too stretched. It would make greater sense to restrict 25 Division to Poonch Mehander, raising a fresh division for Rajouri and Naoshera. With six brigades here, albeit smaller than the existing four plus one reserve, both defence and attack become easier.

Another problem is, of course, that the 40-km road between Poonch and Uri (19 and 25 Division sectors) is held by Pakistan, so there can be no switching of troops between the two Indian divisions.

No offensive in this sector can be undertaken without the induction of troops from outside, because, as noted, the deployments available are insufficient for the defence, with nothing to spare for the offense, India might find it simpler to ignore the question of an attack from this sector and instead advance from Akhnur and Jammu to outflank Pakistani defences, but this again implies a lack of flexibility in that Pakistan will know what to expect.

Meantime, Pakistan is free to move happily along any part of these two sectors thanks to its excellent lateral roads and first-rate communications with the rest of Pakistan. South of Pakistan 12

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Division is located 19 Division with three brigades, and then 23 Division with four brigades. These two divisions cover the area opposite Indian 25 and 10 Divisions.

An incidental matter: while 19 Division's brigades are all Azad Kashmir troops, only three of 12 Divisions and one of 23 Divisions' enjoy this distinction.

Pakistan can easily reinforce any part of the line with its 57 Division located somewhere in the area, plus the reserve brigade for FCNA located at Rawalpindi. The northern army reserve, 6 Armored' and 17 Divisions from Kharian can also be used to reinforce. If the Soviet front is quiet, or if the Soviets really withdraw from Afghanistan as they promise, then even units from Pakistan XI Corps out of Peshawar can become available within hours.

Pakistan's internal lines of communication in the Haji Pir bulge allow it to strike where it wants, against Uri, or against Poonch in combination with frontal attacks. These two-sided attacks can prove very difficult to hold.

Additionally, Pakistan does not have to worry about a hostile Hindu population.

So whereas Pakistan can attack where it likes, India is limited to using in place forces from Tithwal to Uri, and must induct extra troops into West South Kashmir to make any serious offensive.

Because of the mountainous terrain, however, neither side is likely to achieve major gains. As a caveat it should be said that if one side makes a breakthrough for example, if Pakistan took Poonch or India took Kotli, depending on how panicked the defence becomes, it is possible the whole front will unravel and permit a strategic victory. But if both sides hold reasonably firm, neither side will make any strategic gain.

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Mountain positions stoutly defended are virtually impossible to assault frontally. They are 'usually taken by a slow process of infiltration around the position, and then a surprise attack, say from three sides. Cutting roads behind and between positions is of the utmost importance. A brigade attacking battalion position can break through after some time, but not if reinforcements arrive. This not only takes time, with active, aggressive patrolling the defender can prevent encirclement. The Central Italian campaign of 1944 is an excellent example of how difficult it is to take mountain positions. And, of course, the Italian mountains are quite geographically tame compared to ours.

Either we go around Pakistani defences in Occupied Kashmir, as General K.P. Candeth started to in 1971, or a large-scale employment of helicopters must be envisaged. 'Airmobile warfare in the mountains is not the easiest of propositions.. If, however, a decisive result is desired there may be little other choice.

Yet, it must always be remembered that in West Kashmir as elsewhere, time is on India's side. We are bigger, more powerful, better equipped. If we continue hammering, Pakistan 'will break, though the process may take some weeks. An eight-week war gives very different results from a two-week war.

In as much as India's official doctrine assumes as a short war, it is wholly faulty. The responsibility lies squarely with the civilian leadership. You cannot have a doctrine designed to give the weaker side a guaranteed stalemate. Unless you're not serious about winning.

(C) **NORTH JAMMU SECTOR**

This sector encompasses Naoshera, Akhnur, and Jammu.

Chhamb-Akhnur has seen the bloodiest fighting between the two

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adversaries both in 1965 and 1971 because:

It represents Pakistan's best hope of isolating Jammu from Kashmir. the Jammu-Poonch road via Akhnur lying just a few kilometers from Pakistan territory.

It represents a great danger to Pakistan because (1) if India takes the Marala Headwork's the water in Pakistan's anti-tank canals can be switched off in the entire Sialkot sector, (2) Sialkot is threatened from two sides and (3) the process of out-flanking Pakistan Occupied Kashmir can begin.

In 1965, Pakistan sent infiltrators to raise havoc, and when the Kashmir Valley was aflame, launched its 7 Division against our 168 Brigade and overran our positions. The armor follow-up, however, could not be accomplished because when India crossed the international frontier on September 5, Pakistan 6 Armored Division became bogged down in holding off our 1 Armored Division.

Given rue political situation prevailing in Kashmir, with half Indian Army chasing infiltrators and the leadership already on-edge, the loss of Akhnur would have proved disastrous. But luck was with us despite our initial losses.

In 1971 Pakistan launched a particularly, fierce attack against Chhamb, using its HQ 23 Division reinforced to five brigades plus the 2 (I) Armored Brigade and additional tank regiments. The wonder was that in the face of this formidable force 191 Brigade, now part of 10 Division, held on for three days, particularly as it had prepared no defences in anticipation of its impending attack.

After the War recriminations were leveled at everyone, particularly at 5 Assam, which was the first to break, leaving the way open for the Pakistani advance. It is easy to criticize, but difficult to appreciate that Chhamb should never be held in any event because it

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is indefensible. Failing that, the Chhamb brigade should be allowed to fall back slowly, letting the backup brigades stop the enemy.

The United States till 1974 had a draft. This ensured that politicians and bureaucrats had military experience. Though the draft has ended, many decision-makers voluntarily enlist in the reserves. The recently resigned U.S. Navy Secretary, John Lehman, for example, is an A-6 carrier bomber pilot in the naval reserves. He does his annual duty as required. So when he talks of the Navy, he at least knows what is involved. The mere thought of our Defence Secretary taking off two weeks annually to don his back pack and heft his rifle through the Punjab fields is mind-boggling. A former minister of state for Defence, Singh Deo, was a Territorial infantry officer. But we know how long he lasted at his post.

To criticize senior officers for lack of initiative and courage is fair. But to criticize the men who actually face the horror of combat is totally wrong.

This area normally has six infantry and one armored brigade and two division HQs, 10 at Akhnur and 26 at Chhamb. The controlling corps EQ is XVI from Nagrota. Reserve brigades of Reserve brigades of XVI Corps and Northern Command are available for reinforcement. In 1971, for example, an extra brigade was put at Naoshera, with seven army and BSF battalions, and one brigade of 36 Division was put between Naoshera and Akhnur. HQ 26 Division was allotted four brigades, and a corps reserve brigade was given to HQ 10 Division to strengthen it during the Pakistani attack.

Because Pakistan treats the whole Sialkot sector as one, we will discuss its forces separately. We have already noted that Pakistan 23 Division overlaps part of our north Jammu sector.

(D) **PATHANKOT SECTOR.**

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There is a distance of about 110 road kilometers from Jammu to Pathankot. Even with 26 Division at one end (Jammu side) and 39 Division from. Yol, H.P. at the other (Pathankot end), this distance has always been considered too long for this vital sector. It has been customary to induct additional forces here. In 1965 (before 39 Division was in place), Indian 1 Corps with 1 Armored, 6 and 14 Divisions attacked from near Jammu with Sialkot as the objective. So it can be appreciated that there is quite a lot of room for large-scale action in the area. Because India was offensively deployed, the gap was automatically filled.

In 1971, 54 Division from Hyderabad-Secunderabad, a reserve division, took over Kathua-Samba sub-sectors, both defensively and to support the 1 Corps attack toward Shakergarh.

In view of the area's vulnerability, plus with the spill over of the Punjab unrest to Jammu and Kashmir, it was inevitable that a new division be permanently inducted into the area. Now 29 Infantry Division and an ad hoc armored brigade are located here. This will be of great help in case the Punjab turns hostile and external reinforcements are not possible.

In the recent mobilization crisis, 6 Division was back in this sector, making an already swollen XVI Corps, the biggest in- the Indian Army, yet larger, with a total of six divisions plus additional .brigades and three armored brigades. This is about the size of the force that took East Pakistan in 1971.

Pathankot is e key point for India because through this 50-km deep corridor passes India's entire rail and road communications between the bc4rtl4nd and Kashmir.

The potential for Pakistan to cut this corridor, either by a clean advance to the base of the Himalayas or by advancing a short distance and interdicting the main Pathankot-Jammu road with artillery, has

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always worried India. Its first response was to construct a second road behind the first. Now, however, with maximum ranges of modern artillery increasing to 40-km, this is no guarantee of safety.

if targets are well dug in, the heaviest of barrages may have no effect. But if targets are soft and moving, as with vehicles, the results will be devastating. So far from just blocking the Pakistanis on the border itself, India has to push Pakistan back at least 20-km to ensure the security of the road.

The importance of the corridor, and its vulnerability, is the reason that XVI Corps has the largest number of independent armored brigades (three), and that 29 and 39 Divisions are the only divisions in the Indian Army to enjoy the support of an entire armored brigade each the Ad Hoc and the 16th respectively.

Come what may, India has to attack first from Pathankot. There is a brigade of 15 Division at Gurdaspur, as the Pathankot Corridor cannot be defended without holding Gurdaspur firmly. In the 1971 operations 36 Division was used from here to help in the attack on Shakergarh.

Besides the new division at Pathankot, the division under raising at Una-Hamirpur-Ropar will also be available for this sensitive area. This will further reduce the need to induct reinforcements, saving valuable mobilization time and also help to contain civilian unrest.

With the eventual stationing of three divisions in or around Pathankot (29, 39, plus the new division) it becomes necessary to provide Pathankot with its own corps HQ.

The careful and skeptical reader maintaining count, will see that we have already asked for three new divisions and three new corps HQs, and we have barely entered the plains on our tour from the high mountains.

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At its most basic, however, what is a corps H Q? A staff of about 100, and a signal company. In most cases we have suggested mainly a rationalization of existing forces rather than any new additions.

For example, in 19 Division s sector and (3urais, there are already about 35 battalions (including BSF) plus 8-9 regiments of artillery. This is adequate for three divisions Without much addition of outside troops. There is no immediate need to create the extra engineers and support units required by a division and corps because the actual combat strength is not being increased except marginally. The same applies to the proposal of a separate corps for West South Kashmir. The creation of a new corps for Pathankot requires nothing beyond the command and control staff.

With a corps each covering Ladakh, Srinagar, Rajouri, Jammu and Pathankot, Northern Command will have five corps and 12 divisions reflecting its true strength rather than the two corps and Dine divisions (including one under raising) which is its nominal strength.

In conclusion, we may note that India has constructed backup roads behind the two Pathankot Corridor roads. These pass through the mountain districts of Chamba (H.P.), Kishtwar (J.K.), and Riasi (J.K.). While not a substitute for communications through the corridor, they ensure the movement of troops between the mainland and Kashmir in the event of the loss of Pathankot.

### **PAKISTAN'S SIALKOT SECTOR**

Pakistan's great advantage in this area is that Sialkot is a single sector with excellent internal lines of communications. This is why Pakistan can keep just two infantry divisions, an armored brigade and an (I) infantry brigade in this area. In a short war, which is obviously all that Pakistan can plan for, these troops are adequate to prevent India from making any major gains.

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Pakistan 1 Corps has its HQ at Mangala. Its 15 Division of four brigades is headquartered at Sialkot. 8 Division disposes its brigades at Pasrur, Narowal and Zafarwal. 8 (1) Armored and 54 (I) Brigade are the corps reserves. Two other divisions are also part of Pakistan I Corps, while also forming its Army Reserve North. These are 6 Armored and 17 Divisions out of Kharian, the -largest cantonment in Pakistan. This will be matched or perhaps exceeded by our giant Cantonment at Bhatinda. With four divisions here plus another available on short notice from the north (57 Division) Pakistan is well-protected in the face of the several Indian divisions in Jammu and Pathankot sectors.

This gives Pakistan a total of five divisions in this area.

Because of its interior lines of communication, Pakistan can attack Jammu, Samba, Kathua, Pathankot and Gurdaspur with equal facility, or switch forces with ease. Pakistan does not have everything its own way this salient, thrusting into India, is Vulnerable to being pix~cl1ed out by India, as we were doing in 1971. The problem for India is that by advancing, it pushes Pakistani troops back into a more compact, more easily defended area, and a long war becomes inevitable for decisive results.

To buttress its defense and to utilize the minimum number of troops, Pakistan has fortified the eatire area. There are a number of rivers, canals, and tributaries. For example, the Ravi protects the entire south eastern side of the Sialkot sector. The same does not apply to India, because in order to attack Dera Baba Nanak, the gateway to Gurdaspur, Pakistan has only to concentrate on its own side of the Ravi.

To strengthen these water obstacles, Pakistan has also created a series of earthworks and anti-tank ditches. Some of these ditches are 120-feet side, and so cannot be spanned by the fast-moving armored

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vehicle launched bridges. Even a relatively narrow water obstacle can hold up an army for long periods: we have only to remember what happened to the Allies at the crossings of the Rapido River in Italy in World War II.

It may be noted that when war gainers assign values for the defence against a heavy attack, it is customary to allow defenders behind seriously prepared obstacles almost 3.5 times greater chance of destroying the attacker than in open, hastily prepared defenses. And since the area in question is relatively small, with the entire line fortified, outflanking the line of fortifications is impossible.

In the long run, the solution for India lies either in (1) permanently widening the Pathankot Corridor, either by force or by trading territory elsewhere (for example in Rajasthan near Tanot, reducing India's threat to the Karachi-Lahore communications lines), or (2) constructing a new broad gauge line from Roper (Punjab) to Talwara (H.P.), Mandi, Palampur, Nurpur (Punjab), Ramnager (Jammu) and then to Udhampur.

Such a line is certainly within the engineering capability of the Indian Railways. It might total about 300-kilometers depending on its alignment, with most passing through the Mandi and Kangra valleys which are fairly level ground. The Jammu-Udhampur line was budgeted to cost Rs. 1 crore per kilometer at 1983 prices, say Rs. 2 crore per finished kilometer at 1988 prices. Assume that the new proposed line costs Rs. 3 crore at 1987 prices, then an expenditure of about Rs. 1000 crore is required. This is the cost of maintaining and equipping a single infantry division for 10 Years. The new rail line will provide India a depth of another 50 Kilometers and lessen the importance of Pathankot.

**LAHORE SECTOR**

The dominant reality of the Lahore sector is the immensely fixed

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strong defenses constructed since 1947 and steadily improved. Aside from the usual anti-tank ditches and canals, the latter 'equipped with mechanisms to spread burning oil over the water, there are fixed strong points and extensive minefields.

1965 saw this sector as the focal point of both sides' efforts, because Lahore and Amritsar are the main cities in the Punjab. Whereas we launched a three division attack with Lahore as the objective, Pakistan sought to push two divisions through Kasur in a brilliantly conceived effort to outflank the Punjab defences, and run down the open Delhi road.

Later, India denied that Lahore was its objective, but clearly the famous city was a hoped-for prize. Our attack bogged down (1) on the fixed defences, including the unexpectedly tough resistance put up by the Pakistani Local Defence Units and (2) by the Pakistan Air Force attacks on our troops along the Grand Trunk Road. But with 23 Mountain Division coming up to join the attack, and with the prospect of fresh troops from the East, India could have broken through in a second offensive.

The Pakistani attack on Kasur, had it been successful, would have relied more on a psychological effect : two divisions could not have made it to Ambala, leave alone to Delhi. It is possible the intent was otherwise captured documents by which the targets were assessed as being Ambala and Delhi may not be entirely reliable, as they can represent disinformation, options, or discussions.

We know there was severe pressure on India to withdraw behind the Beas when Pakistan attacked Kasur. This would have left most of Gurdaspur, Ferozpur, and Amritsar Districts to the Pakistanis. But Lt.-Gen. Harbax Singh, GOC Western Command, refused to withdraw. That, and a staunch defence by Indian 4 Mountain Division and 2 (1) Armored brigade which bogged down the Pakistanis at Khem Karan, ended the Pakistani hops.

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The battle for Khem Karan shows how misleading are comparison based on a simple analysis of numbers and equipment. Facing the powerful Pakistan 1 Armored and its accompanying 11 Infantry Divisions, with 6 regiments of armor between them, as against our one mountain division and an armored brigade should have been a losing proposition. Particularly so as Pakistan had five regiments of Pattons and one of Chaffers with its two divisions as against our Shermans, a much older tank. The Centurion equipped division, 1 Armored Division, was away in the Sialkot sector.

(Readers interested in this historic clash should read Lt. Col. Bhupender Singh's excellent history of armor in the 1965 war, which along with Major Sita Ram Johri's two books on the 1962 war, is the best of the war histories in independent India.)

Theoretically the Pattons should have run through the Shermans like a knife through butter. The Sherman, a World War II veteran, should have been no match for the Patton, a first-line tank even for the U.S. at this time. But the Indians were in good defending positions, the attackers did not see the defending tanks often till too late (fatal in armored warfare, as the person getting in the first shot usually wins) and, most important, both the Pakistan divisions were not in good combat shape. The 1 Armored had been diluted to raise 6 Armored Division, and the 11 Division was a new formation.

Our 2(l) Armored Brigade was, on the other hand, an old, experienced formation. And 4 Division was burning to avenge its 1962 humiliation. Also, India too had six regiments of armor available, so that the inferior characteristics of the defending tanks were not worsened by an inferiority of numbers.

Recalling Khem Karan will be important in our analysis of what would have happened in the Punjab had Pakistan attacked in 1987.

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Today Pakistan defends its side of the border with a total of twelve brigades as opposed to eight in 1971. Pakistan IV Corps has its HQ at Lahore along with 10 and 11 Divisions and 3(I) Armored Brigade. The re-raised 14 Division is at Okara along with all three of its brigades and the 212 (1) Brigade in reserve. This corps also has 30 (I) Brigade, located probably somewhere around Lahore. This total of twelve brigades makes for a strong corps. In 1971, 14 Division and 212 (I) Brigade were not in place, the corps reserve function being performed by one brigade of 17 Division.

Though this sector saw some fairly fierce clashes in 1971, as at Hussainiwala, there were no major battles as neither side thought it worth its time to attempt a breach of the other's defences.

India in 1971 had its XI Corps with 7 and 14 Divisions around Ferozpur, and 15 Division of four brigades at Amritsar. An ad hoc armored brigade, later to become 6 (I) Armored Brigade, was also available.

India put two divisions at Ferozpur because the Kasur salient permits Pakistan to attack to the north or to the south. And in any case 14 Division detached 114 Brigade to protect Jalalabad-Muktsar, and 35 Brigade to 7 Division.

Because of the strong fixed defences in the northern Punjab sector, there is usually time to bring in reinforcing troops from outside. That is why the final mobilised line-up in this sector bears little resemblance to the peacetime deployment. In 1971, for example, aside from the induction of 14 Division, the deployment of 36 Division to Gurdaspur as part of I Corps shortened 15 Division's sector.

Today, 7 and 15 Divisions maintain their traditional positions, and 23 (1) Armored Brigade is XI Corps reserve. 55 (1) Brigade is located at Beas.

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15 Division's deployment of its four brigades is illustrative: one is at Amritsar, one at Jullunder, and two at Gurdaspur. Additionally, 9 Division from Meerut forward deploys a brigade at Jullunder to enable it to rapidly move into its mobilisation positions at Gurdaspur. In the recent mobilisation crisis, 23 Division from Ranchi went to Ferozpur sector and 57 Division from the Northeast went to Amritsar, so that a total of five divisions were in the Punjab, the largest deployment ever for a war emergency. The size of the deployment was dictated more by considerations of internal security than by the Pakistani threat, which can be quite adequately met by three or four divisions.

It may be noted that by late 1987 there has been a certain rationalisation of for earmarked for the Punjab, by the exchange of brigades between various divisions. It is very likely that the first of the new raisings will be a division HQ for Gurdaspur and the permanent shortening of 15 Division's area of responsibility. For example, if 9 Divisions brigade at Jullunder is given to 15 Division, the two brigades of 15 Division at Gurdaspur can be spun off to a new division without any major upheavals. A new division HQ at Gurdaspur would fit in nicely with a new corps HQ for Pathankot. This (as previously discussed) is needed because XVI Corps sector is too large. Interestingly, in 1965, and 1987 HQ I Corps from Mathura went to Pathankot.

**MULTAN SECTOR**

The Fourth Round had anticipated that the major battles of the next war would be fought between Fazilka and Anupgarh, the so-called Multan sector. This area is nowhere near as fortified as from Fazilka northward, it is open terrain, and does not feature the same problems of movement as the true desert. It is also relatively sparsely populated. At the time of writing the book, 1982, I believed that this was the crucial sector for the Army. But later the plans were changed to use the desert sector as the main stage, for reasons not known to me.

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In theory, a division should cover 30 kilometers. in World War I frontages were commonly a third of this, but with the development of so many infantry indirect fire weapons, greater mobility, and increases in artillery ranges, the larger frontages were accepted as standard and apply to this day. (There are exceptions, such as the border between the two Koreas, where the division density is greater).

In 1971, we saw that India and Pakistan had a dozen odd divisions for a front extending 1500-kilometers. The average frontage was, thus 150 kilometers, or five times greater than recommended. This was managed by leaving great gaps in the front held by small forces. For example: 51 (I) Parachute Brigade was responsible at the start of the 1971 War for a 250 km frontage. Pakistan, on its side, had only 18 Division to hold the 500 km area between Hyderabad and Karachi.

This was possible because both side had limited mobility, forcing deployments close to the rail terminal nodes. Areas where an enemy could concentrate could be easily identified from the start. Since the North Western rail network had been built for a united India, the terminal nodes were common.

With the improvement in road and rail communications (for example, with the conversion of the meter gauge railways on our side in this area to broad gauge), troop densities have steadily increased. Urbanization, semi-urbanization, and cultivation have created fresh obstacles and population. New canals have come up. This is starting to limit the scope of free movement as existed in 1971.

This in turn limits the possibility of concentration for a decisive breakthrough. Taking the Pathankot corridor as an example, Pakistan could theoretically concentrate four divisions against Pathankot: the road network in the area could sustain this build-up. But four divisions

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will get in each other's way, as may have happened to us in 1971.

