

An appreciation of the Pakistani military thought process

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Abstract

The military has played a dominant role in making strategic decisions in Pakistan. Like any other military in the world, Pakistan Army has an institutionalised method of problem analysis. This is known as the 'appreciation of the situation'. This involves a careful scrutiny of four factors; namely, ground and weather, enemy situation, own situation, and time and space. This time-tested method has been used repeatedly during peace and war to arrive at pertinent conclusions, for making appropriate plans to deal with different contingencies.

During the early days of Pakistan, this method was used to make stark choices like seeking security through the Western alliance system and resolving the Kashmir problem through military means. These were critical decisions with long term implications. The results were not always the same as expected.

The main reason for this poor showing was because the immediate threat factor and the short-term gains were overplayed. Long-term consequences were ignored. Had these decisions been taken with greater deliberation and with the larger picture in mind, the results could have been better.

Introduction

Humankind has forever grappled with the issues of decision making. A rational decision - maker weighs the pros and cons seriously and debates the cost-benefit analysis before going for the best option. Given the criticality of decision making, it now attracts serious attention in all fields of human endeavour. Its best practices are most notably visible in business, economy, human and international

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relations. Over time, this process has been institutionalised into a well-defined managerial science. Governments and industry have commissioned studies on decision making strategies and spent large amounts of money to discover slugs and to streamline their decision-making processes. A number of theories have been propounded to explain its intricacies and nuances.

One decision-making theory which gained much currency during the Cold War was the ‘game theory’. This mathematical theory was invented by John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern. It discussed the perceived usefulness of the outcomes under the heading of ‘utility’, for example, the utility of money. In the game theory model, one agent’s best action depends on expectations about what one or more other agents will do, and what counts as their best actions for their sake, depending on their expectations about him.¹

The art of decision making varies in cases of statecraft, warfare, business plans and altruistic pursuits. It is quite logical that a general, a business magnate and an environmentalist will handle a problem differently. According to a Nordic scholar, Sven Ove Hansson:

If the general wants to win the war, the decision theorist tries to tell him how to achieve this goal. The question whether he should at all try to win the war is not typically regarded as a decision-theoretical issue. Similarly, decision theory provides methods for a business executive to maximize profits and for an environmental agency to minimize toxic exposure, but the basic question whether they should try to do these things is not treated in decision theory.²

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The military art of problem solving is the sum total of clearly defined analytical processes based on available intelligence and information. The decision-makers and their close confidantes and advisors discuss threadbare various aspects of the problem according to the model available to them before arriving at pertinent conclusions. The staffs diligently record these thoughts and translate these, according to existing norms and practices, into precise and methodical plans. Militaries all over the world have adopted their own standardised procedures to suit their own genius and peculiar environment.

The patent method of problem analysis in the Pakistan Army is known as the ‘appreciation of the situation’. This touchstone of investigating problems is similar to what is known in the corporate world as the SWOT (Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis. The basic format of the appreciation is taught to the officer cadet from his early days in the Military

Academy and is constantly drilled into him as he progresses in his career. Over time, it becomes second nature for the commanders and staffs to apply the ‘appreciation’ template to all problems, ranging from the most mundane to the more complex ones. While, this model of spontaneous problem analysis conveniently shortens the decision making process, it also inculcates a fixated mindset nurtured and sponsored by military staff and war colleges.

Appreciation is a simple three-step approach. In the first stage, an appropriate frame of reference is established by formulating the aim. Thereafter, the nature of the problem is analysed through the filter of four factors; namely, ground and weather, enemy situation, own situation, and time and space. Each factor is parsed into a number of sub-factors to make the analysis more thorough. After having studied each factor in considerable detail, pertinent and logical deductions are drawn. The most overwhelming deductions form the basis of an embryonic plan comprising the mission statement, the execution paragraph and the administrative and logistical minutiae.

At the higher levels of command, a lot of time is spent determining the commander’s intent and conceptualising the threat hypotheses. A response is then mounted on the most likely hypothesis. The time, space and relative strength factors collectively known as the TSR Matrix in the military calculus provides the essential leads in crafting an intelligent and imaginative design of operation, which forms the kernel of an elaborate operational plan.

From Ayub Khan to Pervez Musharraf, a number of strategic decisions were made, covering a wide range of national and international issues with profound long-term effects on the nation’s destiny. After the departure of senior British officers, Ayub Khan became the first Pakistani Army Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C) – a stepping stone to becoming his country’s ‘first military ruler.’³ Four years before he imposed martial law in 1958, the Army chief General Ayub Khan had already become “the public face of Pakistan’s foreign policy and the architect of its relations with the United States.”⁴

In Ayub Khan’s mind, the problem at hand was twofold: Firstly, how to build the nation, and secondly, how to build its armed forces. He decided to use the problem solving tool he knew best.

