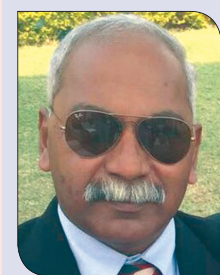


Proper strategy planning crucial for India to win war against Pakistan

War is not a solution to any bilateral problem. But if push comes to the shove and India goes for an all out war with Pakistan to end the menace of terrorism orchestrated by the Western neighbour, is India capable of replicating the same thumping victory against its arch foe as it did in 1971? **NIBEDITA SEN** finds out.

India occupies a unique strategic position flanked by two adversaries in Pakistan and China on both sides of its border, both having nuclear arsenals that pose direct threat to 1.3 billion people. In case India goes to war with Pakistan for a 'permanent solution' to the terrorism menace being orchestrated by Pakistan in India since decades, what would be the likely outcome? "India is definitely ready to fight against Pakistan. We have already got our nuclear weapons tested. We are superior in air power, naval power, and military forces too. The Indian military needs to gain entry into Pakistan and capture as much as land possible. The more territory you have, the more you can bargain. When the diplomatic channel fails, then only the strate-



“India is definitely ready to fight against Pakistan. We have already got our nuclear weapons tested. We are superior in air power, naval power, and military forces too.”
- LT COL (RETD) AUSTIN COLLACO

gic commander decides,” Kargil war hero from Goa Lt Col (Retd) Austin Collaco says.



The epic photo of 1971 Bangladesh liberation war where East Pakistan Army Commander Lt Gen AAK Niazi is seen signing the surrender treaty in the presence of Indian Eastern Army Commander Lt Gen JS Aurora. - file photo

Reminiscing the quality of leadership in 1971, Vir Chakra winner in 1971 war, Lt Gen (Retd) B T Pandit says, “When we went to war in 1971, I remember, then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi’s midnight radio broadcast. There was no television at that time. This raised our morale so high that we were convinced of the political support, the armed forces were convinced that it was fighting for a national cause and very importantly the forces were convinced of the popular support.” “The entire nation was motivated and our half battle was won. Keeping



“The gap between India and Pakistan is increasing every day and this is the reason why Pakistan is resorting to proxy war in Kashmir.”
- LT GEN (RETD) B T PANDIT, Vir Chakra

morale high of its soldiers is the political responsibility of the military leadership. One cannot go for all out war overnight. You will have prepare for it in advance and take the masses along with you,” Lt Gen Pandit says. Speaking on the present scenario he says strategically India is in a superior position against Pakistan. “The gap between India and Pakistan is increasing every day and this is the reason why Pakistan is not entering into an open warfare but low-cost warfare like the proxy war in Kashmir. Therefore, we need to raise a cause to fight Pakistan,” he says.

Former Signal Officer-in-Chief, Lt Gen Harbhajan Singh says, “Our main adversary now is China. China and Pakistan have close strategic ties aimed against India. As a result, while discussing the future conflict between India and Pakistan, China will become a major factor. A two-front war is a possible scenario.” He further adds that Pakistan has adequate conventional forces to defend itself and in case it feels that its red lines



“While discussing the future conflict between India and Pakistan, China will become a major factor.”
- LT GEN HARBHAJAN SINGH

are being crossed, it has let the world know that it will use tactical nuclear weapons. “As a result, India has developed the strategy of Cold Start, which will have limited objectives inside Pakistan. India’s Draft Nuclear Doctrine of massive retaliation is not plausible and a deterrent, primarily due to India’s fickle politico-bureaucratic combine leadership, which controls the nuclear response buttons,” Lt Gen Singh says.

Former Additional Director General Military Operations, Lt Gen (Retd) D B Shekatkar says the strategic and geopolitical scenario in any future conflict with Pakistan will be quite different from the one existing in 1971 and the two cannot be compared. “If Pakistan decides to engage India in a war, it will be the end of Pakistan’s national conventional war endurance and combat potential at least for next 50 years. The war will destroy the next future stability, peace, and prosperity of coming generations.”
- LT GEN (RETD) D B SHEKATKAR



“India will have to evolve a philosophy and mechanism to convert and use India’s soft power protected by India’s armed forces in the form of smart power.”
“India’s armed forces are adequately prepared to teach a lesson even before a completion of 50 years cycle after Bangladesh Liberation War.”

Brigadier (Retd) Hemant Mahajan warned that in case there is a full scale war with Pakistan, then China will surely support Pakistan and will open the Eastern front. “India has to evaluate various other non-military options to weaken Pakistan instead of directly thinking of going for all out war. Balochistan, Sindh and North-West Frontier Province are seeing internal strife. India succeeded in dividing Pakistan once. It can evaluate its options and slice Pakistan further by orchestrating separation of Balochistan and Sindh. This will certainly weaken the troublesome neighbour,” Brig Mahajan says. However, India has to be careful about the tactical nuclear weapons of Pakistan. It can fire nuclear missiles on Indian military formations if it feels threatened. “Pakistan’s nuclear policy is very vague and hence very dangerous. It may feel threatened at slightest provocation and fire nuclear



“India can weaken Pakistan’s military might by dividing it further through support to separate Balochistan and Sindh.”
- BRIGADIER (RETD) HEMANT MAHAJAN

missiles. In such situation India must revisit ‘No First Use’ policy regarding nukes, as once remarked by former Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar. It must also strengthen itself my going for more defence production within the country and become self-sufficient,” he says.

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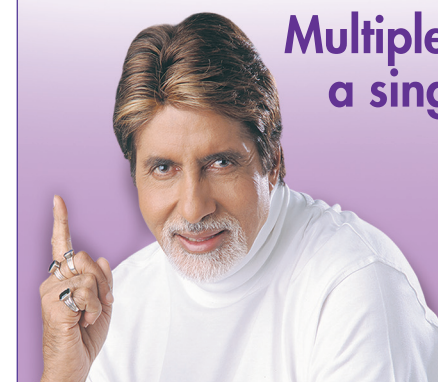
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