Worse, such a concentration is easily detected, and India would rush equalizing forces into the threatened area. This would again even out the balance and end the hope of decisive action.

But if the troops on both sides were fully mechanized, and if we talk of the room available in the Multan sector, then concentrating overnight anywhere within a 100 or 200 kilometer arc would become feasible, allowing the full panoply of surprise, deception, and maneuver.

The low density road and rail nets in Multan sector cannot, needless to say, be compared to the high density nets existing further north. Nonetheless, they have improved on both sides in 15 years, allowing large, multi-corps formations to be deployed. The slowness with which the deployment takes place provides ample opportunity for the other side to react. But a two axis attack can be launched, and the armor strike forces can shift as needed between axes. So while the fact of concentration would be no surprise to Pakistan, the play of armor would. Feints and diversions become possible. This opens up the prospect of victory on strategic scale.

We must, however, keep in mind that these possibilities exist because of Pakistan's shortage of troops. A permanent induction of another two divisions, if available, would inhibit any large scale Indian action.

Pakistan suffers because it has to split its strike forces between the north and the south. There is no way, given India's large superiority in numbers, that the northern army reserve can move southwards to combine with the southern army reserve. India, on the other hand, has no problem concentrating its I and II Strike Corps where it wants, together with several other divisions.

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Pakistan holds this area very lightly because it can afford to give up some ground in the face of an Indian attack. There is 14 Division for Suliemanke, 35 Division at Bhawalpur, and, 1 Armored Division at Multan along with the 10 (I) Armored Brigade. The running mate of 1 Armored Division in the southern army reserve is 37 Division from Gujranwala, which also is tasked to other sectors. HQ 11 Corps is at Multan.

India's deployments are substantially heavier in infantry, but lighter in armor. HQ X Corps is located at Bhatinda 6 (I) Armored Brigade is at Suratgarh. 16 Division is at Gobindgarh, replacing the old Foxtrot Sector, with brigades at Fazilka and Ganganager, and two in reserve at Chandi Mandir and Kasauli, in Haryana and Himachal respectively. 24 Division from Bikaner is assigned to the area, with one brigade at Suratgarh and three in Bikaner. 18 Division from Kota is in reserve.

India has, thus, 11 infantry brigades to Pakistan's six, but only one armored brigade to Pakistani's three. This latter figure is deceptive in that it includes Pakistan's 1 Armored Division, which is really a reserve formation that happens to be located in the sector. Excluding this division, which can be employed anywhere between Lahore and Rahim Yar Khan, both sides have equality in armor and India has a three-to-one superiority in infantry.

Consider for a moment how the front between the two countries has gradually become locked.

In 1947-48, only the Western Kashmir border was fully occupied : the rest of the border was open.

By 1954, when Pakistan acceded to CENTO/SEATO, India deployed the equivalent of a corps in Kashmir (19, 25, 26 Divisions) and a corps in Punjab (Punjab Field Force) with divisions at Ambala, Ferozpur, and Amritsar (4, 5 and probably 27 Divisions: we are unsure

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about the exact number of the third division, which might in fact have been 20 Division). 1 Armored Division and 2 (I) Armored Brigade were the striking reserves.

Pakistan had no regular forces in Kashmir as such, but had a large deployment of so-called Azad Kashmir troops to match India's three divisions. Though we have almost no details on the Pakistan Army at this time, 7, 9 and one other division existed and were probably deployed at Peshawar, Sialkot, and Lahore, to defend the Punjab.

By 1962 India had added 17 Division at Ambala to replace 4 Division sent to NEFA, 23 Division for Nagaland, and 21) Division as a general reserve (we may have 20 and 27 Divisions mixed up : the first may have been raised earlier than the second). Essentially these raisings were for other parts of the country, and the western dispositions remained unchanged.

Pakistan by now had the 12 Azad Kashmir Division, and the 7, 8, 9, 10, 14 and 15 Divisions plus the 1 Armored Division and 106 (1) Armored Brigade to match India's armor. As nearly as we can determine from scanty references, 7 Division was at Peshawar for internal security in the Tribal Zone and tasked to Kashmir in wartime, 8 was at Quetta for the entire southern part of the country and also for internal security, 9 was at Kharian, 10 was at Lahore, 15 was at Sialkot. 14 Division was at Dacca to cover the eastern wing. Now each side had seven divisions in the west.

In 1962-63 all the Punjab divisions except for 1 Armored had shifted to the east to become mountain divisions : 5, 17, 20 and 27 left, completely denuding the west. This was possible only because of American assurances and Pakistani cooperation. Pakistan was still staunchly anti-Communist in those days, and there was, also, perhaps a greater degree of trust between Ayub and Nehru than between other leaders of the two countries before or since.

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Additional to converting all the Punjab divisions to mountain configuration, India also converted 4 and 23 Divisions. It raised 2, 6 and 8 Mountain Divisions. The 3 Division was raised for Ladak.

For reasons not entirely clear, India now made a mistake. It should have replaced the Punjab forces on a one-to-one basis, raising four new infantry divisions. This would still have given India 13 divisions in all to Pakistan's 8. With a couple of divisions extra Pakistan could have met the possibility of some India mountain divisions being diverted to the west.

But instead India sanctioned an additional six infantry and one armored division over and above the four replacement infantry divisions and four new raisings for the mountains. All of a sudden Pakistan faced not 0, but 25 Indian divisions with its total of 8. An 8 to 10 disparity was acceptable because of (1) the American commitment (2) the standardization of equipment thanks to American aid and (3) Pakistan's more compact territory. But an 8 to 25 disparity was potentially disastrous.

The seven extra divisions, beyond the replacement of four division shifted to the east, provided for the west (which included four divisions, available for expansion at short notice) allowed the process of sealing the front to begin.

Pakistan's response was marginal because it lacked domestic resources to match the build up. The United States was by now more even handed between India and Pakistan, and refused to consider strengthening Pakistan's armed forces. Pakistan had become so accustomed to free American weapons that probably the prospect of straining its already over-burdened economy to make its own purchases was impossible to accept. Pakistan limited its response to raising only its 6 Armored and 11 Divisions, largely from its scanty reserve equipment stocks.

After the 1965 War India concentrated on filling out the divisions raised earlier, plus expanding the four cadre divisions. Pakistan raised three more divisions 23 for Kashmir, 18 for the desert, and 16 at Quetta to replace 8 Division that went to Sialkot. Now the front on Pakistan's side was getting as solid as on India's, with the difference that Pakistan had very few free reserves.

After the Pakistan Civil War broke out, Pakistan sent 9 and 16 Divisions to the east, replacing them with 17 and 33 Divisions. This heavily increased the deployments in the east.

After 1971 Pakistan closed the Multan sector previously covered by independent brigades by putting 35 Division into Bhawalpur; and by adding to its reserves in Kashmir with 19 Division, Punjab with 9 Division, and the desert sector with 16 and 37 Divisions.

India at first responded slowly to the post-1971 Pakistani build up, because it still remained much stronger than Pakistan, and because many mountain divisions were finally assumed available on a permanent basis for the west. China was now not so feared as before the war, the Indo-Soviet Treaty of 1971 being the major comfort. India contented itself with raising only 16 and 18 Divisions for the Multan sector, and 31 Armored Division as a second strike force.

But then starting in 1976 India embarked on a whole new series of raisings, seven divisions in 8 years.. Pakistan raised two, but was forced to permanently station four on its western border. This caused a net loss of two divisions on its India border just when India was making available its new raisings plus shifts from the east.

We should not be surprised to see 40 divisions on India's side soon, and 25 or 26 for Pakistan.

Now the entire front between the Nubra in Ladak and Anupgarh is

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militarized and locked, leaving only the desert and sea flanks open. One supposes that Pakistan will now' start sealing off its desert sector, but still the density of troops from Ferozpur southwards will not be as great as to the north, allowing big battles to be fought here.

How can surprise be achieved on a totally locked front? Or do we face the possibility of repeating the Western Front as existed in France and Belgium in World War I, where tens of thousands of men died for gains measured in meters?

Let's look at Central Europe today. NATO's eight corps cover 750-kilometers, approaching the idea of 30 kilometers per division. Understandably, the Soviets expect to achieve no surprise as such.

They count, instead, on using their massive in-place forces with rapid reinforcement from the heartland, and getting results before the flow of reinforcements and reservists from France, Britain, and the US begins. In other words, they plan to win the war of mobilization.

But they understand fully well that if they cannot mobilize faster than NATO, they will get no better than a stalemate.

There is so little possibility of surprise in Central Europe that both sides know,, each others' moves exactly. Soviet hopes for a quick victory are kept alive by NATO's shirking its required peacetime defense effort. If NATO gave its eight forward corps four divisions each plus provided for four reserve corps, the Soviets could not win even by mobilizing faster.

If the Soviets are to win how may they go about their invasion?

The same way everyone else goes about it, by attrition warfare.

And of course this is not going to work, because the west in the aggregate has much superior resources. But then how did the Germans

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manage to change the face of Europe in a few months? How did they defeat three of the most formidable armies of the day in quick succession, the Polish, the French, and the Soviet? Particularly as the French Army, even without the British, Belgian and Dutch reinforcements was considered the most powerful in the world?

They succeeded because (1) they employed a new combination of weapons and tactics and (2) their operational capability was significantly superior to that of their opponents. Even then, the wars were long by our standards: over-running France took six weeks.

The German solution is inapplicable today because all armies are much more professional and better prepared. None will allow such a gap in weapons and tactics to grow as happened between Germany and France. If the Soviets get better weapons, the west responds ; if the west changes its tactics, the Soviets respond. Constant training and education ensure the tactical skill of both sides remains roughly similar.

The Israeli-Arab wars are most misleading, as already mentioned. In 1956 and 1967 there existed a huge discrepancy in the capability of the two opponents ; Arab numerical superiority could not offset their other disadvantages. As Lt.-Gen. M. L. Chibber has pointed out, the inferiority in numbers was offset by Israel's small size, limiting the area of maneuver and benefiting. But by 1973 the Egyptians had greatly enhanced their tactical skills, with historic results.

We cannot expect a 1967 Arab-Israeli margin over Pakistan. We can only go the Soviet way, and take advantage of Pakistan's inability or unwillingness to match forces at reasonable levels. The difference between Soviets versus NATO and us is that we have superior resources and can out race NATO. This is precisely what the Government has been doing.

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Thus, it has to be attrition warfare all the way. To plan for anything else is futile.

**DESERT SECTOR**

The recent uproar about Operation Brass Tacks has resulted in the greatest attention being focused on the desert sector.

Pakistan's permanent deployment in the area is small. HQ V Corps is at Karachi, along with 18 Division clearly identified at Hyderabad. This division keeps only one brigade at Hyderabad, and two in Malir Cantonment in Karachi. 2 (1) Armored Brigade and 30 (1) Brigade are also at Malir. 60 Brigade is at Rahim Yar Khan.. 16 Division from Quetta is dual-based to the area, but its availability obviously depended on an assessment whether the Soviets would have intervened. In the recent crisis at least one brigade of 16 Division appears to have gone eastwards.

Pakistan can count on at all times only about seven brigades including an (I) armored brigade:

—18 Division: three infantry brigades

—2 (1) Armored and 30 (I) Brigades, plus a brigade from 16 Division and 60 Brigade.

This excludes, of course, Pakistan's southern army reserve which can deploy to this area. in as much as the troops from Saudi Arabia and from Quetta take time to arrive in later, the permanent garrison is about seven brigades.

India's permanent garrison is normally about nine brigades. India has raised HQ XII Corps out of Jodhpur; it controls 11 Division out of Ahmedabad with brigades at Ahmedabad, Poona, and Bangalore; 12 Division out of Jodhpur, 61(I) Brigade, at Jodhpur, 75 (I) Brigade at

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Bhuj and 4 (I) Armored Brigade at Jodhpur.

This situation would be perfectly acceptable to Pakistan, except that it has nothing to face the several divisions that will be inducted in the form of the Indian strike corps. When we compare the lineup in Brass Tacks in a later chapter, it will be seen that Pakistan has been seriously negligent in not providing more forces for this area. Doubtless it has been restrained by financial stringency. Nonetheless, using Chinese equipment it does not cost much to provide an extra two divisions such as is being done now.

In 1971 India had its 11 and 12 Divisions, an independent infantry brigade, and a couple of extra tank regiments in the area. It launched 11 Division on the Barmer-Chor axis while 12 Division was to attack from Tanot to Islamgarh and Reti. The 340 (I) Brigade appears to have looked after the Kutch sector.

11 Division's attack succeeded at first, because the Pakistanis simply fell back on Naya Chor, and then dug in. The Indian attack ground to a halt.

12 Division was thrown off its schedule by a Pakistani attack from the Reti side, consisting of a brigade of 33 Division and a tank regiment. The force was attacked by a Hunter fighter detachment from Jodhpur and withdrew after suffering heavy losses but with its mission accomplished: 12 Division was no more a factor in the war.

India's several raids into Pakistani Kutch were successful in boosting Indian morale, but could be of no strategic value because of the vast emptiness of the area.

Even when backed up to Naya Chor, Pakistan did not commit any brigade other than the one from 33 Division used in the spoiling attack at Islamgarh. It utilized, instead, mixed ad hoc forces consisting of a few companies of regulars, Rangers, and Mujahids. Pakistan has

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always been especially adept at economically employing such forces to delay India's advances while conserving its regulars. It was thus able to keep in reserve almost its entire forces in Sind.

The operational problem in the Great Indian Desert is, simply, the sand that lies upto 7 meters deep. In the Mideast and North African Deserts the sand cover is shallow. Bulldozers can quickly sweep paths for advancing troops. Wide ranging maneuver is possible, to the extent that the desert actions of World War 11 have been compared to naval battles finding a flank was always troublesome, because both sides would keep going south of each other.

Tracked vehicles have a low footprint the weight of a 40-ton T-72 tank is distributed along several square meters of tracks, thus reducing pressure on sand to less than that of a two-ton jeep. The jeep will sink into the sand, the tank will float.

Tracked vehicles can move freely in the desert, but not so their wheeled support and the un-mechanized infantry. Some mobility is provided by low-pressure tired vehicle and by aluminum track-ways. The latter is laid at a pace of about 2-3 kilometers an hour by specially equipped vehicles.

There is a difference, however, in laying a few kilometers of matting to help a division across sandy stretches, and laying matting to allow two corps to advance, and two more to operate on their flanks, to distances of hundreds of kilometers.

If the matting stayed laid, there might still be some reasonable prospects of supporting a quarter of a million troops in the desert, provided a very large engineer contingent is available. But because the sand is so deep, it shifts easily under the movement of heavy vehicles, wind and its own internal dynamics. This means the roadways have to be constantly maintained and re-laid.

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Recent newspaper articles commemorating the opening of the re-laid Bikaner-Suratgarh railway line mention a 15-day sandstorm that halted all work. One hates to think what that would do to 40,000 vehicles in the desert.

During the early days of the 1971 War, Mr. K. Subhramanyam suggested that the success in the desert should be reinforced. As advances in other sectors were non-existent or slow, a third division should be committed to the desert. He was told that this was impossible, because our desert terrain required specialized equipment and training: forces from other sectors would not be able to function in this environment at such short notice.

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**THE RIVAL NAVIES**

The contribution of the navies and air forces of each side can be decisive in specific situations. Overall, however, since both countries are land powers, the final outcome of wars between them must be decided on land.

In 1971, for example, the Indian Navy blockaded East Pakistan. Pakistan had no reinforcements to spare, nonetheless, the psychological impact of complete and final isolation was considerable. Similarly, the IAF, by overwhelming the small PAF contingent in the East achieved rapid air supremacy. For an army such as Pakistan's, accustomed to fighting under the secure protection of its active and efficient air force, loss of its air cover proved devastating to morale and operations.

Both these services thus contributed very substantially—perhaps even decisively—to the quick decision in the East. Considering that each day's delay increased the possibility of United Nations intervention in some form, by helping to ensure a quick war, the two services proved strategically decisive.

The Indian Navy cannot contribute materially to a short war against Pakistan. In a long war it will become a vital actor, because the bulk of war supplies and civilian trade must come by sea.

Today Pakistan has excellent road and good rail connections with Iran. Since the Middle East nations have now become its primary support base in the event of conflict with India (the U.S. connection notwithstanding), Pakistan cannot be totally isolated as was its eastern wing in 1971.

Vital high-volume low-weight supplies will come by air. The roads from the Middle East to Pakistan can take 40-ton semitrailers enabling a continual supply flow from Europe and the Arab nations. The Karakoram Highway link with China is of less import, as it will be quickly closed by the JAF at the outbreak of war. For a long war, however, the sea route is irreplaceable.

If, for example, military equipment carried in four Chinese freighters has first to unload at Iran's Chahbahar port, then be containerized or shipped on heavy trailers by road to Zahedan in Iran, and then transshipped by rail or by road to Karachi and Lahore, then the process is obviously more time consuming than unloading at Karachi in the first place. In a longer war, the enormous consumption of replacement arms and war material, and the loss of trade from closure of the nation's ports would hurt Pakistan badly.

Pakistan's maritime strategy is the essence of simplicity:

A. Protect its coast with a combination of

Arabian Sea and attacking the Indian Navy as close to its home bases as possible.

(2) destroyers in the second-line, ranging upto 250 kilometers or so from the coast.

(3) torpedo and missile boats in the third-line, operating close to the coast.

(4) maritime reconnaissance aircraft, anti-submarine helicopters, and strike aircraft operating in conjunction with the surface forces.

B Keep its larger Indian opponent off balance by using its small submarine force to threaten Bombay High and Indian shipping.

This is clearly a strategy of sea denial. India, on the other hand, will seek to impose its naval will on Pakistan, a strategy of sea control by:

A Aggressively seeking to attack all Pakistani coastal bases and targets, including the landing of amphibious forces to help the Army achieve strategic results.

B Seeking to clear the Arabian Sea of all Pakistani shipping, military or civilian.

The dominant reality of the naval balance between the two countries is that sea-denial (Pakistan's strategy) is far easier and cheaper to achieve than sea-control (India's strategy). The situation may be linked to that between Germany and the Allies in World War II. With a much smaller investment in men and equipment, the German Navy neutralized the much larger Allied fleets for almost five year;

India's strike, power against Pakistan may have increased by a factor of five since 1971, but Pakistan's ability to defend itself has increased by a factor of—say—twenty. While avoiding imputing more exact comparisons to these figures than justified 'by the available data, a repeat of the Karachi raid may well be at least three times harder than was the case in 1971.

In the last war, Karachi was a sitting duck because Pakistan had no maritime reconnaissance capability. An ad hoc capability after the attack on Karachi was provided by Pakistan International Airways, akin to using Vayudoot or Indian Airlines to coyer Bombay port and naval base. Pakistan had no land-based strike aircraft, nor any anti-ship missiles. The results are a matter of history, even if we dispute as to who inflicted the greater damage on Karachi, the Navy or the IAF.

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Today the major naval bases of Karachi and Gwader are well protected by anti-ship missiles. A small but adequate, reconnaissance element exists in the form of three Atlantic MR aircraft, recently upgraded in France. About five Sea King helicopters, capable of anti-submarine warfare (ASW) and anti-ship missile strikes are available. A small long-range strike element, the 12 Mirage 5s of No. 8 Squadron PAF from Masroor, Karachi, is available with Exocet anti-ship missiles. The Mirage is not, of course, a long-range aircraft, but on over water missions can be flown at high-altitude to optimize range. All this makes simply sailing in and blasting Gwader or Karachi impossible.

Today a repeat of 1971 may prove, more expensive to us than to the enemy. If we send twenty warships to sink three Pakistani warships, and damage the port, but lose four or five of our expensive ships in return, the exchange ratio cannot be considered favorable. Our Kashins and Godavaries, the pride of the fleet, are far more valuable than the floating hulks Pakistan calls destroyers, 40-year old discards dating back to World War II.

Those ancient destroyers, however, have adequate sensors to detect a Foxtrot submarine, though perhaps not a Kilo or a Type 209, and to kill it. Armed with a few Harpoon missiles, the Gearing destroyer (or any platform) is a formidable deterrent, because the sophistication lies in the missile, which is basically an inert round till fired, not in the ship.

If Pakistan was to send two four Gearings against India, our Navy would have little trouble disposing of them without casualties. But if we want to fight, the Pakistan Navy in its home waters, then even the otherwise insignificant Chinese missile boats become deadly. The Pakistan Navy may not be able to attack, except with submarines, but it certainly can defend.

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The problem with defending against submarines is that the cost-benefit ratio favors the submarine. This has led the submarine to be a preferred weapon of the weaker naval power. As with any other weapon, no matter how good, numbers themselves are the best force multiplier, and Pakistan's six submarines today present a threat more than twice its four, submarines presented in 1971.

The point is not that of quality: our Kilos and Type 209s are much superior to Pakistan's four Daphnes and better than the two Agostas. It is instead:

— In 1971 Pakistan had just received its three Daphnes from France and many of the crew, Bengali in origin, had jumped ship before they reached Pakistan, so that the small force was effectively crippled. Today's force is much more effective.

— Trying to stop a handful of submarines in an area as large as the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea is a losing proposition.

In 1971 Pakistan's obsolete American submarine Ghazi, actually a training boat, sneaked right up to Vishakapatnam and but for bad luck, would have sunk the Vikrant instead of being sunk in its turn. Today if PNS Hurmut manages to put three torpedoes into Vikrant, our blasting Karachi will prove of little comfort.

A long war, of course, presents an entirely different picture. Pakistan's basic naval strength is

- 6 submarines
- 6 destroyers
- 24 gun and missile boats

India's on the other hand is:

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- 2 light fleet carriers (one working up)
- 10 submarines
- 4 large missile destroyers
- 3 large missile frigates
- 16 multipurpose frigates
- 4 missile corvettes (others being added)
- 16 missile boats (replacing, adding)

The matter of raw combat capability can be summed up by noting that a single R class destroyer (Soviet Kashin class) at market prices costs more than all the combat ships of the Pakistan Navy put together.

In a fleet-to fleet battle (a purely hypothetical situation) the four Nanuchka corvettes could sink the entire Pakistani surface fleet by themselves.

The Pakistan Navy has exactly sixteen chances (the number of its deadly Harpoon missiles) to sink an Indian warship at longer range. India has several hundred there are not just the multitude of missile ships, there is also the Vikrant. The carrier will probably sail with about 15 Harriers, each with a combatloaded radius of 300-kilometers, and could, in ten days easily, fly 300 sorties.

Suppose we lost one-and-a-half times as many warships as Pakistan. After every Pakistani warship had been sunk, we would still have 20 warships left and then Pakistan's coast would be completely vulnerable.

But is anyone in Delhi going to show that kind of resolution?

In the Falklands, the British Army did not entirely live up to expectations, considering that it is a beautifully equipped, exquisitely trained, all volunteer force. The problem was, of course, that in the first conventional fighting since Korea the British failed to show any

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notable enthusiasm to die. Which is fair enough. As a civilian, I find it difficult to condemn a soldier for wanting to live.

The Royal Navy, on the other hand, was a different proposition. Bringing ships into such close proximity to land goes against everything a sailor is taught a fleet's protection is provided by mobility and the open sea. Yet, because the ground forces needed its support, the Royal Navy held its gun line positions despite losing four modern warships in the fiercest air attacks suffered by a naval force since Okinawa, 1944.

There is little doubt that had Mrs. Thatcher ordered, the Royal Navy would have continued standing off the islands to its last ship.

We can be sure that the current Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral Ram Tahiliani, would in the spring of 1987 have gone the full route if required. Can we be as certain about his blood and flesh subordinates? And if we can be sure of them, can we be sure of the Admiral's civil leaders? I doubt it.

Which is why the greater probability is there will be no decision at sea.

Parenthetically, it may be noted that Pakistan's plans to acquire three Type 23 frigates from Britain for a total of perhaps \$1.2-billion are currently in doubt. The money would clearly be better spent on more submarines, corvettes, and aircraft for the Navy, and enough Pakistanis appear to think along the same lines to cause reappraisal of the frigate deal.

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**RESTRICTED****THE RIVAL AIR FORCES**

By preference I like to study navies. By necessity living in India the study of armies becomes of paramount importance. But it is the air forces of both sides that fascinate me the most.

The fighter pilot is the last remaining example on earth of the military gladiator, the individual champion. His is the last remaining chance to hark back to the days of chivalry, and go one-on-one against an opponent. A fighter pilot may rely on his aircraft performance the way a warrior of old depended on his horse's abilities, but ultimately, when two pilots oppose each other in approximately comparable aircraft, the outcome is entirely one of courage and skill. In an age where numbers and mass count for everything and the individual for nothing, there is something very attractive about a fighter pilot. A successful one, of course.

The picture can be overdrawn. A fighter pilot squaring off one-on-one would certainly face problems with his officer commanding, because the air force, as any other branch of service, is interested not in heroics and gladiatorial dash, but in winning. And you win best by team work. The Israelis were the first to call themselves the Orange Juice Air Force there they don't encourage drinking, bravado, individuality and dash, but a quiet, unspectacular teamwork. The idea is to shoot more of them for each of us. That is the simple equation that governs air warfare.

The interesting thing about the two traditional air forces is that each is a microcosm of their societies and their overall military position.

The Pakistan Air Force has always been far smaller than the I.A.F. The ratio has never been as bad as 1953, when India had about

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ten jet fighter squadrons to one of Pakistan's but it has never been better than three-to-one. With resources being so tight, the P.A.F. has always striven to get the best return from a small force.

The P.A.F. reached its peak about 1960. It had ten combat squadrons, seven on the F-86 Sabre, two on B-57 (the American version of the Canberra) and one on the F-104 Starfighter, and about 160 combat aircraft. The I.A.F. had about 500 aircraft in 25 large squadrons. The small Pakistani force operates with high efficiency, learning quickly from its American mentors that a small number of highly professional pilots flying standardized aircraft, and backed up with first class maintenance and a well-organized air base system costs less, and is more powerful, than a larger, more disorganized force.

Of course, Pakistani strategy required hanging on for ten days till the Americans arrived. The Americans certainly didn't expect the Pakistanis to take on single-handedly the Soviet or Chinese air force in southern Asia.

With such a clearly defined mission, a clearly defined structure became possible, and everything else followed logically.

The P.A.F. showed its worth in 1965 when it squarely beat the larger I.A.F.- we lost many more aircraft than the P.A.F. A statement like that sounds impressive, but it needs analyzing.

The air battle is not some kind of junior league match taking place in the small stadium while the main eleven battles it out in the big stadium. The real question is what did the P.A.F. do to help Pakistan Army achieve its objectives?

The answer is nothing, because, it was too busy fighting off the I.A.F. What did the I.A.F. do to help the Indian Army achieve its objectives? Also nothing for the same reason.

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So actually the affair was a stand-off and an aerial stalemate and as such the P.A.F's victory was of no import, though it was good for the 5mall air force's morale.

There was no particular reason for the Indians to feel bad. India is a larger country, the I.A.F. had to worry about the Chinese, it had a large number of partially trained pilots and personnel because of its post 1962 expansion, and it had no air-to-air missiles.

Suppose 1965 war analysis and been done on the P.A.F. versus the I.A.F on the same basis as we are fond of doing today. The I.A.F should not have survived. The F-86 Sabre was supposed to be better than anything we had. There was nothing to match the F-104, as our first MiG-21 squadron was still working up. We had no air-to-air missiles, whereas Pakistan was using the ALM-9 Sidewinder which had given American Sabrejets 7-1 scores against Chinese MiG-17s over the Taiwan Straits a few years previously.

But in reality we lost about 50 aircraft to Pakistan's 30, a 1.6 to 1 outcome, far more damaging to the PAF because we had three times as many aircraft. So where would we go wrong in assessing the air balance?

First, I.A.F. pilots may have been inferior to PAF pilots if the rival air forces are taken as a whole. But because we outnumbered Pakistan three-to-one, probably we had as many first rate pilots as Pakistan.

Second, numbers, as ever, determine the outcome of wars. Where you have six aircraft to put up against his two, other things being equal or almost equal, you are going to win.

Third, the Hunter was fully the equivalent of the Sabre jet, and we had over 160 including trainers to the PAF's 120 including trainers.

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Fourth, 20 St4rfighters could make no difference given the numbers engaged on both sides.

Fifth, a short-range air intercept missile definitely expands the combat envelope of an aircraft, but it was insufficient an advantage to set off the other disadvantages.

So we might as well have saved self-the tension we created for ourselves by playing up the Sabrejet and the Starfighter.

In 1971, the JAF felt more secure. While India inducted into service no less than 350 MiG-21s and Su-7s, Pakistan's new induction's were 90 ex-Luftwaffe Sabrejets, mostly useful as spares, about 60 MiG-19s, a fighter inferior to the MiG-21, and 28 Mirage 3s. We replaced our Hunter and Canberra losses, Pakistan could not replace its B-57s. Even to start with, in the 1965 War it's two B-57 squadrons with a front-line strength of 24 aircraft disposed of half the attacking power of our three Canberra squadrons with 48 first-line aircraft. And now it had even fewer B-57s. The air balance was so askew in India's favor that even the most pessimistic and alarmist evaluation could provide no grounds for concern.

The I.A.F. admits to losing 95 aircraft compared to a figure of 72 for the P.A.F. The latter is based on a signal intercept from Pakistani sources, and includes every single loss, from light planes and transports to fighters and bombers.

The P.A.F. flew 2800 sorties during the war compared to 7000 for the I.A.F. This represents a higher sortie for the PAF not just because we had three times as many aircraft, but because four PAF squadrons were being withheld from combat as a reserve for a long war.

In terms of sortie rate, 95 IAF combat aircraft represent a loss of 1.25%, which is high, but not intolerable. The rate would have been more satisfactory but for the abnormally high losses of the Su-7.

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Soviet doctrine calls for aircraft to attack from many directions and depart after one pass. The I.A.F. attacked in neat formations, making multiple passes at a target. One Su-7 squadron commander interviewed by Shekhar Gupta says he lost 9 aircraft (including his own) providing support for the Indian Army at Hussieniwala. The Su-7 had a very slow pull up after its bomb run, and this vulnerability was duly exploited by the Pakistani Army flak.

It was losses of this magnitude that led to bitterness on the I.A.F.'s part about being used as mobile artillery for the Army. The Army, needless to say, remains totally unmoved; when it was losing more men every six hours than the I.A.F. lost in the entire war, a sympathetic feeling for IAF casualties is absent. (The I.A.F., however, might reply that if the Army was to lose, say, 5% of its officers as casualties in a two week campaign, then the comparison would be more apt.)

P.A.F. losses were about 50-55 combat aircraft, or something approaching 2% of sorties flown. This would be a serious drain in a long war. But it needs recalling the P.A.F.'s 16 F-86s from its No. 14 Squadron in the East were lost against extreme odds. Taking on MiG-21s in F-86s with tail-homing missiles is a thankless task. The P.A.F. can certainly be proud of this unit. If these losses are factored out, then the PAF loss rate is less serious.

An interesting story concerns India's claim of 5 Mirage 3s. Pakistan lined up 23 Mirage 3s for inspection by foreign military attaches. Since supposedly it purchased 24 from France, and one was said to be lost in training, Pakistan apparently suffered no combat loss. Later it became known that the PAF had actually received 28 aircraft, so the Indian claim was not unduly exaggerated.

The years after 1971 have been totally disastrous for the PAF in terms of equipment. It appears to have purchased about 80 more Mirage 315s including a batch of 30 ordered in 1970 but embargoed by

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France till 1972 on account of the Civil War. There is not much agreement on the exact number of Mirage deliveries, so our total may be higher than justified. Conversely, there may be some Mirages actually belonging to Arab nations but based in Pakistan for pilot training and available in wartime. Against the purchase total of about 110, there will have been twenty years of combat and non-combat losses, so perhaps 90 may be flying.

Thanks to a \$ 500-million Saudi loan plus \$ 700-million from the first US F.M.S. package, the P.A.F. acquired 40 F-16 A/Bs. Interestingly, the proportion of trainers was changed from four trainers in 40 aircraft to twelve trainers. While Pakistan would doubtless like another 40, the available funds are inadequate to permit this, plus AWACS, plus modernisation of the Army and Navy. Even one more squadron will take up almost a third of the 19S7-92 FMS package. So Pakistan may get no more than 10 or so aircraft as replacement and attrition reserve.

For the rest, the PAF has had to content itself with buying more MiG-19s, and now the A-5, a MiG-19 derivative for ground-attack, from China.

The MiG-19 is the approximate contemporary of the US F-100 Super Sabre, still flown by the Turkish Air Force. Doubtless the Chinese aircraft has some utility, but nobody will buy a 30-year old design if anything better is affordable. The MiG-19 is the desperate choice of a poor country.

Looking at the I.A.F.'s purchases since 1971, we can understand better the P.A.F.'s problems with its larger adversary:

- 400-450 MiG-21s including imports
- 160 Jaguars (still under delivery)
- 130+ MiG-23 BN/MF
- 200 (approximate) MiG-27 including domestic manufacture

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underway

- 50 (approximate) MiG-29
- 50 (approximate) Mirage 2000.

This total of 1000 first-line combat aircraft compares with Pakistan's total of 120 first-line aircraft (80 Mirage 3/5, 40 F-16), or an 8 to 1 advantage. This doesn't count approximately 150+ Ajeet and Marut from domestic production in the same period, as we exclude these from being first line aircraft on the same basis we exclude the Pakistani purchase of the F-6 and the A-S.

To an air force, the number of squadrons is not the relevant consideration as much as the total aircraft available. A squadron of 16 (such as used by the P.A.F. and the L.A.F.), if no additional aircraft are available for maintenance float and attrition, is a different proposition from a squadron of 16 backed up by 5 to 10 additional aircraft.

For example, Pakistan has, at times, had as many as 24 MiG19s per squadron. But the aircraft has to undergo major overhauls after 600 hours of flying, and its engine has a Time Between Overhaul of 100 hours. It is doubtful if the PAF had even 12 ready aircraft per squadron despite the availability of twice as many.

So while the squadron figures are of interest, and are provided in this study, we should watch the total number of aircraft.

### **PAF ORDER OF BATTLE**

The pride of the PAF are its two F-16 squadrons, Nos. 9 and 11, with about 38 aircraft remaining from an initial total of 40. Increasing this number is the most important PAF requirement after airborne early warning.

Next come five Mirage 3/5 squadrons: Nos. 5, 8 (Maritime Strike), 20 (Photo Reconnaissance), 26 and 33.

Three A-S squadrons exist: Nos. 7, 15, and 16. More will come as F-6 Units are converted.

There are six F-6 squadrons remaining: Nos. 14, 17, 18, 19, 23, and 25.

Other important P.A.F. squadrons are No. 1 (MiG-17, also called the F-5, for fighter conversion training), No. 2 (Composite. with the remaining P-57s and T-33s plus P.5), No. 4 (Search and Rescue), No. 6 and No. 12 (Transport and VIP aircraft), No. 24 (Electronic Reconnaissance) and No. 29 (Maritime Reconnaissance in support of the Pakistani Navy, but with Navy pilots). Other squadron for which we have no numbers are helicopter squadron with the 4 Super Frelons and Alouette 3s, and six surface-to-air missile squadrons with the Crotale. These appear to have two fire units each controlling three 4-missile launchers.

### **IAF ORDER OF BATTLE**

The IAF is now so large that to list all its squadrons even if we knew them, would be a tedious affair. The reader is requested to follow the rule of 90%: ten percent of the listings might well be wrong for various reasons. One type of error arises because of our not being up to date. The two Mirage 2000 squadrons were, for example, planned to be numbered as Nos. 225 and 226, but the designations were changed before the aircraft arrived.

The MIG-29 and Mirage 2000 squadrons are the IAF's pride: (Nos. 1 and 7 for Mirage 2000, Nos. 28 and 47 for MiG-29). The -MiG-29 Falcon is not strictly relevant to our analysis, because as of January 1987 it was yet to attain operational service.



The Jaguar in Nos. 5, 14, and 27 Squadrons represents the IAF's main strike capability. No. 16 Squadron plus one more and the maritime strike flights of No. 6 Squadron are waiting re-equipment with this type.

The MiG-27 with Nos. 9-sunder equipment) and 222 Squadrons will become the backbone of the IAF's shorter-range interdiction capability. Six more squadrons will be equipped with this type.

The MIG-23BN/MF equips six squadrons; Nos. 10, 31, 220. 221 for strike and No. 223 and 224 for interception. The MiG-27 and MiG-23 are quite similar.

The MiG-21 in several versions (FL, PMFA, M, MF, bis) is the single most important fighter equipping 19 squadrons (Nos. 3, 4, 8, 15, 17, 21, 23, 24, 26, 29, 30, 32, 37, 40, 45, 51, 52, 101, and 108 Squadrons). Most of the PL version, which India imported and constructed till 1974 are now out of service or under phasing out. The PMFA and M units will be the next to go.

Pout squadrons perform reconnaissance and electronic intelligence duties; No. 6 for maritime strike and reconnaissance, No. 35 with MIG-21s and Canberras, No. 102 using the MiG-25R Foxbats, and No. 106 for electronic/photographic reconnaissance using the faithful Canberra.

Three Ajeet squadrons still survive (Nos. 2, 22, and 28) the remnants of eight Gnat squadrons that served well in two wars. The Gnat was a noble experiment by the British Pollard Company to promote an inexpensive, simple, small and agile day fighter in preference to the increasing large, complex and expensive fighters. The Royal Air Force used it only as a trainer but it was to prove its combat worth in the subcontinent. Pollard had proposed a supersonic Gnat to keep with the requirement for ever increasing fighter speeds,

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but neither the U.K. nor India showed interest. By tempering with the basic design in an attempt to upgrade the Gnat, India essentially ended up with another failure.

No. 20 Squadron still flies the trusty Hunter, the show plane of the IAF's acrobatic team, the Thunderbolts. This and the last surviving Canberra unit, Nos. 16, soldiering on with a plane now approaching 30 years of service, will both probably end up with the Jaguar.

The IAF thus has 43 combat squadrons, higher than the 36 it is normally credited with. The main problem is one of replacing eight or so obsolete squadrons. Why does the IAF continue to raise new squadrons when it lacks sufficient aircraft to modernize the force?

As a bureaucratic ploy the IAF must get as many squadrons as it can. It is easier to demand replacement of old aircraft in existing squadrons than to get an increase in the established force level when more resources are available.

There are, also, conditions in which the Ajeet and Canberra still have a role to play. The Ajeet is useful for point defence in the face of lighter air threats, such as China. The Canberra has great utility in non-combat reconnaissance.

Oddly, in one field the IAF is falling behind rather than forging ahead. For tactical reconnaissance it used to equip one out of three Su-75 with camera pods, and thus a considerable capability was available. Now the number of tactical reconnaissance aircraft is much reduced.

The multiplicity of aircraft types in the IAF is a serious problem. The IAF flies eight types (MiG-29, MiG-23/27, MiG-21, Mirage, Ajeet, Canberra, MiG-25, Hunter) against the PAF's three (F-16, F-6/A-5, and the Mirage 3/5). If the PAF had resources, it would probably standardize on just one type, say 200 F-16s. The IAF, by contrast, will

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still be flying six types when the Ajeet, Hunter and Canberra leave service some five years from now ; knowing the service's predilection for ordering new types, at least one new fighter will come in to keep the total high.

The U.S. Navy, incidentally, flies over 1000 combat aircraft in first-line units, using four types (A-6, A-7, F/A-18, and F-14) with the A-7 being phased out in favour of the F/A-18 so that only three types will remain soon. The U.S. Air Force's Tactical Air Command with about 3500 combat fighter aircraft uses five types (F-4, A-7, A-10, F-15, F-16). In 1971 the IAF also flew eight types, so there has been no change. In the 1965 War, with about 500 combat aircraft, the IAF used five types (Vampire, Toofani, Mystere, Hunter, and Canberra.)

An annoying aspect of the IAF is its insistence that it consists of 45 squadrons when actually at 100 squadrons it is the fourth largest in the world. It passes understanding why the IAF and the Government should continue to underplay our strength.

The original figure of 45 came from a plan existing before the 1962 War, and is not—as commonly believed—part of the post 1962 build up. It implied 34 combat and 11 transport squadrons.

If the IAF includes the transports in the total figure, why not the squadrons with helicopters and missiles? If, however, we are to talk only of combat flying squadrons, why include the transports?

This example of muddy thinking is the bane of Indian defence planning and analysis if a fictitious figure with no relevance or meaning is continually bandied about, how can we meaningfully assess defence issues?

The true size of the IAF is;

43 combat squadrons

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11 transport squadrons  
38 surface-to-air missile squadrons  
16 helicopter squadrons

This totals 98 squadrons, and takes into account the loss of eight Air Observation Post squadrons to the newly formed Army Air Corps. Against this, however, some helicopter and SAM squadrons are slated for activation.

The IAF fought the creation of the Army Air Corps tooth and nail, as has happened in many other countries. Now, however that the functional split has finally taken place, the IAF will probably find itself well rid of this tedious, difficult, and thankless mission.

The SAMs are of two types. The SAM-2, many times modernized, still has a useful role to play in the sub-continent. Its ceiling has been steadily lowered, so that it can attack lower level targets. Meanwhile, it prevents the PAP from coming in high by default because it is originally a medium/high altitude missile. The SAM-3 would also be considered obsolete in the West. Its eight launchers can fire 24 missiles in a single salvo, a formidable discharge, even if the Mean Time Between Failure of the missiles themselves is absurdly low and dozens have to be fired to obtain one hit. A SAM squadron costs little to operate and maintain, its value is in deterrence, and the creation of complexities for the attacker. This is more important than the actual number of kills.

A new airfield defence missile is long overdue it should have entered service around 1982, and the choice was between the French Roland and the British Rapier. Eventually, budgetary constraints forced a postponement of the choice, which eventually fell on the SAM-S, now entering service.

SAM-9 squadrons have numbers falling in the IAF's main sequence, for example, No. 34, 46, 50, 53, 58, 72 and 74 Squadrons.

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The approximately 1 § SAM 3 squadrons, have four digit numbers, which is unfortunate. There should be a sense of continuity and history in designations. And now we have, for example, a 21 Squadron, a 221 squadron, and a 2211 Squadron. Reserving a block—say between 150 and 200—for SAM squadrons other than the SAM-2s would have made more sense.

The helicopter squadrons, after the transfers to the Army Air Corp, consists of three Alouette 3 squadrons with anti-tank guided missile and four for liaison and light duties, eight squadrons on the Mi-8/-17 for medium transport (the core of the helicopter force), one with the Mi-26 heavy lift helicopter, one with and the Mi-25 heavy gunship. The Mi-25 is the export version of the Soviet Mi-24 Hind. The helicopter squadrons are called “units” because they have 12 aircraft as opposed to the more usual 16 in LAF squadrons, and are commanded by squadron leaders instead of wing commanders. Additionally, the IAF does not want to inflate its squadron count and suffer unnecessary attention from the Government.

Most puzzling is the IAF’s failure to reconstitute the Auxiliary Air Force. The AAF was immediately disbanded after the Chinese War and its Vampire aircraft absorbed into the regular air force, partly because the reserve units were found to be inadequately trained. This, however, was throwing the baby out with the bath water; the solution is to train the reserves properly, not destroy them.

In the U S., it is worth noting, about 75% of the air defense force is reserve manned, and about 30% of the tactical air forces are reserves. Every military long-range transport unit relies heavily on reserves for crews needed for sustained wartime operation. Whereas reserve air defense pilots stand alert every day, the tactical fighter wings mobilize so fast that they deploy with regular wings to overseas stations.

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An air force is the most amenable to a reserve system. A fraction of the men and women required by the army are adequate. In India's case, for example, 20,000 men would barely fill an army division and support units, but could easily provide a 25% increase in fighter squadrons.

If Pakistan can rebuild its MiG-19s, why cannot we rebuild our MiG-21s for the reserves? Having available in emergency extra ten fighter squadrons equipped with refurbished aircraft at a fraction of the cost of the regular equivalent would be a big bonus. This also retains necessary manpower: there are many men who want to fly, but not, for one reason or another, spend half of their productive lives in the air force. A reserve system enables them to pursue their own careers while permitting the air force to continue utilizing their skills.

A question I am frequently asked, when the two rival air forces are compared, is why has China been ignored?

Because China is not an air threat The IAF normally has about six fighter squadrons in the Northeast? at Tezpur, Bagdogra, and Hasimara. Four or five are MiG-21 squadrons and one is on Ajeets. In the recent mobilisation crisis at least three MiG-21 squadrons went west. It is likely that only one or two would have been left back had war broken out. Of course, the large fleet of combat trainers available in the Northeast would have partially compensated for the withdrawal of combat squadrons. Essentially, however, the IAF is not hampered by concern over China in the event of a winter war with Pakistan.

In passing, however, we may note that China avoids lightly entering into wars on behalf of others. It intervened in Korea because otherwise North Korea's defeat would have left American forces sitting on the Yalu River. It skirmished with Taiwan for several years because of its claims on that country, which are certainly more valid than the claims under which it occupied Tibet. In 1979 it wanted to "teach

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Vietnam a lesson", but for the entire duration of the Vietnam War, fought on its doorstep, it never committed combat troops against the Americans.

Pakistan is no buffer for China against India we already have a lengthy, contested border with Beijing; it is already in occupation of a sizeable Indian area, and it has satisfied its claims on northern Kashmir. The Pakistanis thoughtfully exchanged the disputed areas for Chinese military and diplomatic support against India. Should Pakistan break up, or should we win back Kashmir, our border with China only increases no new border is created. China's security situation, therefore, does not worsen if we attack Pakistan. From Beijing's viewpoint its security might actually improve should Pakistan fall, India will share borders with the Soviet Union. No one can coexist with a superpower on its borders unless the game is played by the superpower's rules, as happens in the case of Canada and Mexico which share borders with the United States. Since India, if there is no Pakistan, will have no incentive to play by Soviet rules, Delhi and Moscow will come into conflict to the Chinese advantage.

Rather than worry about diversion of air resources to the China front, we should examine a major advantage we enjoy over PAF, in the matter of resupply of fighter aircraft.

Once upon a time air forces commonly had more aircraft than pilots. A first-line fighter of World War II cost about \$50,000. Today's top-of-the line fighters cost about \$15 million plus. After allowing for inflation on a generous scale, this is still probably a 15 times increase. So today there are more pilots than aircraft. Each aircraft lost for combat or combat related reasons, even if the pilot is lost or badly hurt, which, is not always the case, means another one or two pilots without an aircraft.

New aircraft are very difficult to come by because manufacturers produce only on firm order, and take two years or more for delivery.

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The only way to get fast replacements is from friendly nations. In this matter we are far better placed thanks to our Soviet allies than is Pakistan with its American friends and Arab allies.

The PAF has much smaller pool of fighter pilots, being a much smaller air force. This may not matter in a short war. In a long war, however, one lives off the fat till new pilots are trained, and as we have ample fat, the advantage is ours. Admittedly the replacement pilots may not be as good as the first-line ones. But as the best ones disappear, or survive to get better, the not-so-good pilots become adequate in comparison to the enemy, who is also losing his good pilots.

The Soviets will ensure us unlimited supply. For them to ship over ten MiG-21s and MiG-27s a day is a matter of small consequence. But the Pakistani situation vis-a-vis the US is entirely different because Washington's first reaction on the outbreak of war is to embargo all war material. This obviously does not apply in situations like North Korea versus South Korea, because the US has combat troops and aircraft in the South and will be as much at war with the North as Seoul. It also does not apply in a situation like the Mideast in 1973, when the US was allied to one side, Israel, but hostile to the others, Egypt and Syria. US embargoes extend to diversions of war material from third parties. For example, in 1971, Jordan could send ten F-104 Starfighters to Pakistan only after Nixon's approval, and even Nixon, for all his support of Pakistan, could do no more than send these ten aircraft. The reinforcement was to have no effect whatsoever on the outcome of the war. Once the PAF's pool of F-16s starts diminishing, there will be no hope of replacement.

What about the Arab states? There was a time when the Saudi-Iran-Jordan supply scenario appealed to me. Pakistani pilots had ready access to F-5Es in these Countries. Presumably they could be transferred in an emergency. If aircraft at US East Coast bases can be maintained at West Coast bases, 5000-kilo-meters away, then it should

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not have proved too difficult with a pool of over 250 F-5Es, to maintain 80 or so in Pakistan during a war. Essential support equipment and Arab technicians would come in by C-130; for more serious maintenance, the aircraft would be flown home or disassembled for return in the C-130s.

The problem with this scenario is that Iran, previously a major supporter of Pakistan, is busy crippling itself. And Saudi Arabia and Jordan would require American permission to transfer any arms at all. If the Soviets attacked Pakistan this permission would be given, but it is improbable in the event of an India-Pakistan war. Also, Pakistan appears not to have taken the minimum steps needed for realistic and quick implementation of this program in emergency. Had Pakistan accepted F-5Es from the United States then the needed infrastructure would have been established. As it was not, no one in India worries about this scenario any more, though at one time it was a matter for serious concern.

Pakistan can certainly take Mirage 5s from Libya and the UAE. The UAE might spare some, but certainly no more than a few. The UAE purchased the aircraft for its own minimum security needs. These have escalated dramatically since the Gulf War between Iran and Iraq. The UAE knows it cannot, in short order, replace any aircraft it loans to Pakistan. Pakistan no longer has the close ties with the Libyan air force that it enjoyed in the 1970s. Besides, it is unclear how well the Libyan Mirages are being maintained. With every passing year the stock will shrink. And with every passing year the number of Pakistani pilots on deputation to the Arabs decreases as the latter learn to pilot and maintain their own aircraft.

China can, of course, supply additional F-6s and A-5s. The F-6s are not a problem as Pakistan has probably stockpiled its discarded aircraft against dire emergency. The A-5s will have to come by sea, in which event time will elapse. Aircraft have to be taken from Chinese stocks, prepared for delivery, shipped to ports, loaded, transported,

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unloaded, reassembled, tested, delivered and absorbed. There are several substantial differences between Chinese and Pakistani F-6s; we may assume that in like manner Pakistan will alter its A-5s and this will also affect emergency absorption of aircraft. In any case the procedure will take up much time. If the aircraft are flown from China to Tibet and then to Pakistan by means of several short hops, they are vulnerable to interception over North Kashmir.

India, conversely, will continue to get all the aircraft it requires. Its contracts with France and Britain specifically rule out the possibility of embargoes. India is a much bigger nation and politically much more important than Pakistan: no European nation can afford to antagonise us. Soviet aircrafts of every type are freely available: if required, they can be disassembled and transported in the giant Soviet air freighters, the An-22 or even the An-124 Russian, largest aircraft on earth.

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### **THE MILITARY BALANCE IN THE EVENT OF WAR**

This detailed analysis has been only a prelude to our main discussion. To summarise the core of the argument:

- India today is so strong that there was no need to call off the Sind operation no matter what Pakistan did;
- Pakistan's retaliation for an attack into Sind, as revealed by its deployments, would have aimed at the Punjab but India could have successfully held the Punjab;
- There would have been no intervention from any external source;
- All our considerable military power is rendered impotent by the lack of political will;
- India is in such great danger that this weak political will is likely to cost us far more than decisive action to improve our security environment.

### **THE DEFENCE OF THE PUNJAB**

If the Government feared an internal uprising on the Punjab in the event of a Pakistani counteroffensive retaliating against Operation Brass Tacks, could have prepared itself to prevent the eventuality. It was criminally negligent in failing to take these steps and then getting outwitted when the Pakistanis' brought pressure to bear on the Punjab.

The fear the Government has about an uprising in the Punjab is entirely a product of its misconceptions and paranoia. Perhaps the Government is feeling guilty about what we did in East Pakistan in 1971 and feels that if we could do it to Pakistan, Pakistan can do it to us. This shows how little the Government understands its own people. Had Pakistan attacked, the Sikhs would have joined with every other Indian in doing their best to repel the attacker and nothing else.

But we already know from the Government non-policy on the Punjab for the last four years that realistic appraisals are somewhat out of the Government's ability, so there is no sense in insisting on one regarding the Punjab. We have to go along with the Government's conceptions and then see what is to be done.

In preparation for Operation Brass Tacks it could have inducted sufficient troops into the Punjab to preclude the possibility of revolt. The cover would have been a decision to take a tough stand on the Punjab, and the entire country would have supported the Government.

Of course, if we say that the Government was not fully aware of what was happening, then obviously it could not have prepared the Punjab for Brass Tacks, because Arun Singh and General Sundarji do not control that aspect of the situation. The point is that even when the Government presumably found out what was happening, it had a choice of backing down or going along with the hawks. That it chose to back down speaks for itself. But had it decided to back the hawks, mobilisation itself would have provided the cover for inducting additional forces into the Punjab: as noted, additional forces did come in any case.

What level of forces might have been required? We have two yardsticks for comparison, the force required to hold Delhi down after the communal riots erupted, and the force sent to the Punjab for Blue Star.

The existing level of paramilitary deployment in the Punjab is about 300 companies, or an effective strength of about 25,000 men allowing for under strength units, men on leave, sick, or under training.

In November 1984, the Army deployed the equivalent of three divisions in Delhi after the riots started. The troops inducted included

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seven infantry brigades, an air defence artillery brigade, and other troops we may equate to a brigade. Assume 5 battalions worth of infantry, artillery, and support troops per brigade, and an effective 600 men per battalion. Then approximately 27,000 men were on the streets or quickly available. Delhi at that time had a population of about 7.5-million, or a third of the Punjab's, but of course it is a compact city and less than 1500 square kilometers.

Conversely, had the Army been called in on October 31, 1984 itself possibly ten thousand troops would have provided a sufficient deterrent. Against the advantages of Delhi's compact geography is that in the Punjab even a platoon of 30 men backed up with a quick reaction force suffice to demonstrate presence in a group of villages extending to several square kilometers. It is much harder for rural groups to concentrate for mischief than urban groups.

In preparation for Blue Star, the Army deployed six divisions in the Punjab and one in Haryana. This excluded the two divisions already on permanent station in the Punjab: these were geared to meet any external attack during Blue Star. As nearly as we can tell the divisions inducted from outside included 4, 9, 22, 23, 36 and 54 Divisions and 14 Division to Haryana.

Besides 23 and 57 Divisions, which moved to the Punjab during the mobilisation crisis, to preempt any uprising there, seven divisions were available in the Northeast. Of these only four suffice to hold against China in a winter war situation: 17 and 27 Divisions in Sikkim, and 2 and 5 Divisions in Arunachal. The Army could have moved 8, 20, and 21 Divisions into the Punjab at short notice if their heavy equipment was left behind. Even with the heavy equipment, 100 trains are required per infantry division. Since the mobilisation in the west was already largely complete, this movement was entirely feasible.

Additional to this available total of eight divisions (two normally in the Punjab, three sent as the initial reinforcement, and three more

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available from the north east), about 100 paramilitary and state armed police battalions could have been comfortably moved to the Punjab, or about an additional 50,000 effectives. These would have proved invaluable not only in strengthening the Army but also for protecting rear areas against possible sabotage.

All this implies 1,50,000 regular and paramilitary troops in the Punjab exclusive of the divisions on the border. This is surely quite enough to ensure harmony.

**NEUTRALIZING PAKISTAN'S Pincer ATTACK**

Pakistan concentrated its Army Reserve North in a manner that would have allowed it to attack Pathankot or Dera Baba Nanak. Either objective would have served the larger purpose of forming the northern pincer in a drive to isolate the Punjab from the rest of India.

Pakistan's Army Reserve south was positioned to attack either Fazilka or Kasur, though since it had crossed north over the Sutluj, Kasur was the more logical objective. Other points between these two towns were not a target because you don't want to start your attack by 'crossing a broad river before getting to grips with the enemy, particularly as he is superior in firepower and quality of equipment, plus a large superiority in the air.

**A. JAMMU-PATHANKOT SECTORS**

To recapitulate the troops deployments in and around the Pathankot sector:

**(1) INDIA**

Between Akhnur and Gurdaspur India deploys 10, 26, 6, 29, 39, and 9 Divisions, plus at least three extra brigades including one with 39 Division. It has three (I) armored brigades, including one ad hoc,

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and three at least divisional tank regiments. Of the twenty-two odd infantry brigades available, one or two may be presumed to be deployed north of Akhnur to strengthen the 25 Division sectors, as discussed in our sector deployments.

**(2) PAKISTAN**

In the same area Pakistan deploys its 19, 15, and B Divisions, plus an (I) brigade, a total of eleven brigades (15 Division has four). Additionally, 6 Armored and 17 Divisions, and 8 (1) Armoured Brigade, plus (let us assume) the FCNA reserve brigade at Rawalpindi, are available. This makes a total of 15 infantry and three armored brigades. The armored regiment total is 11: five with the armored division, one with corps, three with the independent armoured brigade, and three with infantry divisions.

Any Pakistani impulse to pull down brigade from its 12 and 23 Divisions (ten brigades between them) is assumed to be restrained by the Indian reinforcement of the line north of Akhnur by pulling out troops from the Jammu-Pathankot sectors.

**COMPARISON**

India has a substantial superiority in infantry (20 brigades to 15) and a parity in armor (12 regiments to 12, and presumed three mechanized battalions to Pakistan's four. Pakistan's count is based on three mechanised infantry battalions with its armoured division and one with its independent armoured brigade.

Now, no matter how we play this, because Pakistan has interior lines of communications, and because it can switch forces, if allowed to strike first it will score gains. Particularly vulnerable is Akhnur: after 1971 neither side gave up its gains in Kashmir, so now Pakistani troops are sitting right in Chhamb. Compared to 1965 and 1971, when Akhnur was their target, they are already half way there.

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This is particularly true of Pakistan's armor, which can switch directions within hours, whereas ours is deployed all along the periphery. Against this advantage is a disadvantage Pakistan cannot concentrate its armor against one point because of the lack of room. There is little open terrain here.

If Pakistan were to concentrate against any one of the three targets (Akhnur, Pathankot, Gurdaspur), the rest of its Sialkot sector would be left with minimal forces to defend. It would be vulnerable to an Indian counter offensive, which would be much superior in infantry. This might well be a risk it is prepared to take, because it could count on its very strong fixed defences and interior lines to delay any Indian counter offensive.

The point that we will make again and again is, why should Pakistan be allowed to attack first? If India is to unleash Brass Tacks, why should we not attack here first also?

Our reader will reply that we are stepping outside the rules for discussion because in terms of our own argument, India looked as if it planned to provoke a Pakistani attack first and then retaliate.

We have already commented on the stupidity of such a course of action: why should India be unable to manufacture a *causus belli* that leaves it with the initiative? And in any case, when India's entire strategy calls for conceding the first strike to Pakistan, why should we flinch from losing ground? Should not have some one worked out all these pros and cons before deciding on Brass Tacks and before trying to provoke war?

#### B. **FEROZEPUR SECTOR**

During the mobilization crisis, the Army sent 57 Division from the North East to Ferozepur, to reinforce 7 Division, and it also pulled



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armour plus an infantry division northward from the exercise area to relocate opposite Fazilka. Since both targets were covered, it becomes difficult for us to say which the Pakistanis would have attacked had war been unleashed. Still, to cross the Sutluj northward means that Ferozepur is more logical than Fazilka, and so this area is discussed.

**(1) INDIA**

The location of 7 and 57 Divisions at Ferozepur has already been noted. Plus there would be XI Corps reserve brigades, 55 (I) and 23 (I) Armored Brigades. This gives seven-infantry brigade presuming no other reinforcement was made, and an armored brigade. The total tank regiments would be four: three with the armored brigade and one divisional regiments.

57 Division being a mountain formation, it has no integral tank regiment. Also, the tank regiment from 23 Division sent to Amritsar would not be available as the division moved very quickly from Ranchi. The 15 Division regiment would be required at Amritsar sector itself.

**(2) PAKISTAN**

By shifting its 1 Armored and 37 Divisions north of the Sutluj, Pakistan could have concentrated a formidable force against Ferozepur.

Besides these two divisions, it had 11 Division from Lahore (leaving 10 Division to protect Lahore) and 14 Division from Okara. The two (I) infantry brigades with Pakistan 17 Corps were available as were the independent armored brigades with IV and 11 Corps, 3 (I) and 10 (I) Armored Brigades. This gives in theory four armored brigades (including two with 1 Armoured Division) and eleven infantry brigades. About 15 tank regiments should have been available five with the armored division, three each with the two independent brigades, and if each infantry division has its own regiment, one each

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with the three infantry divisions. A last regiment would be with HQ 11 Corps.

If this is the force that faced Ferozepur, then surely the Army was entirely correct to be alarmed about the shift of Pakistan Army Reserve South.

The above force total, however, has to be highly qualified.

(a) With two Indian divisions at Amritsar, 15 and 23, would Pakistan have left Lahore with only one division? We know that the Army intended 23 Division to prevent any internal trouble in Amritsar. This does not mean that Pakistani intelligence, which has to assume the worst, would agree with the Indian Army's ostensible reasons. From Pakistan's viewpoint, the two-division concentration against Lahore would have been highly dangerous. At the minimum we should deduct one infantry brigade and a tank regiment from the Pakistani total opposite Ferozepur.

(b) With all of Pakistan Army Reserve South shifting across the Sutluj, and with the known vulnerability of the Sutluj bridges, 1 Armored and 37 Divisions could have offered no threat to Fazilka or any point southward. If we assume that Pakistan 10 (I) Armored Brigade out of Multan goes to Kasur sector, that India can spare 6 (I) Armored Brigade out of Bhatinda to reinforce Ferozepur. So we should add an (I) tank brigade to our total. Likewise, Indian X Corps would face no Pakistani armor, and could have sent the tank regiments with its two infantry divisions northward.

(c) The Pakistani deployment presumed in this example leaves the whole of Pakistan between Sulimanki to Rahim Yar Khan defended just by 35 Division. India could, then, have detached 16 Division to the Ferozepur sector, with a combination of brigades from its own resources and from 22 Division. A total of four brigades could easily have been spared, leaving five in X Corps to face three Pakistani brigades.

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(c) With the shift northward of Pakistan Army Reserve South, there would be no major force left to oppose Indian I and II Corps in its Sind drive. In that case India by no means required the huge concentration of forces in Rajasthan. It could quite easily spare one independent armored brigade from the ad hoc Armored Division. The Division would be left with six tank regiments, the normal complement, and two mechanized infantry battalions, if it was so essential to keep this force balanced, an additional mechanized battalion could have been pulled out from somewhere else.

If we now rework the force comparison for Ferozepur sector, we get:

- Pakistan: four armored ten infantry brigades, total 13 tank regiments
- India: two armored eleven infantry brigades, total 10 tank regiments

For the defender, these should be acceptable odds, with the IAF filling in any gaps on account of the inferiority in armor numbers.

If it was not essential for India to have two armored or mechanized divisions per strike corps for the Sind thrust, then of course a northward reinforcement could have been made, including an armored and an infantry division. And this would give India a big superiority in Ferozepur sector.

We are not attempting to second guess the Army or imply that we have some special insight into its deployments and counter deployments. Our purpose was purely to show that adequate force to protect Ferozepur was available without disrupting Brass Tacks. Since the Army has not seen fit to enlighten us, we have made our own assumptions regarding deployment. And even if an armoured and an

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infantry division had moved north, there still were available two armored, one mechanized and seven infantry divisions in four corps, whereas Pakistan would have had only about four infantry divisions 18, 25, 60, and 16 from Quetta side) plus an independent armored brigade to defend Sind.

There was, then, no military reason to panic about Pakistan's counter deployment. Pakistan's pincer attack on the Punjab would have been defeated.

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**WHY OPERATION BRASS TACKS WOULD HAVE FAILED**

**THE BALANCE IF PAKISTAN DEFENDED SIND**

The tacit assumption behind Brass Tacks is that India's advance into Sind would have provided protection against a Pakistani pincer attack in the Punjab. This is why we assert that Brass Tacks was called off because the leadership was nervous about the Punjab, not for any military reason. After limited initial losses, India would have been stalemated with a minimal re-deployment of troops. Since both of Pakistan's army reserve groups would have been tied down in a pincer attack, the rest of Pakistan would have been almost completely open. And in any case Indian success south of Ferozepur would have forced Pakistan, like it or not, to pull troops down no matter how successful the pincer attack.

Two precedents for this exist. In 1965, Pakistan 7 Division had only, to continue hitting Chhamb and Akhnur and it would have broken through. But when India counterattacked across the international frontier, at Sialkot and Lahore, in its moment of triumph Pakistan had to bring 7 Division down to the Sialkot/. Lahore areas, relieving the pressure on Kashmir.

In 1971, Pakistan 23 Division, heavily reinforced, could have continued its attack on Akhnur after the fall of Chhamb. But with Indian I Corps already making inroads into the Sialkot sector, Pakistan had to meet this greater threat and Akhnur was safe.

It is possible to argue that Pakistan would not bother with pulling troops down to bolster the defence of Sind in the same way as it did to protect Sialkot and Lahore in 1965 and 1971. But an advance of a few kilometers into the Punjab in no way compensates for having the country cut in two. Even if we lost the three border districts of

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Gurdaspur, Amritsar and Ferozepur, we gain many times over by the destruction of Pakistan cut off from the sea it cannot exist except by courtesy of India. The loss of Hyderabad and Karachi, two of Pakistan's first and fourth most important cities would strangle the country. Whereas the loss of the three border districts would be a grievous loss, but would not affect India in any way comparable to the loss of Sind.

It may be noted in passing that if Sind is lost, Pakistan cannot hold Baluchistan. That province too 'gill fall to India The unraveling of Pakistan will be a fact.

If we take all this into consideration, then our falling for Pakistan's bluff over the pincer action on Punjab is all the more reprehensible not only was it impossible for Pakistan to take the Punjab, it was impossible to leave Sind defenseless. As usual Pakistan was bluffing, and as usual, we fell for its bluff.

But even so, Brass Tacks would have failed. Consider for a moment the situation if Pakistan had decided to protect Sind against Brass Tacks instead of trying for compensatory gains in the Punjab.

In Sind/southern Punjab Pakistan would have concentrated its 1 Armored, 14, 16, 18 and 35, Divisions plus 2 and 10 (I) Armored Brigades and the V Corps independent brigade, plus 60 Brigade. Since both Indian armored divisions were in the south, Pakistan too could have sent 6 Armored Division from Sialkot sector to the south. Allow a couple of brigades picked up from other sectors, plus a couple more tank regiments.

Let us count two tank regiments and a mechanized battalion as a standard armored brigade and two mechanized battalions plus a tank regiment as a standard mechanized brigade. Roughly Pakistan could have massed a total of 18 standard armored and 14 infantry brigades. Three corps HQs would have been available II from Multan, V from

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Karachi, and XII from Quetta.

Against this would have been Indian I, II, V. and X Corps with 1, 31, and the ad hoc Armored, 33 Mechanized, 18 and 36 RAPID, 54 Air Assault, and 4, 11, 12, 14, 16, 18 and 22 Infantry Divisions. X Corps would have an (I) armored brigade and an (I) brigade; Southern Command would have had two (I) brigade, and the amphibious operation would have landed an infantry brigade, possibly 340 (I) from Trivandrum or a brigade of 54 Division. I Corps would have 89 (I) Infantry Brigade. A RAPID division had two infantry and one mechanized brigade. The Indian independent armoured brigades formed into the ad hoc armored division and one left separate had more tanks and BMPs than four standard armoured brigades, so we count them as six. This is a total of twelve standard armored brigades, five mechanized brigades, and ~34 infantry brigades.

To summarize:

Armored brigades: India 12, Pakistan 8

Mechanized brigades: India 7 Pakistan none

Infantry brigades: India 32, Pakistan 14

Now let us use a crude form of Lanchester's formulas to assign a combat power value to each type of formation. Assume a count of 1 for an infantry brigade, 2 for a mechanized brigade, and 3 for an armored brigade. We have not, of course, taken into account artillery, communications, air power, helicopters and so on. But this suffices for our limited purposes.

India gets a total of 82, Pakistan a total of 38. Squaring both sides as required by Lanchester's formulas we get a combat power of 6609 for India and 1444 for Pakistan or a 4 to 1 margin in our favor. This should normally be quite adequate for a quick victory.

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Couldn't a decisive result have been achieved before international pressure on a week-kneed Delhi forced the fighting to a stop? In the case of Exercise, international pressure was deemed to become effective within 12 days of the outbreak of war (March 4 to March 16), and twelve days to advance 250 kilometers to Hyderabad and 100 kilometers to Rahim Yar Khan Reti should be quite enough. So why insist that Brass Tacks would have faded?

To make our point, we need to step back and describe Brass Tacks and make some examination of the grand strategy of both.

**EXERCISE BRASS TACKS**

As we have been unable to get General K. Sundarji's author description of Brass Tacks we have to compose, as best as we can a mosaic out of the limited information and unlimited lies available.

The centre piece of Brass Tacks was a two-pronged thrust by two corps in a broad arrow head formation. The armored arrowhead is supposed to deflect counter attacks against the shaft of the arrow, composed of infantry and support troops. For the sake of discussion, let us assume that II Corps is the northern prong, I Corps the southern.

The prongs are about 150 kilometers apart and there is some flexibility of objectives. II Corps can, for example, divert slightly northwestward and attack Rahim Yar Khan or Reti before continuing westward.

Each prong has two armored/mechanized divisions: I would have 31 Armored and 33 Mechanized; II would have I Armored and the ad hoc Armored Divisions. A RAPID each would be assigned to the corps, we assume 18 with I and 36 with II A number of divisions would be in reserve: 4, 14~ and 54 Air Assault.

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The northern flank of the main arrowhead is secured to some distance by X Corps from Bhatinda, with 16 and 24 Divisions. These attacks into Pakistan to fix Pakistan 14 and 35 Divisions force dispersal of troops deployed against the arrowhead, and deflect troops coming southward from the Lahore and Sialkot sectors. It would not be necessary for X Corps to advance any great distance to achieve these objectives: even ten or twenty kilometers would suffice.

To the south, there would be a diversionary thrust by Southern Command's lone corps, XII, attacking from Bhuj to Badin and then Hyderabad, with two divisions.

There would be yet another diversionary, an amphibious landing in brigade strength in the Korangi Creek area of Karachi city. RAW through its agents would arrange for trouble in Karachi; combination of these two would force a wide dispersion of Pakistani troops from the Punjab and from the Sind front itself.

The two divisions, plus the attack by X Corps, would ensure the security of the Punjab by forcing down all available Pakistani mobile reserves. And of course, any southward shifts would be severely interdicted by the IAF through their long transit.

**GRAND STRATEGY OF INDIA**

The grand strategy of India has been economically spelled out by the Army in the recent presentations to a number of people. We can summarize it as follows:

- Because of International intervention the next Indian Pakistan war will be short.
- In a short war the relative size of the combatants is irrelevant: forces in being, not war potential, determine the outcome of the war.
- Both sides have virtual parity in deployable forces.

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- Thanks to massive arming by external powers and availability of 'force multipliers' Pakistan may actually hold an important edge.

The document also implicitly assumes that Pakistan will have the initiative and that it will make gains in the Punjab. These gains will be offset by the Indian counter offensive in the desert.

This document is so astonishing that we are at a loss in answering and analyzing it. It is a curious mixture of lies, admissions of weakness, confessions of helplessness, and a dwelling in Never-Never Land.

It is, of course, intended for the public, an offensive twisting of the perpetual trust the public reposes in its armed forces. Nonetheless, I have heard too many responsible, intelligent and patriotic military officers repeat the official strategy too many times to doubt that the armed forces themselves believe 90% of the cant.

The lies are obvious: there is no area in which there is virtual parity, and we have seen in some detail. It passes imagination as to how a 1.5 times advantage in divisions and armor, a 3 times advantage in total fighter aircraft and a 4 times advantage in first-line fighters, and an approximate 5 times superiority in naval forces can be construed as virtual parity by even the most paranoid of analysts.

Pakistan at times has built a purely temporary parity or even superiority in a sub-sector of the military balance, but this has been due entirely to India's negligence. There is no case where parity or superiority has lasted longer than India wanted it. For example, India's purchase of the Mirage 2000 preceded Pakistan's purchase of the F-16, though both countries had for some time been looking time to upgrade their fighter forces. Because General Dynamics, the manufacturer of the F-16, is more efficient than Dassault, the

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manufacturer of the Mirage 2000, Pakistan started receiving its F-16s first, so there was a time when Pakistan had a marginal and utterly meaningless superiority in this area of comparison. India responded, typically, by inducting three times as many aircraft, buying 40 each of the MiG-23BN, Mirage. 2000, and MiG-29.

Recently, Pakistan has acquired a marginal edge in self-propelled medium artillery by purchase of 'the U.S. M-109A1 155mm SP howitzer for its armored forces.

But consider the background for 'a moment, Till 1972, the only SP artillery with India was the World War 2 vintage Sexton, an 88mm piece: Pakistan had acquired a handful of US 105mm SP howitzers as part of the 1954.60 arms aid packages. The number of pieces involved and the performance difference between the two pieces was so insignificant that this so-called edge was meaningless. In 1972 India began inducting large numbers of British Abb6t 105mm SP howitzers, already in first-line service with the British Army of the Rhine, and attained a huge superiority over Pakistan. That it had not bothered to do this earlier was because of higher priorities and because the alleged Pakistani edge was causing the Army no loss of sleep.

Next India constructed the Catapult, its 130mm self-propelled gun to bolster the medium artillery of the armored forces, again enormously widening the gap between India and Pakistan. The limitations of the Catapult were long obvious, but there seemed no particular urgency to remedy these, Because Pakistan has tended to buy the best it can afford, when finally it responded, in 1982, it purchased a better weapon and even achieved, with a repeat order in 1985, a numerical equality with India in this vital area. But Pakistan has, literally, shot its bolt as far as self-propelled artillery is concerned: realistically it can expect no further modernization or any significant increase in numbers because of resource constraints. India, however, will go on to buy a new medium SP piece, and will again, swamp Pakistan in numbers and in quality.

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And in any case no one who will say that because Pakistan had numerical equality and qualitative superiority in SP artillery with India in March 1987, that it had any advantage it could translate into a battlefield victory. Because against this advantage, it faced immense Indian advantages in tanks and mechanized infantry. Artillery forms only the third leg of the armor trio:

India's advantages in the other two legs give it a decisive edge. Similarly, take heavy anti-tank guided missiles. Pakistan has perhaps 5000 TOWs, with a 4000-meter range. India had the option to buy TOW from the U.S., but deliberately refrained for political reasons. It concentrated on the Euromissile Franco German Milan, a medium ATGM widely used by NATO. It not only embarked on a program to build 15,000 missiles, but also constructed a plant to permit its self-sufficiency, whereas Pakistan must import. That our own inefficiency was responsible for long delays in the Milan program is hardly to be blamed on Pakistan.

Our defense establishment (and this includes defense journalists and analysts) has of late been smitten with American jargon. Thus the term "force multiplier", a typically American invention that sounds profound but actually means precisely nothing. When I first heard the term, it was applied specifically to the E-3 AWACS, and the implication was that its command and control features permitted the more effective utilization of fighters. Thus, instead of necessarily adding more fighters to meet a given threat, you could procure AWACS, which would multiply the combat power of your fighters.

This is fine as far as it goes. But then all improvements to command and control are "force multipliers", as are all improvements to weapons, intelligence, leadership, logistics, tactics, strategy, and diplomacy.

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Guided weapons much as TV-guided bombs are force multipliers reduce the number of sorties needed to kill a given target. ATOMS are force multipliers because they provide an economical method of killing much more expensive tanks. The National Defence College in Delhi is a force multiplier because it enhances leadership standards and permits a more efficient use of existing forces, reducing the need to increase force levels. The 1 and 2 Army Signal Regiments in Delhi are force multipliers because they snoop on Pakistani communications: a more precise knowledge of the opponent's moves enables a more efficient use of forces. Vehicles with balloon tyres in the desert are a force multiplier because they have improved mobility, which improves logistics, which in turn improves combat power. The recently (for India) adopted tactic of not waiting to consolidate after an Initial advance but to push on is a force multiplier because, again, It enables a much greater productivity from existing forces and thus reduces the need to add more forces. The Indo-Soviet Treaty Is a force, multiplier because it frees Indian divisions from the China front for deployment to the Pakistan front, thus reducing the pressure for more divisions.

Now, since every improvement is a force multiplier, how does it help (a) to use this term in the first place and (b) to use it With reference to Pakistan to imply, they have some kind of advantage because they allegedly have more force multipliers than India? In as much as India is improving its forces at a rate twice to ten times that of Pakistan, if this obnoxious and misleading term is to be used at all, it should be used to point out an Indian advantage, not an Indian disadvantage. Otherwise it simply adds to the vast complex of lies that we are burdened with.

“Massive American arms aid” is one of the two favorite phrases of the Indian press and defence analytical community. (The other is a “sophisticated” arm.) Let us for the sake of argument assume that the supply of American arms to Pakistan is indeed massive.

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Can it be called aid when it is to be paid back in full at prevailing commercial rates of interest? And when the full market price is being charged? If this is aid, then what do we say about Soviet arms, which are supplied to India at 2% interest and repayment periods ranging upto 17 years, at a fraction of the free market price? (Though increasingly the Soviets are charging full cost, albeit, at the same highly concessional interest rates.)

And if we are to call it massive, how do we characterize India's arms purchases? A single recent contract for the Bofors 155mm gun, will eventually total about \$4-billion, for guns, prime movers, ammunition, spares, training and documentation. (This assumes the full buy of 1500 guns as planned today) By contrast the two (U.S. arms packages over 11 years (1982-91) will total \$ 3.34 billion.

An objective observer might wonder that when one single Indian deal exceeds both U.S. arms packages, what are we talking about? Besides making enormous purchases abroad, India also has a domestic defence production establishment many times larger than Pakistan's. For example, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited produces 25 MiG-27s and 15 Jaguars annually (approximately), or a total of about 40. First line aircraft. This is quite aside from its foreign purchases. Pakistan produces no combat aircraft whatsoever and 40 aircraft every year would permit the P.A.F. to reequip every eight years.

The lies and misperceptions are obvious and even understandable, in that we want to always present ourselves as the good guys. But we are baffled by the Indian insistence that any war will be short because of international intervention.

Why on earth should we throw away our biggest advantage, size and mass, and fight a war on Pakistan's terms? A short war benefits only Pakistan. We have repeatedly emphasized throughout this book that no decisive results are possible in a short war even with our 3 to 1 overall advantages. Decisive results are possible after four weeks or

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so, when after accounting for our greater losses because we will be attacking, the overall advantage in our favor becomes 5 to 1.

Is it our leadership's business to fight wars to enable Pakistan, invariably, to achieve stalemate? Are our leaders and generals fighting for India or for Pakistan? Sadly, it would seem that they are fighting for our adversary.

If we allow Pakistan to attack first, then of course it will make gains in the Punjab. But why do we have a national strategy that concedes the right of first strike to the enemy? Neither Israel or the Soviet Union do so they insist, very clearly, they will attack first. NATO as an alliance has a defensive strategy, but that is because with the exception of the U.S., its constituents, being smaller than the Soviet Union, are terrified of Moscow, and are determined, at all costs, to avoid giving it any provocation. The U.S. when acting individually, has a different strategy, though it may not openly say so, For example, at sea the U.S. Navy will hit first. Of course if for some reason it cannot, it is prepared to absorb a first strike before counter attacking.

It is absurd to concede the first strike to the adversary, thereby giving him an advantage he cannot ever hope for by virtue of his own strength. Oddly, in the past we have not followed this strategy. 1971 is the clearest example; we crossed the Pakistan international border in force on the night of November 21/22, thus striking first. 1965 is not so clear, but nonetheless instructive Pakistan struck first at Kashmir, when after its infiltrators' attacks had failed it used its 12 and then its 7 Division at Chhaamb, but India was first across the international frontier.

The folly of permitting a first strike to the adversary was amply evident during the Kutch incident of April 1965. India did nothing except react and then sat back. This enabled Pakistan to muster the courage to attack Kashmir in August and September, confident that

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India would not retaliate anywhere else.

A strategy must provide a framework within which we analyze the situation and create our responses and counter responses. It must, then, be based on a ruthlessly frank assessment of facts, and a completely cold-blooded appreciation of our interests.

When we have a strategy that is a failure, then we will also fail in the war fought on that' strategy.

**POLITICAL LIMITATIONS OF BRASS TACKS : WILL INTERVENTION TAKE 12 DAYS?**

Brass Tacks assumes that international intervention will bring the war to an end. The time frame used is 12 days.

If we begin on the assumption that intervention will force a cease-fire, then we cannot resist intervention when it comes.

If intervention is to come, its timing, mode and duration are beyond our control.

On what basis, then, has an estimate of 12-days been used for Brass Tacks?

Since we are not privy to General Sundarji's thoughts, we have to provide our own rationalization for this time frame, and then look at the limitations of the reasoning regarding intervention.

It is difficult to find any real analysis behind the estimate of 12 days. Rather, it seems to be an ad hoc estimate based on a general feeling that neither we nor Pakistan can sustain a war much beyond two to three weeks. Since the war itself will be no more than 14 to 21 days based on the fighting limitations of the two forces, then intervention is assumed to take place sometime within this period. The

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exact date of intervention appears to be a purely subjective assumption.

Now, let us take another canon of our foreign policy Pakistan is assumed to have so close a relationship with the United States that it is the eastern bulwark of the entire U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East, as important as Israel, the western bulwark. We do not in any way accept this canon, believing it to be a misperception and misconstruction of U.S. interests and relationships. But for this analysis, our views are irrelevant: it matters what the Government thinks.

If this canon is correct, and if Pakistan is really that important to the U.S., then intervention will take place as soon as the US can organise it: as in Israel's case no time will be wasted.

Diplomatic pressure will begin on the outbreak of war. It will not just be the U.S., but every Muslim country and every country the U.S. can persuade or coerce into supporting Pakistan. The anti-India line-up will have a clear majority in the United Nations as in 1971. A Soviet veto will prevent any U.N. intervention but not other multilateral action.

This action can be of several kinds: diplomatic, a cutting off of oil supplies, an expulsion of Indians working in various countries. It can also include military intervention: Pakistan has lent combat troops to Jordan and Saudi Arabia. It is always possible that the U.S. will airlift troops from these countries to Pakistan. They could be utilized either to free troops from the Afghan border or to strengthen the defences in sensitive sectors, such as Sialkot and Lahore. The combat contribution of the foreign troops might be marginal, but the symbolic value would be immense.

There could be direct commitment of U.S. forces, aircraft, either to free forces from the Afghan border or in direct support of Pakistani

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forces against India. Here the value would be military as well as political. The arrival of USAF, F-15 wing 'with 72 fighters plus three or five E-3 AWACS would change the entire air balance of power. And is an India already so fearful of foreign intervention prepared to engage U.S. forces in combat?

Both these interventions could take place within a very few days. For example, if the US wants, it can deploy a fighter wing to Pakistan within 72 hours.

Once foreign intervention is assumed, there is no telling if India will really have 12 days available. It might have no more than one or two. And no one says that anything can be achieved in this period.

**MILITARY LIMITATIONS OF BRASS TACKS: IT'S A LONG WAY TO HYDERABAD (SKID)**

On a map, getting to Hyderabad (Sind) from Rajasthan is a simple problem. We have 4 to 1 superiority in combat power on the ground, superiority in the air, and control of the sea, including a diversionary amphibious landing near Karachi. Along the southern axis of the arrow head thrust from Kokhrapar to Hyderabad is 250 kilometers as the crow flies. From Tanot to Rahim Yar Khan or Reti involves crossing 100 kilometers of Pakistan territory. Given a modest advance of 20 kilometers a day, something less than two weeks is perfectly adequate to cut Pakistan in two. Presumably, there will be losses in the Punjab. But these will be more than compensated for by the immense gains in Sind.

In reality, for all our superiority of force, the situation is likely to prove quite different. To see this, we will need to examine a variety of different factors.

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In the 1983 exercises, Digvijay, Blue advanced against Red at ten kilometers a day or about 70 kilometers for the attack phase. There might well be substantial differences we remain unaware of in the assumptions for 1983 and the situation in the Sind scenario. But even at that time the advance was in the desert and while the balance of forces may have changed further in our favor since that time, the desert has remained the same. As against improvement in lines of communication, signals, logistics, firepower, there is the diversion of strength to the Punjab for internal security, which would negate some of these gains.

At 10 kilometers a day it might be possible to reach Rahim Yar Khan or Reti in 12 days, but Hyderabad would require a month.

Can the exercise results be replicated in combat? Particularly as Red was not played by troops specialized in this role. The pressures are all to show Blue in a favourable light and Red in an unfavorable one. If 10 kilometers a day was the exercise advance, in real life it will be less, at least until substantial attrition has occurred and Indian forces enjoy an irresistible advantage, At 1 to 5 kilometers a day, no objective on the Karachi-Lahore railroad can be cut in 12 days. India will capture large areas of sand, and nothing else.

**B. THE SUPPLY PROBLEM**

Can 13 divisions be supported in the desert sector? This does not appear likely. Review for a moment the presumed Jayoj4t of Brass Tacks.

- The northern end is anchored by X Corps from Bhatinda with two large divisions, an (I) armored brigade and an (I) brigade a total of ten brigades.

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- The middle is I and II Corps with three armored, one mechanized, one air assault, two RAPID and two infantry divisions plus one or two (I) brigades.
- The southern end is XII Corps with two divisions plus at least one (I) brigade.
- The naval component is an amphibious brigade to the west.

The amphibious brigade will be supported by the Navy by sea, so the army does not have to support it.

There should be no difficulty in supplying and supporting X Corps, as it will advance only a short distance from its bases, which are all located on rail heads.

The initial supply of XII Corps is not as simple, because there is only the rail head at Bhuj and the road network is minimal. Still, cross-country Movement through the Kutch in winter should be possible along carefully reconnoitered routes, as the marshes would have dried up to a considerable extent.

It is the nine divisions with I and II Corps that are worrying. The supplies required for the war would have been laboriously assembled over the past four months through the rail heads at Barmer, Jaisalmer, and Jodhpur. But this is a huge force, the largest India ever assembled for any operation, and that too over the worst terrain in any of the plains sectors. Moving the supplies forward and into Pakistan to support the advancing troops will prove almost impossible only some fraction of the troops can be supported, and this reduces the odds that Pakistan faces.

While the armored spearhead has full trans desert mobility, all the B vehicles used for support and for the infantry divisions are limited in this respect. It is unclear if the supplies required for an entire corps can be moved along one or two temporary desert roads

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normally, a railhead is required to support a corps.

It is difficult to estimate a priori what each division will require for each day's combat consumption a thousand tons a day for an armored/mechanized division and about half that for an infantry division may not be unreasonable. The usage of the divisions themselves may well be less, but when all the supporting troops are added, and as the distance from the forward dumps to the front increases with the advance, the logistical requirements increase.

It can be argued that a rapid advance reduces the supply requirement because fixed battles, so greedily demanding of artillery ammunition, are avoided. Against this, the lack of proper roads of any sort multiplies wastages in transport. For example, we know from the World War 2 North Africa experience that three times as much fuel is required as might be thought.

In the desert, limited off road mobility creates another problem. Any blockade of the road leads to a back up of all movement behind the block because possibilities of going around the obstruction are limited. On a road where supplies are competing with the infantry moving up behind the armored spearhead, the possibilities for confusion' and a breakdown of all movement are only too obvious. And it is not as if the movement is one way: empty vehicles, evacuated equipment and units, and redeploying units will all be fighting for space.

And as yet no account has been taken of enemy resistance and interdiction which will compound the difficulties by a factor of ten.

It may safely be concluded that the possibilities for supporting nine divisions, including four fully armored and mechanized, and two partially so, are dim. It will not just be the lower priority infantry that will be limited by supply constraints, it will be the spearhead itself. This will reduce our margin of superiority against Pakistan.

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C. **THE PROBLEM OF AIR COVER**

In 1971 Pakistan used an ad hoc force from 33 Division to attack from Rahim Yar Khan to throw off 12 Division's attack. This force appears to have consisted of an armored regiment with T-59s and an accompanying infantry battalion. Though referred to as "Pakistan's attempt at a lightning Israeli style thrust" it had no intention of holding any ground or even precipitating a major battle, only of throwing 12 Division off stride and thus preventing the attack on Rahim Yar Khan aimed at cutting the Karachi Lahore rail line.

It succeeded in its aim, as 12 Division never really got going after that, though it captured some insignificant areas. The division was, of course, very badly handled and there were other problems, such as bad intelligence which led the division to believe it had a good (by desert standards) road on which to advance to Reti, whereas only an indifferent track existed.

The contributory factors do not alter the situation that when lateral mobility is limited, a small force can completely throw out of gear a much larger force. Committing less than a brigade to neutralize a division, and that too in an action lasting less than three days, is not a bad investment.

Conversely, the Pakistani attack was held by a lone company of 23 Punjab with a couple of recoilless rifles till daybreak. There six Hunters from the Armament Training Wing at Jamnager, deputed to Jaisalmer to provide air cover for 12 Division's attacks began their action. In 30+ sorties over two days the Hunters caused the tank regiment heavy damage. The Hunters included two trainers with limited ordnance capability, and two of the combat Hunters became non-operational during the course of operations. The aircraft Used only canon fire and rockets, no bombs, The Pakistani force withdrew in good order.

Doubtless there were special considerations here too: the P.A.F., for example, was largely absent during this time and the Pakistani force had no integral anti-aircraft cover. The example is nonetheless valid.

Giving Pakistan three tank squadrons and, say, six rifle companies for the mixed brigade, we arrive at a combat power total of 15, if each rifle company is valued at one, and if each tank squadron is valued at three times an infantry company. On the Indian side the ground force would total one in combat power. Squaring both sides, we get 225 for Pakistan and 1 for India. Normally this force should have swept over the defending Infantry Company. But a mere six fighters, including two trainers, evened out the odds.

There are reasons for this. (1) Neither India nor Pakistan can really operate in the face of enemy air attacks and the absence of their own air cover. This is no reflection on their courage or their training: only armies with a very long history of working without air cover, such as the North Vietnam Army, can adequately acquit themselves in such circumstances, (2) Acquisition of ground targets in the desert is a most simple affair because of the dust moving vehicles kick up. The dust cloud from a brigade-sized force can be visible at distances up to 80 kilometers. The ground troops, in effect, solve the problem of target acquisition, a most difficult one in normal terrain, by marking themselves for all to see.

It is easy to see one of the reasons Pakistan was not overly worried about protecting Sind. It would have let India come well in, and then attacked the large, conspicuous Indian armored formations from the air. Because they would be advancing, the Indians would be especially vulnerable.

In South Western Air Command India's bases are well back, and we have too few to begin with. The main thrust would have to be

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supported by fighters flying from five bases, at Bikaner, Barmer, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur and Null. (Jamnager, a sixth base, would have covered XII Corps.) Once Indian force advance any substantial distance into Pakistan, the armored spearheads will outrun their air cover and become helpless.

Even within the range of air cover Indian forces face problems because our bases are more than 100 kilometers behind the border. Maintaining standing air patrols is difficult at any distance with the short-ranged MiG series. For example, to keep a two aircraft Combat Air Patrol over an air base requires a whole squadron of MiG-21s.

Pakistan, on the other hand, has at least six, perhaps more, bases available in the area. True that there Mirage. F-6s, and A-5s also suffer from range limitations but with each kilometer advanced, the Indian forces put themselves closer to the. Pakistanis while getting further from friendly aircraft.

General Sundarji has, of course, thought out this problem in detail. His solutions are two. The first, preferred, solution utilizes the mobile air defence groups to protect his spearheads. These groups are within his control and integrated into his combat teams. He can, therefore, feel confident of their support. The second involves the air force.

The General's relationship to the I.A.F. is no different from any other Army Chief in the past. He has not integrated tactical air power into his armored formations either directly or indirectly. An example of direct integration is the Panzer-Stuka combination used so devastatingly by the World War 2 German Army, or the U.S. Marine Corps from World War 2 till today. An example of indirect integration is the Israelis or the U.S. Army/U.S. Air Force. Both can be equally effective given the will to weld the two disparate forces.

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In India the air force has always been taken for granted by the army. It is always assumed to be handy. But neither arm has much time for the other. The army prefers a subordinate air force, to merely hang around at the army's disposal and whim. The air force prefers to fight the Pakistan Air Force and waste none of its expensive and valuable aircraft in the thankless job of close air support.

Undeniably the level of air-ground coordination has increased since 1965, when it was non-existent, and 1971, when the Army often used the I.A.F. to get out of trouble. But the relationship is barely cordial or effective, whatever well wishers on both sides may claim.

So General Sundarji's attitude to the air force is one of certain indifference if they do their job, we'll give them a few pats on the back if they don't do their job, a problem, we'll look after ourselves. In the past, of course, when air defence groups did not exist, there was no question of the army looking after itself and this resulted in an inevitable and huge acrimony between the two services when things went wrong—as they inevitably do.

The I.A.F. has a simple strategy for dealing with the problem of enemy air over the Desert: suppress all relevant P.A.F. air bases in 72-hours, and keep them suppressed. The I.A.F.'s inability to provide extended air cover to the armored spearheads is then of no consequence: the P.A.F. will be in no position to fly, and the few sorties can be handled by the air defence groups.

The IAF's rationale for its ability to implement this strategy is three-fold.

(1) East Pakistan experiences 1971.

In 1971, the IAF quickly put out of commission the seven Pakistani fighter air fields in East Pakistan. It first put Dacca out of

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action. The airfield was repaired in four hours. The IAF then reattacked and this time the airfield was repaired in six hours. The third time the IAF caught the reaper crews in the open killing or wounding about 80 men, and after the PAF simply gave up leaving Dacca permanently out of commission.

(2) Superiority of new weapons

Today the IAF possesses a formidable array of aircraft and weapons for the counter base mission. The aircraft has excellent toss bombing capability with a Circular Error Probable of about 150 meters at 5 kilometers distance, The MiG 27 has been supplied by the Soviet Union together with the entire range of advanced weapons including TV guided bombs and anti radiation missiles, The French Durrandel runway attack munitions is also available in large numbers it consists of clusters of small bombs which first penetrate runway concrete and then explode, cracking the pavement and disrupting the runway base, making a huge crater, Some Jaguar support will also be available. This aircraft has a very low CEP about 30 meters (though presumably it will be less if it has to toss bomb at a distance).

(3) The inadequacy of Pakistani air base defences.

Unlike India Pakistan has very few air base defences, There are only six short range SAM squadrons (Corbel), each with 24 ready to fire missiles and thus comparable in numbers (though not in range) with a SAM-3 squadron. As the PAF has seven major base complexes and Kahuta to defend at most two Crotale squadrons can be spared for the south for Quetta and Karachi For the rest the PAF bases will be defended only by anti aircraft artillery.

Matters, however are not so simple as far as the desert is concerned, Consider the following object to the IAF's strategy.

(1) Counter air is controversial even in the IAF

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Any object can be achieved if cost is disregarded, particularly when a 3 to 1 superiority in aircraft is available. All over the world however the costs associated with counter air operations are under question. Should the large complex, expensive multipurpose aircraft capable of successfully penetrating to distant air bases be risked in this mission? Many are of the opinion that the most important of circumstances, such as keeping Karachi air defence suppressed while an amphibious landing is conducted, warrant the risk.

(2) Difficulty of keeping a base suppressed.

In 1971, the PAF failed to keep even one IAF base out of action for one day. Generally bases were repaired within 6 to 8 hours. Today the same would apply to IAF attacks on Pakistani air base. The 1971 Eastern example is not relevant today. Against the lone fighter squadron based in the East India deployed ten combat squadrons and there was a huge disparity in performance between the F-86 and the IAF Su-7s and MiG-21s. Today the PAF will fight at 3 to 1 odds, not 10 to 1. When 16 aircraft had to protect seven fighter fields and the entire Eastern wing to boot we need not be surprised that India succeeded so easily. And even then Pakistan was still flying from Dacca as late as seven days into the war. If we reran the scenario with three F-6 squadrons and two flights of F-16s defending against ten IAF Jaguar MiG-23 MiG-21 Ajeet and Canberra squadrons we would get a totally different outcome. If runway attack techniques and weapons have increased lethality airfield repair techniques have also improved. One simple solution which we must assume Pakistan has adopted in the face of its known vulnerability to Indian air attack is to increase the number of runway repair teams assigned to each base.

(3) PAF base not completely helpless.

The I.A.F.'s contempt of PAF air defences, which are based almost entirely on flak, is reminiscent of the initial American contempt of North Vietnamese *air* defenses. It does not matter whether you get

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hit by a million dollar missile or twenty \$ 20 cannon rounds, the result is the same; an aircraft shot down. The problem with attacking an air base is that the defender knows exactly your direction of attack : the runway has to be hit along its length. It is a simple matter for him to cover your approaches and wait. The attacker's accuracy suffers because of the requirement to come in fast and low. Many more sorties are required to be certain of achieving a given task than with medium level attack. Pakistan has sufficient flak to cover each air base with a regiment worth of guns: forty to sixty guns can provide a substantial defence against air attack.

(4) The I.A.F. lacks resources to ensure suppression.

This may seem a surprising assertion in view of our analysis that the I.A.F. has three times as many combat aircraft as the P.A.F. But if we consider the enormous demands on the I.A.F.'s strike force over a 1500-kilometer front, the assertion is viable. The I.A.F. may be able to spare no more than one Jaguar squadron (a third of the force), two MiG-23 BN squadrons (half the force), one MiG-27 squadron (the entire operational force) and one Canberra. squadron (half the force, for night attack when P.A.F. defenses are degraded) for South Western Air Command. The handy MiG-21s will not be available for attack because the distances are too great here. Karachi will be the priority because of (the amphibious landing, the need to keep the P.A.F. off the diversionary thrust from Bhuj and the presence of Pakistan's major naval base. With this force, it will be impossible to keep suppressed all P.A.F's bases in the South West.

The standard I.A.F. attack pattern involves four flights of four aircraft coming in at very short intervals, supported by four interceptors, two at high altitude and two at low, plus one or two ECM aircraft. A total of 2.2 aircraft per attack mission is involved. Each attack squadron can fly one mission per day. So we may assume that four major targets can be struck every day with the force available. The Canberras will be reserved for reconnaissance and for compacting

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jobs at night when the main attacks prove only partially successful. With the vital Karachi complex itself featuring three air bases, two ports, one navel base, army installations, power and bridges, to say nothing of the amphibious bridgehead, we may wonder what will be left over to attack the six P.A.F. fields that will be utilized against Brass Tacks.

The job of protecting the Brass Tacks forces once they advance substantially into Pakistan will, then, fall largely to the air defence groups. We had earlier defined the forces available to each of the two air defence brigades as a SAM6 regiment, an air defense group with two Shilka regiments, each with 24 guns, and an L-70 40 mm regiment with 36 guns. Other L-70 regiments will be available to the divisions as needed.

The Shilkas are given to the battle groups on a ratio of about four per battle group. Twelve battle groups can, therefore, be protected by an air defense group, which essentially takes care of the forward brigades of the two armored/mechanized divisions in each corps.

The L-40/70 is semi-mobile and can be used to protect the corps and division rear areas. It has to be employed and struck down for the next move. As noted earlier, they do not really belong with the mobile air defense groups, which must have the ability to fire on the move, or at least to stop and fire and then move again within minutes.

The SAM-6 is also only semi-mobile and travels with a huge entourage of support vehicles. It is not suited for the role of supporting fast moving armor spearheads.

The battle groups will have excellent protection. The rest of the division and corps, as long as it is not moving, will also have good protection. But on the move it is left to its own devices while the semi-

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mobile units relocate.

The problem of coordinating fighter aircraft and missiles in same space is acute. In 1973, Egyptian and Syrian fighters treed heavily at the hands of their own SAMs, and Israel too l its problems. The I.A.F. handles the problem efficiently; it apply avoids the Army's missile blocks, clearing out when the my wants to use its SAMs. In our scenario this coordination 'blame is not acute because the short legged, defending MiG.21s 11 not be available.

Given the known lethality of the SAM-6, which is greater than the SAM-2 but still around 25 rounds per aircraft kill, we may assume that the Army will run out of stocks long before the PAF suffers. The Soviets will, of course, replenish stocks. But it is takes time and we are talking about a 10 or 12 day war.

Also, these kill figures come from the 1973 War when the SAM screen moved once or twice. If the SAM-6 has to move every day or even twice a day, then the results might be quite different.

It will be asked that since SAM-6 frequencies were compromised in 1973 and are presumably available to Pakistan through the U.S, will not this render our SAM-6s useless? No, because India long ago developed its frequencies, and the countermeasures will have been further upgraded.

The problem with using the Shilka to protect the battle groups against the P.A.F. is that it is ideal for use against helicopters rather than against fighters. Moreover, it becomes a primary target of the enemy's air and helicopter attacks.' Tank and BMP losses are easily replaced because we have so many of them. But in a short war the Shilkas are not replaceable.

On balance the idea of protecting two armor heavy corps without air cover and with mobile Shilkas and semi-mobile SAM6s and

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L.40/705 is certainly novel. It might work during the early stages of an advance, but not for long thereafter. And without proper anti-aircraft cover, which includes interceptors, Brass Tacks will not advance far into Pakistan before suffering heavy losses and coming to a standstill.

D. The Problem of the Pakistani defence?

It is worth examining the Pakistani defences against Indian Southern Command's attack in 1971. India had two divisions, about four armored regiments, and perhaps two (I) brigade groups plus commandos and BSF troops. Pakistan had its 18 Division out of Hyderabad, plus probably at least two brigades of 33 Division in southern Punjab, perhaps two regiments of armor, and Rangers and Mujahids.

India appears to have committed everything except one (1) brigade, so that Pakistan faced seven infantry brigades and four tank regiments. Yet Pakistan held us back with two partially coordinated brigades. Part of 51 Brigade at Naya Chor held back II Division. Part of one brigade from 33 Division opposed 12 Division in the Reti-Rahim Yar Khan area. So Pakistan had the equivalent of four brigades uncommitted.

The results are well known: after an initial long jump to Naya Chor, India was stalled throughout the war.

There were two reasons Pakistan could hold off the Indian attack with minimal force. (1) It was prepared to trade space for time and allow the Indian advance to over eaten itself, and (2) because of the adverse terrain Indian forces could not leave the single axis. of advance in each sub-Ketor to maneuver around the Defenders. So India may have had a division each at Naya Chor and Ranigarh, but actually only a. brigade at a time could fight. Moreover, Increasing numbers of troops were required to hold down the line of communications as India advanced, further reducing the number of

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troops available. In as much as Pakistan itself was limited by, the desert, it could not make any effective or decisive counter attacks and so did not throw back the Indians.

The point is that a large Indian force was stuck in the desert a long way from home. Had Pakistan used its I Armored Division in this area instead of keeping it facing Foxtrot Sector, and had air cover been available, India would have been pushed out with huge losses.

In such a situation, which could be repeated today, India's 3-to-1 superiority cannot be utilized. If Pakistan were to accept battle. then we could grind it down until the 3-to-1 became 9-to-1. But it will not accept battle.

E. The power of modern defence: Shakergarh

The Pakistani defence of Shakergarh in 1971 is an example of the power of a modern defence.

India employed three divisions (36, 39, 54 Divisions) and three (I) armored brigades (2, 14, 16) against the Shakergarh salient.

Pakistan had its S Division and 8 (1) Armored Brigade, committed to the defense itself, with substantial forces (most of 6 Armored Division, some of 17 division, and regrouped troops from the reinforce 23 Division) in reserve. But it is important to realize that essentially two brigades and an armored brigade kept the Indians down to 1 kilometer a day advance.

Indian pressure was telling on Pakistan by December 17, 1971. Had the war continued, the reserves would have had to be committed, especially if Shakergarh had fallen. But the war was not to continue, and in the two weeks of action, Pakistan most economically held back India.

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On Pakistan's side perhaps four armoured regiments and about seven or eight infantry battalions were defending. This gives a combat power of about 20. On India's side there were about ten armoured regiments, and perhaps 21+ infantry battalions, say a combat power of 50+. (36 Division was missing two brigades in the Shakergarh operations so only 21+ battalions were available.) Squaring the two sides we get 400 for Pakistan vs. 2500 for India, or a six-to one superiority for India. Yet there was no rapid advance.

It is true that Pakistan was greatly aided by fixed defences and an interior area of battle. In the desert, however, there will be ample space and limited room for maneuver, and this will have the same effect.

**F. Problems of Amphibious Assault**

Brass Tacks was to simulate the landing of an amphibious brigade at Korangi Creek to the west of Karachi. 54 Division used to include one amphibious brigade, but now that it is to become a specialized air assault formation, probably the amphibious brigade will become independent.

The idea of a diversionary amphibious landing has been in vogue since right after the 1971 War. The object was to force Pakistan to pull down one division from the Punjab, thereby taking the Army's job easier in the main theatre of war.

This time, however, there were wider aims, including the disorganization of the Sind defences and the fomentation of an uprising in Karachi.

The amphibious brigade would have been shipped and landed using a combination of specialized landing ships and merchant men. It requires a port for unloading, so it may be inferred that the landing involved seizure of at least one dock. Evolve landing ships cannot be

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run up into any shore: particular area arc required.

An amphibious assault against a defended shore is perhaps the most difficult of all military operations, much harder than even a paratroop operation. It requires absolute local sea supremacy and an undisputed air superiority. The Allied landing of five divisions on the Normandy coast in 1944 involved there and a half years of preparation and a host of other operations ranging from Dieppe to Anzio for experience. Not to mention the entire Pacific campaign, the largest such war ever fought.

A forced landing is not something to be taken lightly. The only country today in a position to make such landings is the U.S., which maintains a Marine Corps of 200,000 men and 61 large specialized landing ships. To cover its landings, the U.S. Marine Corps uses fighter cover from its own fighter squadrons operating off its 12 assault helicopter carriers (five of which are 40,000 ton ships), and fighter and gunfire support from the huge U.S. Navy armadas. A landing could be covered by three giant aircraft carriers with 180 combat aircraft, 50 anti-submarine warfare air-'craft, and upto 70 other specialized aircraft including tankers, ECM, and early warning planes, and a battleship with nine 16 inch guns, firing one ton projectiles. Some 30 frigates, destroyers, and cruisers would support such a force.

All in all, this is an enormous concentration. Even then the U.S. Navy does not propose to assault Vladivostock or Murmansk, the main Soviet Pacific and Northern Fleet bases respectively.

Now, obviously the combat power ratio between the Indian and Pakistani navies is much more in our favor than is the case for the U.S. Navy versus the Soviet Navy in Soviet waters. Nonetheless, the whole concept of landing off Karachi is so risky that we must ask whether the Indian Navy, known for its canniness, was really prepared to do this, or whether it would have landed further west, say at Guwader. or at Pasni, Jiwani or Ras Ormara,

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To protect the, landing of an amphibious brigade at Karachi, half the entire Indian Navy would have been required, presenting Pakistan with a target of upwards of 40 ships of all kinds, including the aircraft carrier, two or three Kashins, four or more Godavans and Leandera, half-a-dozen corvettes, four or more mine sweepers, plus the landing ships and merchant men.

From 500 kilometers out this force would have come under serious attack from PAF Exocet armed Mirages, after having been taken under attack by Pakistani submarines. Every available longer range Pakistan fighter, Mirages and F-16s, would have joined in the air attack. Then the force would have had to cross the gauntlet of the Pakistani destroyer line outside Karachi, and after that face the missile and patrol boats. From about 200 kilometers out the F-6s and A-55 would have joined battle to lend their weight to the Mirages. Approaching Karachi the task force would have had to clear mines, never an easy job, and enormously complex when under fire. Pakistani midget submarines would have had a field day.

Since a very specific area has to be utilized for the landing, the docks and ground would have been mined and prepared for demolition, making a landing near impossible even if it survived the Pakistani defences with reasonable casualties.

The landing itself could have been disrupted by a relatively small defending force a large number of ships docked together and requiring several hours to unload for the merchant men is an easy target.

If, against all these odds, a landing were still to be made, the resupply and protection of the beachhead would be next to impossible: air cover cannot be provided from Bhuj and Rajkot to a beachhead outside Karachi. And the assumption that the TAF will force the PAF to keep its head down by repeated attacks may be not just overly optimistic, but will also render impossible the suppression of other

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Sind air fields and expose the main Brass Tacks thrust to great danger.

It is true that the Falklands campaign showed that sea borne Harriers have excellent capability against land based Mirages and Skyhawks. But the British task force, with about 35 Harriers was located at the extreme end of Mirage range. It was not landing troops on the Argentine coast, which would have been an altogether different affair.

This operation, (presuming it was really contemplated) would have succeeded in nothing other than risking half the Indian Navy against Pakistani coastal and air defenses. A large number of Indian ships would have been sunk, together, of course, with a number of Pakistani ships. But there is no way that an ancient, broken down Gearing destroyer is a fair exchange for one of our Kashins, or a Daphne submarine a faith exchange for the INS Vikrant.

The landing force would either have been smashed before landing, or if by some miracle landed, would have been isolated and captured. Though the numbers of men involved in the landing would have been small, around 3000, the high profile of the operation and the naval 1055C5 would have proved disastrous for India.

It is for this reason that we may sincerely doubt the amphibious landing was contemplated at Karachi. Gwader as a target offers for more possibilities.

**PAKISTANI STRATEGY AGAINST BRASS TACKS**

We have already covered most of the elements of the difficulties of successfully implementing Brass Tacks. Now let us consolidate the argument and analyze likely Pakistani strategy against Brass Tacks.

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**RESTRICTED****A. TRADE SPACE FOR TIME**

Since India has itself set a limit of less than two weeks for implementing its strategy before international intervention becomes effective, Pakistan merely has to avoid losing a major city or strategic area during that period. If India is occupying non-strategic areas, just major expenses of sand, Pakistan can afford to negotiate without any pressure. After the last war it had one very big problem : 93,000 troops from Pakistan Eastern Command in Indian custody and a nation dazed and demoralized by first a civil war and then the loss of half its territory. This will not apply in the case of a March 1987 Brass Tacks scenario.

**B. CONSERVE FORCES**

Pakistan will fight with absolutely the minimum number of troops required to prevent India from taking a strategic area, conserving the rest both for counter attack and as a force in being to aid in negotiations.

The deeper we go into Pakistan, the more we will be fighting on ground of the enemy's choosing and ground with which he is entirely familiar. This, plus the difficult terrain of the desert, will see Pakistan continuing and extending its standard strategy of using missed battalion sized groups built around one or two regular companies, plus paramilitary and militia forces.

These groups will be used to slow down the Indian offense, channel it into favorable areas, most important, to ambush and waylay unwary Indian troops, both in the spearheads and in the rear areas. In these tactics of delay and ambush the Rangers and the Mujahids, who live in the desert, will be of utmost importance and will have an effect out of all proportion to their normal combat power.

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**RESTRICTED****C. RELIANCE ON AIR POWER FOR THE KILLING BLOW**

Pakistan will let India come in deep, outside the range of its air cover, and then strike Indian spearheads from the air, causing heavy casualties and bringing the advance to a stop.

**D. RESERVE ARMOR FOR DECISIVE ACTION**

Whereas India will commit its armor to the attack, Pakistan will follow the usual sub-continental strategy of keeping its armor (the equivalent of ten standard armored brigades in this scenario) for the counter attack. Once India is stretched out, an armored division attack against a corps line of communication and against the follow up infantry will lead to total panic and disorganization. It might open up the possibility of capturing a large number of Indian troops, useful both to avenge Bangladesh, and to have a stronger bargaining position.

Pakistan will prefer to delay the Indian armored spearheads using small groups of tanks from its infantry support regiments combined with TOW teams, mixed infantry groups including a minimal amount of mechanized infantry, its corps reconnaissance regiments (which are already mixed teams of tanks and mechanized infantry) and self-propelled artillery. These groups will rely on shoulder-fired Stinger and Bofors SAMs for anti-helicopter protection. These groups will never stand and fight instead they will inflict casualties and then retreat to other defended positions in the rear to await the Indian advance. As naturally the Indians will prefer to await reconnaissance results before committing themselves to a blind forward advance, much delay will be effected.

**E. TO W-COBRAS FOR LAST DITCH DEFENCE**

Pakistan may not, at this time, have received all of its. 20 TOW-Cobras, but may have enough to form two 8 gunship squadrons without

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reserves. This is an extremely valuable asset which Pakistan may be expected to conserve. It has cost as much as five regiments of M-48A5s, or an armored division's worth of tanks. Because of the ease with which a TOW-Cobra squadron can be switched along a 200 to 300 kilometer front, it is ideal as a last, ditch defence against an Indian breakthrough that cannot, or should not, be held by other means. A single squadron has the potential of destroying eighty armored fighting vehicles before being shot down itself; this is less than similar results in NATO central front exercises but we may assume conservative outcomes because Pakistan will still be learning to effectively utilize this tool. Conversely, of course, India has not learned to counterattack helicopters. In a short war this is bound to be a hit or miss affair, so that the TOW-Cobras may achieve better results than anticipated.

An armored division has perhaps 400 armored fighting vehicles; 270 tanks, 90+BMPs, and 25 Shilkas. Eighty losses combined with another few from TOWs and aircraft would certainly suffice, under sub-continental conditions, to bring the armored division to a more or less permanent halt. It would need major reorganization and reorganization before returning to battle and in a short war might not be available again.

**QUESTIONS ABOUT THE INDIAN ARMY**

The problem with being a general is that you get used to people jumping when told to jump. This is fine in peace time, because by impinge the subordinate officer or jawan is not risking his life. In war, it's a different game altogether, because the people being told to jump are running a good chance of being killed, or worse, of being seriously wounded.

The way an army performs in peace and in war are two different things. In a real war, General Sundarji is likely to find that most of the ideas and concepts he relies on for a quick victory will prove impossible to implement because the men he commands are human.

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General Sundarji's new concepts are merely the standard mobile war ideas prevalent the world over. Ostensibly his aim is entirely unambiguous: he simply wants to bring the Indian Army on par with other first-class armies in the matter of tactics. So why should this prove difficult, or even impossible?

A minor clarification mobile warfare tactics do not, by themselves, depend on mechanization. Ninety percent of the World War II German Army marched on foot. Mechanization is simply a means towards the end of moving faster. You can, however, be fully mechanized and still not utilize mobile warfare tactics.

In lay terms, General Sundarji's tactics involve:

The battalion-sized combat group, an appropriately tailored unit with tanks, BMPs, self-propelled artillery, anti-aircraft artillery and helicopters, as a powerful, self-contained formation capable of all tactical tasks.

Rapid movement without waiting to consolidate positions, eliminate enemy pockets of resistance, or worry about open flanks : the movement itself is protection, and pressing on without pause gets inside the enemy's Operation—Decision—Action cycle. Each defense he organizes is rendered irrelevant by the rapid movement, so he never quite gets to make a defensive line.

What is wrong with all this may be summarized as follows.

A. Penalty for Showing Initiative.

The Army cannot be better than the system it springs from. The entire Indian system is geared to punishing those who show initiative. The punishment comes because no one, at any level, is prepared to take responsibility. No one is prepared to take responsibility because



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each level is very quick to punish those below for mistakes, and no one wants to be punished.

Can we imagine the fate of an Indian Army tank regimental commander who loses 75% of his battle group tanks in a single battle? He is very unlikely to make it anywhere except to oblivion.

A TOW missile platoon with four launchers can, in open terrain, knock off ten or more armored fighting vehicles before back. Combine this with mines, a few tanks and guns in an ambush position, and a fast moving battle group told to push forward at all costs could suffer 75% casualties within minutes.

Or take the case of an armored or mechanized division commander. He has made his breakthrough, and is counterattacked by a TOW Cobra squadron. His losses could reach 33% of his fighting vehicles and he may have to retire. Who will protect him then?

Or take the plight of GOC XVI Corps. Assume he loses Akhnur and assume Jammu is now at risk because he has not been allowed to attack first (the entire war scenario calling for conceding this Initiative to Pakistan). Will Delhi steel its nerve and tell him to carry on? Or will it replace him and force General Sundarji to withdraw troops from his main offensive for reinforcement of threatened sectors?

If this regimental, divisional or corps commander has, in an earlier war, served under General Sundarji and knows he will be looked after, then possibly he will take the risk. No commander has, however, had that privilege.

Moreover, in a corrupt system, how far can the General himself go? In every situation since 1947, divisional commanders in crucial sectors and not performing up to what is unrealistically expected of them, have invariably been changed in mid-battle. When a nervous Delhi starts ripping his plan to shreds, more efficiently than could the

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Pakistanis, what does the General do? He can either resign, in which case there is no protection for his subordinates, or he can continue after sacrificing his subordinates. Either way, the subordinates, who must carry the burden of his plan, are at grave risk

So why should any responsible officer, be he a squadron or company or battery commander, or a more exalted battalion, brigade, division, corps or army commander, take any risks at all?

Now suppose. General Sundarji miraculously, overnight create an environment where his squadron commanders to his army commanders can be assured that they have his protection. If they are stupid, he will replace them, but if they take reasonable risks which do not work out, or if they err on the side of boldness, he will protect them and see they do not get punished. Suppose the involved officers believe General Sundarji and proceed to do whatever is necessary to speed up the pace of battle.

General Sundarji leaves the minimum prudent force to protect other sectors, and concentrates everything to achieve a decisive victory in Sind. The Pakistanis make some small intrusion into India and Gurdaspur falls. General Sundarji calmly orders the attack to continue: the loss of Gurdaspur is a small price to pay for keeping his main strike forces concentrated for a decisive victory.

But now Delhi, which is micro-managing the battle, will be screaming down General Sundarji's neck. He may be able to afford his officers protection, but the political leadership will offer him none. So there is no way that he can, in reality, offer his soldiers any protection at all. He can't afford to have them take any chances because he can't afford to take chances. And if he does, and things don't work out, as frequently happens, he will find himself replaced overnight. The new army chief will, understandably enough, be very cautious indeed.

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In 1971, the brigade battle at Chhamb, involving less than 100 square kilometers of real estate, was being managed all the way back to Delhi, with Delhi screaming that no withdrawal should be made at any cost. A withdrawal should have been made at the outset of battle, and the failure to do so almost cost us the entire battle. Can Delhi be expected to show any less sensitivity now that it worries about the Punjab as well as Jammu and Kashmir? Very unlikely. If anything, it will act worse.

If any proof is required that things have not changed since the last war, we have only to remind ourselves about the way the Government panicked then the Pakistanis concentrated opposite Fazilka. If war had broken out, more than just one armored and an infantry division would have been shifted north. As it 'vas the shift ruined General Sundarji's plan.

#### B. Tactical And Strategic Handling: Asking the Impossible.

When General Sundarji expects the Army to overnight change all its concepts of tactics, he is asking the impossible. Take three examples : the Germans, the Soviets, and the Egyptians.

(a) Germany. In 1939, 1940 and 1941 the Germans unleashed their new mobile warfare tactics on Poland, France, and Russia and smashed Europe under their heel. But the Germans were already the most proficient of the world's armies:, matched possibly only by the Japanese. They were driven by an intense nationalism a sense of history and destiny, and had been among thc world's fiercest warriors for two millennia. They had tested mobile warfare tactics in the two Franco-Prussian Wars, and had seen what modern defensive weapons (the machine gun) could do to unarmored infantry in World War One. Their general staff system had no parallel anywhere.

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And whether we like it or not, they were led by a man who insisted they could do more than they ever imagined even in their great arrogance. And he was right.

The Germans had two separate major campaigns to refine their tactics before they hit Russia and they had four years in Russia to carry their tactics to exquisite perfection, even though by 1944 they had no equipment and the quality of their infantry fell due to casualties from 1942 onwards.

It must also be kept in mind that the Germans were so good that the Americans and British never came anywhere near them in tactical and strategic skill. The most famous of the British generals, Montgomery, smashed the Germans in set piece, material superior battles. Only one American general in the west, Patton, came anywhere close to the top dozen or so German generals. (The generals in the Pacific were, however, a different matter : but then the situation was also quite different).

(b) The Soviet Union. The Soviets attained a very high level of skill in tactical and strategic handling by about 1943, after two bitter years of war. Before June 22, 1941, they were among the world's worst armies ; by 1943, among the best.

Their system was simple. Any soldier or any officer, and it did not matter whether he was a private or a four star general, was shot or sent to a penal battalion if he withdrew without orders or failed in any major sense. One was a quick death, the other a slower death, but the result was the same. No matter how senior the officer, he either won his battle, or he died at the front, or he was executed at the rear, or he joined a penal battalion sent on suicide missions again till he was killed, if he withdrew unless told to. It was not good enough to simply show his personal bravery by holding on himself : if his unit, even be it an army group, showed lack of enthusiasm, he was held respon-

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sible. So if any of his subordinates showed weakness, the general would shoot or reduce to a penal battalion a of stiffening morale.

Even with this powerful incentive to perform, it still took the Red Army two, or more years of the heaviest fighting seen in modern warfare before its tactical skill was sufficient.

And, of course, had the Soviets not been able to manage a 6•to-1, often a 20-to- 1 material superiority over the Germans, if the Germans did not have to deploy one-third of their troops against the Allies, to say nothing of millions more in air defence, the navy, and the effort needed to keep their country functioning under the Allied strategic bombing, then it is unlikely that the Soviets would have defeated Germany at all.

(c) Egypt. Till October, 1973 the Egyptians were a joke. The well known riddle told it all:

Q : How many gears does an Egyptian tank have?

A : Five. One for forward and four for reverse.

But in October, 1973, the comic Egyptians crossed the canal, and defeated every Israeli counterattack but one. Eventually, towards the end of the three-week war, Israel managed to get a spearhead across the canal. But it was too late : Israel was at the end of its tether, with material and manpower losses it could never have dreamed of taking. How did the Egyptians manage to humble the Israelis? By understanding their own weaknesses, and by framing a strategic and tactical plan to minimize these.

Egypt knew that it could not cross the canal if Israel was fully or even partially mobilized. So Egypt kept exercising, kept mobilizing and standing down, kept fighting, till the Israelis went to sleep and then

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the Egyptians attacked.

They knew they lacked the skill to go careening across the desert a la Rommel, so they planned on advancing a few kilometers, digging in, and letting the Israelis break their heads by counterattacking. They knew the Israeli Air Force could defeat them, so they kept behind the densest SAM screen the world has ever, and shot Israeli planes out of the sky in such numbers that by the third day Israel wondered if its defeat not finally at hand. They knew the Israeli armor, once unleashed, could wipe them out. So they set up a very dense anti-tank defence, and lot the Israelis founder on it time and time again.

Aside from their military tactics, their political tactics were perfectly tailored to their limited capabilities. They managed to get across the canal and hold on till Israel, equipped and trained for a short war, tired and could fight no more. Then, having broken the myth of Israeli invincibility, they forced the United States into a position that Washington had to take Cairo seriously. So that ultimately, it was Washington that negotiated the peace, and Washington that forced Tel Aviv to vacate the Sinai desert.

The Egyptians showed clearly that the military and the political cannot be separated, even in a short war. The coordination of their political and military strategy was brilliant, and proved a dazzling success.

The Indian Army in 1971 showed an unexpected tactical skill in the eastern sector, where it advanced over 200 kilometers in a matter of ten days. This was largely on foot. Why should it not be able to advance 20 to 30 kilometers a day as required by General Sundarji, particularly when his spearheads are fully armored? To understand this we have to examine the exceptional circumstances of the East Pakistan campaign.

**RESTRICTED****EAST PAKISTAN CAMPAIGN 1971**

This campaign can provide no guide to the future for the following reasons.

(1) Pakistan was morally on the defensive, and its troops were exhausted after a 9-month civil war. They were fighting not for what they could perceive as their homeland, but as an oppressing, occupying power. All the excesses of the civil war and occupation told on their morale, their training, and their professionalism.

In 1987, Pakistan would have been fighting for its homeland. This would have been the final battle: national survival itself would have depended on defeating the invader. Though the top leadership of the Pakistan Army may still be suffering from its involvement in the martial law regime, now replaced with a civilian dominated government, the army itself is in a high state of preparedness. The brigade and junior officers are thirsting for a chance to avenge the 1971 defeat. Neither are there any doubts to the righteousness of their cause, nor will there be any wavering as in 1971.

(2) The entire world community was against Pakistan in 1971 because of tile excesses of the civil war. This told heavily on the national morale.

In 1987 the entire world community would have been against India. The ability of the Government to censor the news today is much less compared to 1971, and the people of India would quickly come to know the truth. Indians cannot only come out and say “we must attack Pakistan in our selfintci A”. They must feel morally justified in their actions. Without such justification, India cannot function. Our national morale would have suffered.

(3) East Pakistan was completely cut off by the Indian armed forces. There was neither any hope of reinforcement nor of escape.

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The Pakistani troops were being asked, essentially, to make a last stand, but one for which there was no moral justification.

In 1987, Pakistan would have continued to obtain essential war material, perhaps even troops, from fraternal countries. If India had attacked Pakistan, for once the United States might well have permitted shipment of some war material from third countries like Turkey. Both these factors would have tremendously boosted Pakistani morale.

(4) India had no intelligence problem as the locals came forward at each and every point to inform the attackers about the exact dispositions of the enemy. India also had several tens of thousands of locals, in the Mukti Bahini, fighting alongside. By themselves, we can agree, the Mukti Bahini was not a particularly impressive force. But combined with the regular Indian Army, it made an invaluable contribution.

In 1987, doubtless India would have found locals to aid our cause, but nothing even remotely approaching the scale of support evidenced in East Pakistan, 1971, is conceivable. And conversely. Pakistan would have found local support in Kashmir, perhaps even in the Punjab.

(5) India had air supremacy. In 1987, India would have had to fight on the traditional odds of 3 to 1 against the Pakistan Air Force. In a short war, Pakistan would have neutralized the IAF.

(6) India's initial strategy required seizing a narrow area around East Pakistan so that the independent republic could be declared. The Pakistani commander, Lt.Gen. A.A.K. Niazi, who had excellent information, accordingly had deployed his forces all along the border. He could not afford to give up any terrain, because even a thousand square kilometers was sufficient for India's purpose. This inflexibility, this attempt to defend everything simultaneously, predictably ended up

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with General Niazi defending nothing. Worse, when the Indians charged their strategy and decided to go for Dacca itself, the Pakistanis had no reserves to counter the new plan.

In 1987 Pakistan would have had plenty of ground to give up. Indian troops would have been fighting blind inside Pakistan, because there would be no Mukti Bahini and hundreds of thousands of locals to help. There would be no shortage of reserves in a short war.

(7) India's advance to Dacca was actually made in two phases. The fighting really began on November 21/22. By December 3/4, the formal start of the war, several Indian brigades were already holding firm bases inside East Pakistan, and it became much easier for the Army to begin the second phase, the drive for Dacca. By contrast, Western Command had a harder time because it began the war on December 3/4, from a standing start.

In 1987 the situation in Sind would have been akin to the Western front in 1971 because the war would have had to begin from a standing start.

This list of differences in the situation in East Pakistan, 1971, and today, is not exhaustive. But it suffices to make the point.

**A NOTE ON INDIAN ARMOR**

Indian armor Operates in the British tradition rather than in the German. Interestingly, of the three major armies that have been trained by the Soviets, each has, in battle, utilized tactics that are exactly similar to General Montgomery's and to Russian World War 2 tactics, that is to the German mobile war tactics that the Soviet Army today swears by.

These tactics involve letting the infantry make the break through after massive concentration and preparation, then a slow, cautious advance

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to the next objective. All enemy opposition is systematically reduced, flanks are zealously guarded, and a continuous line is maintained at all costs. Also interestingly, when the British and Indians fought the Italians in East and North Africa, mobile warfare tactics were successfully used, so it is not as if there is something intrinsically lacking in the British mind. The use of mobile war tactics may have more to do with the quality of the adversary than anything else. And the quality between the Indian and Pakistan armies has always been fairly equal.

Both in 1965 and 1971, the Indian armor, consisting of some of the oldest and most famous units in the Army, did not exactly cover itself with glory. Part of the reason we have covered : rapid action means risks, and risks mean senior officers who protect their juniors.

But there is another factor: no Indian armor commander is prepared to "bash on regardless" (the Armored Corps' unofficial motto) because we are still an equipment poor army. Psychologically, commanders are not conditioned to losing equipment, whereas they have no problem losing men. The commander of 67 (I) Brigade in Fazilka in 1971 made 12 successive assaults against the entrenched Pakistan 105 (I) brigade, all without effect. But no one particularly thought anything of this. It is the least expected from the Indian infantry. Can we imagine an armored brigade commander making 12 successive assaults? We cannot, because each of his tanks has cost upwards of Rs. 1 crore.

In peacetime, Indian soldiers maintain their equipment so well that it is commonly said that if no cleaning materials are available, they are prepared to clean with their tongues. Their equipment is truly precious to them. They can never have the casual indifference to equipment displayed by an American soldier.

This may have nothing whatsoever to do with ours being a scarcity culture: the Syrians also have such a culture, but they

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managed to lose 800 medium tanks without flinching in three days fighting on the Golan in 1973. Could it have something to do with ours being a volunteers army while the Syrians are draftees?

A tank is not a throw away item in the Indian Army. So no one is going to throw away tanks. Anything resembling mobile warfare tactics runs enormous risks : the pay off, if successful, of course, is enormous.

What General Sundarji has to change is the entire psychology of the Indian Army. This cannot be done overnight, with a few directives, no matter how honest, how sincere. how brilliant, and how hard-working the General himself might be.

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**TRIDENT**

We have devoted much space to the discussion of Brass Tacks because ultimately a war against Pakistan must be won or lost in the plains. In the plains the armoured battle is of paramount importance. But now we must look at Trident, a fascinating concept. Again the reader will realise that whatever General Sundarji's limitations may be, bold conception is not one of them. It is, indeed, a great tragedy that what India has really needed is a General like him. He has come at a time when no political leader except Arun Singh is able to understand his talents and put them to the use of the country. And Arun Singh's tragedy is that he alone of the political leaders realized the need and uses of force in international affairs.

Our examination of Trident will be helped by the discussion on Brass Tacks, because, even though one is a high mountain operation and the other a plains mechanised one, many of the limitations of the Indian Army apply equally.

A. **OUTLINE OF TRIDENT**

Trident was to be an attack by Indian XV Corps on Skardu and then Gilgit with the object of recapturing the Northern Areas of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir. It involved elements of all three XV Corps divisions. 3, 19, 28 Divisions, reinforced by the externally inducted 6 Divisions a mountain formation. It would have been the largest high mountain operation in 70 years, exceeded only by the brutal three year comparing between Italy on one side and Germany/Austro-Hungary on the other for control of the Italian Alps during World War I. That comparing is, of course, in a different league altogether. It was the biggest high mountain war in all history, and both sides suffered an astonishing 875,000 casualties, amazing even by the profligate standards of casualties in the First World War.

A veteran of that campaign (and there must be many still alive) would have considered Trident to be a side show. Still, a four division campaign in the high reaches of the northwest Himalayas, some of the most inaccessible terrain on earth, is nothing to sneeze at. There was a time, not so long ago, when we lost the entire Northern Areas because we could not push a battalion through from Srinagar till it was too late.

That is also something worth thinking about: for want of a battalion and some good planning, we lost an area that would have taken thirty times as many battalions, and 400 casualties a day, to recover forty years later.

For Trident, the following were the axes of attack

- (a) From Gurais to Gilgit (diversionary attack)

268 Brigade of 19 Division

- (b) From Kargil to Skardu (main attack)

121 Brigade of 28 Division

One additional brigade of 28 Division

- (c) From Thoise via Khappalu to Skardu (supporting attack)

102 (1) Brigade, under command to 3 Division

70 Brigade of 3 Division

114 Brigade of 3 Division

6 Division would have taken over 3 Divisions positions facing the Chinese. Reserves would have been provided by one brigade each of 6, 19, and 28 Division.

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The reader must note that we have also been told that instead of 3 Division attacking from Thoise, 6 Division would have done so and 3 Division (Leh) would have stood in plato against China.

For one thing, it does not matter whether 3 or 6 Division would have made-the attack from the right flank: the important thing is that one division was committed here and what we have to study is why the attack was not made, and if it had been made what would have happened.

For another, it would have made more sense to use 3 Division which is fully used to the area. 6 Division normally operates out of Bareilly to descend the northeast corner of UP against China in the event of a war with China, and it goes to the Pathankot corridor in the event of a war, with Pakistan. It had actually shifted to its war station in December 1986, one of the many proves that set the alarm bells ringing in Pakistan because exercise or no exercise, inducting this division into the area means you are all set for a war. It was shifted within a week to Leh and given another few days to acclimatize itself. Even though it is a mount tam division, and even though the Indian Army can now acclimatize troops very fast, not knowing the area at all 6 Division would have been a distinct liability compared to 3 Division it' plunged into an attack. It makes more sense, therefore, to assume that it would take over 3 Division's fixed defences to protect against an attack from China. The terrain is easier' and so is the mission.

**B. PREPARATIONS FOR TRIDENT**

Trident had as its key the shift of 6 Division from its normal war station between Pathankot and Jammu to Leh. This was accomplished by a rqnkarkable air lift from Udhampur. Within six days the entire division was airlifted. On one day, the peak of the airlift, 70 land were made at Leh. It must be remembered that by late morning the whether at Leh closes in, so these 70 sorties, consisting of 1 I-76s, An- 12s, and An-32s, would have had landed within a window of perhaps five hours at best. Leh cannot hold more than ~Q An-12 sized aircraft on

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its aprons at one time, so the number at return flights that day would have had to total at least 50.

But still things went wrong, namely, there was insufficient food in the Lou for the 12,000 odd troops that suddenly appeared from nowhere. Also important heavy equipment was delayed in the delivery. The rate of the attack was, therefore, changed from February 6 to February 8, which also had the benefit of allowing two more days for acclimatization.

The attack was scheduled for 0430 hours on February 8. At 03.00 hours the attack was cancelled.

Why? There are two explanations, both of which could well be true.

Explanation 1. The entire plan was leaked by one of ten suspects at the Ministry of Defence in Delhi, to Saudi Arabia and the UAE, and from there to the US. Conservative Arab and US pressure went into effect to abort the operation. We cannot vouch for this explanation as we have no further details, but do know that a lengthy investigation was conducted in the MOD without any results.

Explanation 2. Pakistan got wind of the 6 Division reinforcement (as obviously it would), and remarkable as the Indian speed of reinforcement was, staged even a more remarkable counter of Skardu. Three hundred C-130 sorties were flown into Skardu within 3 to 4 days, bringing in at least two brigades, perhaps three, of extra troops. That altered the balance of forces irrevocably against India and so Delhi decided to call off the operation.

We have confirmed that the reinforcement of Skardu did take place. Some express doubts about the 300 sorties, but it would not do to underrate either the Pakistan Air Force, or the C-130 aircraft, which like all American equipment can generate very high cycles if required and has a large over load margin.

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**RESTRICTED****C. PROBLEMS OF A NORTHERN AREAS OPERATION**

India had provided two weeks to reach Gilgit via Skardu. It was a bold scheme, but like Brass Tacks, it would have foundered on the hard rocks of reality. There was nothing intrinsically wrong with the scheme, provided three times much time had been allowed. Once again, the Army planners were overcome by their concepts of lightening war, and as we have said several times earlier, there is no such thing as lightening war against an equally competent adversary, even if you happen to outnumber and outgun him.

**1. PAKISTAN DEPLOYMENT**

In the Northern Areas, Pakistan normally deploys three brigades: one at Khappalu west of the Siachen Glacier, one at Skardu, and one at Gilgit. The corps reserve brigade for X Corps, the 'commanding headquarters of Force Command Northern Area (HQ Skardu, controlling the three brigades) 111(1) Brigade from Rawalpindi, is also normally assigned to this area.

Thus, India would have thrown:

Two brigades against Pakistan's base at Khappalu, from where the Siachen operations are supported. This attack, of two brigades against one Pakistani brigade, would have jumped off from Thoise and advanced along the Shyok River valley going downwards. (Khappalu is at about 10,000 feet.) Though this attack leaves Pakistani positions in the Siachen area on the right flank, there is no danger as the entire deployment on the glacier is about one battalion for each side: Pakistan cannot, then pose a flank danger and there is no harm in advancing south of the glacier. Plus, if necessary, India will launch local attacks on the Glacier to keep the 'Pakistanis pinned down. The Shyok Valley attack would have supported.

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Two brigades from 28 Division jumping off from Kargil against Skardu, proceeding downhill along the Sindh River. This would have been the main attack. It would have faced one brigade, and both the 3 Division and 28 Division operations would have been aided by the subsidiary attack by 268 Brigade from Gurais through the Burzail Pass. This route is uniquely placed to threaten either Skardu, forming a third prong towards this town, or if not needed, aim straight for Gilgit down the Astor river, forming the southern (left) prong of an attack on the Karakoram Highway. (The northern or right prong would have been troops from Skardu.)

**2. THE MATTER OF TIME AVAILABLE**

The problem with all this was the timing. The job is difficult enough in the summer, but in the winter there is no manner in which it could have been accomplished within anything less than six weeks. It is about 80 air kilometers from Kargil to Skardu, which means a minimum of 150 kilometers along the river valley and 250 kilometers across the tops of the mountains for vehicle support, less in both cases for the foot slogging infantry. From Skardu to Gilgit it will be somewhere between 300 and 350 kilometers by road, as the air distance is about 130 kilometers in a straight line. No one is going to get to Skardu in two weeks, leave alone Gilgit.

In 1971, a Ladak Scouts battalion sent about two companies in an attack from Turtok to Biedgano, a distance of about 30 kilometers. A few platoons, perhaps a wing, of Pakistan's Frontier Corps opposed. It was, at that time, considered a major feat of arms, it took two weeks in all from start to finish, and when the snows melted next spring it was found that actually the Indians had occupied much less terrain than they had first thought. That was in December.

Admittedly the Siachen Glacier fighting has given us the experience of fighting year round at incredible heights, but there is a difference between battling for outposts, no matter how desperately

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situated at enormous heights, and launching four brigades at Skardu in February. Of course it can be done: in war, the adage where there is a will there is a way applies more than in any field of human endeavor. The very act of being at war produces in people an ability to turn in superhuman performance that no one would imagine possible in peace time. And of course India would have done it : but no in two weeks.

It would have been able to do it openly in the old fashioned way, which is sloggongeway till the odds come down from one as to two in favor to an overall one as to three, and one as to nine at crucial points. This means attrition, attrition, attrition all the way. And we assume, of course some display of tactical brilliance all through the six weeks: otherwise, mountain terrain being what it is, there is no reason Pakistan could not hold is up for twice that time.

There is nothing wrong with a six or even a twelve-week war: we have the capability to wage a six or even a twelve-month war. The problem is not the Army, which can fight for as long as is needed, but the mind set of the strategic decision makers who would never conceive of a longer war and would never agree to it.

**3. TERRAIN AND WEATHER FACTORS**

In a Trident type operation, the terrain favours India. Any advance from Thoise and Kargil towards Skardu is a downhill climb. The Gurais axis involves a climb up to get through the Burzail Pass, and then a downhill movement to Skardu or Gilgit, but the climb up is very short compared to the climb down and we are virtually on the crest of the mountains here. In general, of course, India enjoys the downhill advantage in Western Kashmir, which till the Siachen area became live in 1984, was our major concern in this disputed state.

At the same time, however, it is important not to exaggerate the impact of this terrain advantage, particularly in a short war, because though Skardu and Gilgit are at lower altitudes than our jump off

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bases, we have to advance along very predictable routes, the Shyok, Sindh, and Astor River. Valleys.

The river valleys are narrow, and consequently easily defended. To facilitate the advance, India will have to seize the crests of the mountains running along the valleys. This involves an up and down advance, even though the overall advance falls along a descending line. When we have to attack up slope to secure a particular position, all the disadvantages of this movement will hit us.

The Siachen problem for Pakistan is instructive. Pakistan has to climb from 10,000 feet (Khappalu base) to 22,000 feet (the crest of the Glacier). By stealth it manages to infiltrate sections and platoons up to this altitude and then attacks Indian outposts. But when it tries to get up to a company-sized infiltration, it loses surprise because all the routes of advance are under Indian observation.

Now, of course, there are very few cases where the Indians will have to climb a net 12,000 feet if we attack Skardu and Gilgit and probably, since there are many routes to these towns, such difficult terrain can be avoided altogether. But even a 3000 to 6000 foot climb can prove a very difficult proposition, and now we are talking of whole divisions tramping around, not a couple of companies or a battalion. We have seen in the Golan Heights battles in Israel/Syria, where the net climb for Syria is less than 3000 feet, and where the hills are open enough for mass armor use (three armored and two mechanized divisions in the Yom Kippur Campaign of 1973, the enormous difficulties faced by Syria, and the wholly disproportionate ratios between the attacker and defender. Again, of course, there are several well known factors involved such as the Israeli superiority in training, firepower, intelligence, air power and so on, but a good deal of the problem is, simply, that Syria has to attack uphill.

Then there is the problem of knowledge of the local terrain. Even in totally flat country, like that of the Punjab, lack of precise

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information on roads, canals, bunds, ditches, woods, extensions of villages, factories, bridges and so on can materially affect an advance. In the mountains the problem is far worse. A simple example suffices. Right under my apartment building in Simla is a bird sanctuary that extends to perhaps 2.5 square kilometers, a tiny area that covers the higher half of a tiny stream's valley. It would take ten men at least a day to map all the trails and the defending positions in this small area, and probably two nights as well, because everything looks different at night. There are several positions in this small valley where ten local men can hold off a hundred outsiders for 24 hours, and if the defender is operating off the crest road, which is about 2 kilometers long, he has a vast mobility and positional advantage over the attacker, who must stumble along a 5 kilometer track located in the middle of the valley, a track which tucks in and out of the folds of the hill down whose side the valley is located. No doubt about it: the hundred men will get through in a day. But they will have suffered losses in severe disproportion to the defender, and they will have lost time.

Even in a city of 100,000 people like Simla, it is doubtful if even a hundred people know their way through this small reservation, so that even if an outsider has insider help, he will be hard put to find guides. Again, time solves all things, as time is on the side of the big battalions. But this is exactly what we go on emphasizing: time would have been required for the Northern Areas campaign, and time is exactly what the Indian Army was failing to allow enough of.

The problems faced by India, it penetrates deeper and deeper into the Northern areas, will get worse and worse. Indian troops will all be rank outsiders, where the bulk of the troops that will be assigned to slow down the Indian advance will be local recruits of the North Light Infantry. The defender has many advantages, but in mountain terrain, the geography is above all, the greatest advantage of all.

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An Indian infantry division operating in the mountains will need, in an offensive mode, 300 to 400 tons of supplies a day. Some 2000 vehicles of all sizes will be working within the division sector, including divisional, corps, and line of communications vehicles. The road used by the division, even though it is through a valley, will cross dozens of culverts and minor bridges per kilometer, and every ten kilometers or so could cross a major bridge.

The defender will destroy every single water or gap crossing as he retreats, creating enormous demands for bridging materials and engineers. The best illustration of this is the history of the Punch Rajouri link up in the 1947-48 War : it took several months because, among other reasons, the raiders had destroyed vital bridges. Today the resources available to the attacker, India, are much greater. But the vehicles we have to move, the distances involved, the capability of the defender, have all increased proportionately.

Aside from the problem of the bridges, there is the problem of breakdowns with 2000 vehicles under battle conditions, it is safe even to assume that with the best will and the best maintenance, one hundred to two hundred vehicles a day will break down. On a plains road this creates few problems: it is possible to divert traffic along the side of the road, through the fields as needed, and keep traffic moving till a wrecker arrives and moves the offender. In the mountains, on the other hand, it may be hours before the wrecker gets to the bottleneck in the first place. Of course, we could just as well adopt a policy of simply unloading the broken down vehicle and then shoving it over the side of the road. But even that takes time: and remember, this is not a mild summer in the mountains we are talking about : this operation is take place while it is snowing, the roads are blocked by snow or iced over, the wind chill is resulting in exposed skin temperatures of minus 40 centigrade or below, when events to manipulate tools is an agonizing experience, and, best of all, when there is less than ten

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hours of effective light, less if you happen to be in a valley fold or the wrong side of the mountains.

It is also worth noting that there is no real road between India and Khappalu, and the road between Khappalu and Skardu is somewhere between a jeep able road and a truck road. The Pakistan Army uses light trucks on this route. Supporting a couple of battalions at Khappalu during peacetime, with an occasional surge of fighting, is one thing ; supporting a division advance along this road, in the face of enemy opposition, is quite another.

Similarly, there will be immense problems supporting a division from Kargil to Skardu along one indifferent road.. It can be done, but—as always—assuming sufficient time is allotted.

**5. HELICOPTERS**

But won't India's considerable helicopter lift make a vital difference to the speed of advance?

Recall that we are discussing a winter operation. Many of the days will feature ceilings too low for anything more than the occasional intrepid helicopter sortie. The wind is up at all times, getting particularly bad after 11.00 in the morning when . flying becomes particularly hazardous: Under these conditions, we will either rapidly lose helicopters, or only relatively few support sorties will be available.

Another problem will be the vulnerability of the helicopters to Pakistani shoulder-fired SAMs. In conventional helicopter operations, the use of support helicopters is limited to missions well behind the Forward Edge of the Battle Area (or the Forward Line of Own Troops as now the Americans have taken to calling the FEBA). This reduces the dangers from enemy SAMs of all kinds.

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If missions are required ahead of the FEBA, for example, reconnaissance, heavily armed. attack and scout helicopters flying nap of the earth tactics infiltrate forward. This is very specialized flying, and doing this in the flat lands. of Central Europe is on thing, doing it in the high Himalayas is entirely another.

Airmobile insertion in the face of adversary opposition is impossible without total command of the air, and large numbers of attack helicopters to support the troop and logistic helicopters.

It will prove impossible under the conditions of a Northern Area war.

In such a condition, the battlefield is likely to be porous and there will be no FEBA. On both sides aggressive small unit leaders will infiltrate well ahead of the main bodies of troops. Pakistan w11 have stay behind forces, as well as making sorties from unexpected directions to establish forces for short periods behind the FEBA. Two SAM teams hiding on two mountain tops could easily ambush Indian helicopters.

We do not have so many that we can afford losses of more than fifteen or twenty helicopters. In conditions of bad weather, mountain flying, and a porous battle fire with a SAM armed enemy, if we are going to rely on our helicopters to ease the logistic problems, we will lose that many within two to three days, which will put paid to helicopter support.

**D. THE CHINESE AT TOWANG-SELA-BOMDILA 1962**

But did not the Chinese make a very rapid advance, perhaps 150 kilometers, in a short time in 1962? And they had no helicopters to supply their advance, unlike ourselves.

Yes, the Chinese did make a very rapid advances given the

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difficulty of moving in the mountains. But from the day they readied themselves to take Towang to the fall of that town was about two weeks. They then had to pause at Towang for three weeks to complete their logistical build-up at this town, including the construction of a fair weather 3-ton road from Bumla to Towang, before they could launch their two division plus force at Sela and Bomdila (11 and 55 Divisions, 419 Unit). They then defeated the Indians in about another week. So, to advance approximately 150 kilometers, they took about six weeks in all, or a rate of 3-4 kilo. meters a day from the date of concentration.

True they had no helicopters. But at that time a Chinese division of 8000 men would have used perhaps 50 tons of supplies a day, a fifth of the equivalent Indian consumption. The need to move large tonnage was simply not there.

Virtually every authority agrees that had the Chinese, by means of their infiltration tactics, not managed to stampede the Indian into hasty withdrawals, and had the Indians stuck their ground, the Chinese could never have advanced anywhere near as fast as they did.

There are two types of bypassing tactics:

- (1) The attacker isolates pockets of resistance, advancing all the while, leaving the pockets to be dealt with at will
- (2) The attacker panics the defender, who withdraws to a rear position, only to find the enemy waiting for him and getting panicked into yet another withdrawal till he disintegrates.

The attacker hopes for the first effect, but should be prepared for the second. The problem here is that if the defender maintains his positions in good order, he can sortie out at any time and cut the lines of advance of the attacker, forcing the attacker to start withdrawing. So the attacker cannot really leave pockets of resistance. if they are large enough, untended.

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The reduction of defended areas in the mountains is a very difficult task. The defender normally establishes himself on a commanding height, from where he can survey all movement from miles around and bring down fire as will. The attacker must first concentrate and then attack uphill. It is the difficulty of all this that has prevented either India or Pakistan from making any major gains in the short wars of 1965 and 1971 in Kashmir.

It now needs emphasizing that neither are the Indians of 1987 akin to the Chinese of 1962, nor are the Pakistanis of 1987 akin to the Indians of 1962. The Chinese infiltration tactics are peculiar and specific to armies trained in the guerrilla tradition; you cannot take an army trained to fight in line, as is the case both for India and Pakistan, and get them to adopt infiltration tactics. This is true no matter how much talk of mobile warfare is thrown around. India managed in Bangladesh, but as we have discussed earlier, this was under very special conditions, which certainly can never apply in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir.

Doubtless the Indians will do some infiltrating past defended Pakistani positions, and doubtless some Pakistani defensive boxes will panic. But to count on this happening and to base your entire campaign on this is future in the case of an India versus Pakistan operation. Remember if this should happen an advance of 3 to 4 miles a day would be good, so that in any case we should count on 90 days to get to Gilgit, and 30 or so to get to Skardu. If it should not happen, if the Pakistanis should generally stand firm, then progress will be very slow till we have inflicted so much attrition on the defender that we achieve an overwhelming superiority in troops.

**E. THE PROBLEM OF THE PAKISTANI REINFORCEMENT**

An overall strength of seven or eight Indian brigades against four Pakistanis in the Northern Areas would normally be sufficient to

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ensure victory given some weeks of fighting.

But what if, on each axis of advance India found itself opposed not by one brigade, but by two? Then India's two brigades plus one in reserve per axis and one brigade from Gurais would certainly not have sufficed.

Pakistan reinforced Skardu with at least two, perhaps three brigades before the start date of Trident. If we assume that Skardu got two brigades and Astor (between Gilgit and the Burzail Pass) one, the odds become irrevocably balanced against us.

The equation these would have been

- Shyok axis : three Indian brigades versus two Pakistani
- Sindh axis as above
- Astor axis one brigade versus one

Immediate Reserve

—Pakistan : two brigades

—India: three or more brigades from XV and XVI Corps reserves

No one can pretend that any quick victory was possible with these odds. In fact, India would have been decisively defeated.

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**LAST THOUGHTS**

A. **THE CRUCIAL JCO**

When all is said and done, the burden of combat falls on the Junior Commissioned Officers, the link between the officers and their men, the individuals that actually lead the infantry platoons and tank troops.

Indian JCOs are among the finest junior leaders anywhere in the world . They have years of experience, they are tough and they are seasoned. In 1962, when every other class of officers from brigadier upwards failed, and battalion level officers functioned well, the JCOs performed brilliantly. But for them, the Army would have fallen apart so quickly that no one would have known we had an army.

In other armies, the youngest officers command platoons. An American or Soviet platoon commander can be as young as 19 years of age, a 2nd Lieutenant or equivalent with' just 6 months officer training behind him. He is inexperienced, but he is young. At 19, or 20, or 21, few can have any real idea of what death means or what they risk when they risk their lives.

The Indian JCO, on the other hand, is in his thirties. He is married, with two or three children. He knows the value of life, and the futility of death. Because of improved health standards, he is as physically tough as his 18 years old jawans, perhaps more so. But he is not as mentally tough because he is a mature man.

Once upon a time, when the world w~ a simpler, more naive place, the Indian JCO was absolutely wedded to his regiment, and would rather face death before breaking and running. Issues were simpler in those days. But today's JCO is very well educated, he is canny, street wise, and politically aware, a product of his culture. He

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knows his political and military leaders have feet of clay. He sees the corruption that has spread through the Indian fabric, and that has sunk deep into the heart of his Army.

He knows that if he dies, for all the pious drivel the services put out about looking after the dependents,- his wife and his children will have very little future. He is asked to sacrifice his life while the rest of India, the other 99.9% of the population, is busy running every kind of scam to make money, even as he fights.

Will he risk his life for the country as his counterpart of 25 years ago did? When the shock of battle comes, that point at which all fine theories, fine ideas, fine equipment's fail, when a man is caught between his most instinctive need, the urge to survive and what the Army requires of him, will he pass the test as well as his counterpart of 25 years ago? I think not. And I for one will not blame him.

**B. EVACUATING THE WOUNDED**

General Sundarji told a friend of mine that in any future war, the war he envisages, the Army will be moving so fast that there will be no time to evacuate the wounded.

As a last thought I would like to suggest that . this is really the top thinking, there will be no rapid advance, because every soldier, JCO, and officer will do his best to see he is not wounded.

**C. SRI LANKA**

In Sri Lanka the Indian Army has seen its first large scale combat since the 1984 Golden Temple episode. It is clearly too early to fully analyze Operation Pawan, the four brigade operation that destroyed the LTTE stronghold in Jaffna.

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Nonetheless, it is obvious the Indian Army has not exactly covered itself with glory. Its intelligence, strategy, tactics, and fighting will-power have all been tested and found wanting.

None of this is surprising or alarming. . After all, with the exception of scattered company sized battles for the Siachen Glacier the Army has seen no large scale conventional combat in 17 years. When a force is required, suddenly, after many years of peace, to do a tough job, there will be mistakes, and the need to go through learning process. This is as true of us as of any country. We need recall only the glitches that beset the US raid to rescue its Iran hostages (1980) and the bombing of Col. Gaddafi's HQ in Libya (1987) as an example. This from a country that spares no expense on equipment, support, or training.

War is so difficult a business that no one can possibly hope, by means of mere training, to be 100% ready for actual combat. The only way any one learns about war is by being at war.

Our intention is not to cast aspersions on the Indian Army or to pretend that the Pakistan Army does not suffer from its share of problems.

It is only to repeat, yet again, that in war everything takes time. A two week operation of the magnitude of Triden in such difficult terrain and under such bad weather conditions simply has no chance.

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