After the early demise of the founder of the nation, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, and the unfortunate assassination of its first prime minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan was experiencing extreme political uncertainty. In Ayub Khan’s mind, the problem at hand was twofold: Firstly, how to build the nation, and secondly, how to build its armed forces. He decided to use the problem solving tool he knew best. He employed the format of the military appreciation to analyse the issue of

nation building. In the secluded environment of a London hotel room, at night in October 1954,, he wrote ‘A Short Appreciation of Present and Future Problems of Pakistan.’⁵ Although Ayub Khan did not recommend a ‘military-first strategy,’ as in the case of North Korea, he did envisage a large role for the armed forces in national affairs. Upon becoming the President of Pakistan, he used this document as the basis of his reforms agenda.

In this paper, I will examine Ayub Khan’s decision-making paradigm using the time-honoured military template of appreciation of the situation. To make my research meaningful, I have chosen two examples: Security through the Western alliance system and the choice of resolving the Kashmir problem through military means.

Security through the Western alliance system

When Pakistan emerged on the scene, the imperial colonial order was being replaced by a bipolar system of global spheres of influence. A small group of newly decolonised nations wanted to chart an independent path within the framework of the Non Aligned Movement (NAM). The leading lights of the NAM included, among others, India’s Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Naturally, Pakistan did not find it a friendly forum. Pakistan’s tilt towards the U.S. had begun before Ayub Khan took over as the military chief. Ayub would merely formalise Pakistan’s accession to the U.S.-led alliance system. He would live to regret his decision.⁶

Pakistan’s slow but inexorable march towards the Western camp is discernible in Muhammad Ali Jinnah’s interview to *Life* magazine’s photojournalist Margaret Bourke. White. Jinnah hoped to enlist technical or financial assistance from America, he emphasized “America needs Pakistan more than Pakistan needs America.”⁷ In 1946, he sent his close confidante Mirza Abol Hasan Ispahani to the U.S. to create a favourable impression about the emerging state of Pakistan.

Ispahani did a good job and was appointed his country’s first envoy to the U.S. There was nothing unrealistic or unusual in this approach. It was based on realpolitik and reflected a clear understanding of the evolving world order.

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The U.S. stood out as an economic and military giant after the Second World War. In the new bipolar superpower equation, it had an edge over the USSR. So strong was its economy and defence technology that it had even sponsored the Soviet Union's war effort by providing it with military and food supplies worth billions of dollars through the famous lend-lease scheme.⁸

In May 1950, Pakistan's first Prime Minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, made his maiden foreign journey to North America. Some term it as the defining moment in the Pak-U.S. relationship. The proverbial red carpet was rolled out for the head of the government of a small unknown country somewhere in the backwaters of South Asia. Liaquat had the dubious honour of becoming the first in a long line of Pakistani leaders who were relentlessly wooed by the Americans.⁹ Obviously, the U.S. anticipated long-term gains in this 'unequal friendship.'¹⁰ Not only was the prime minister of Pakistan personally received at the airport by the president of the U.S., he was also invited to address a joint session of the U.S. Congress.

Liaquat was genuinely impressed by the American ideals of democracy and free enterprise and found common ground with a country which like his own had won independence from colonial rule and was now the leader of the 'free world'. Muhammad Ali Bogra, Pakistan's prime minister from 1953 to 1955, also got along famously with the Americans. He was Pakistan's ambassador to Washington before becoming the prime minister and returned to occupy the same position after being removed from the post of the head of the government.

During the Suez Crisis of 1956, the political leadership of Pakistan under Prime Minister Hussain Shaheed Suharwardy did not side with Egypt.¹¹ President Nasser and likeminded Arab leaders considered this a Pakistani ploy to divide the Arab world¹² and weaken the Non Aligned Forum which was the common platform shared by India and Egypt. Ayub Khan would later claim that as C-in-C he had alerted the government about the possibility of Egypt being attacked by Britain in conjunction with others, in the hope that his 'anxiety' was passed on to the Egyptians.¹³ Given its strong pro-Western outlook, the government is not likely to have paid heed to this advice.

One can assume that Ayub Khan was more concerned about the looming military threat emanating from India rather than the great power game being played out in the Canal Zone and the Sinai Peninsula. Ayub's solution for his country was simple and straightforward. He "vitaly linked" its survival "with the establishment of a well-trained, well-equipped, and well-led army," and he "was determined to create this type of shield for his country."¹⁴

Pakistan had inherited a hodgepodge army. At the time of independence, British generals and the Indian National Congress members in the interim government had opposed Liaquat Ali Khan's plan to divide the armed forces.

They had argued that the best way of defending the South Asian subcontinent after independence was by not dividing the armed forces of the erstwhile Army of the Raj. In its present condition, Pakistan was considered economically weak to create an army from the scratch. Muslim soldiers of the British Indian Army were spread all over the world and it would take a herculean effort to bring them together and cobble them into a fighting force.

Pakistan lacked training institutions, ordnance depots, technical manpower and most importantly senior leadership to run an army. Pakistan's share of military assets like tanks, guns, aircraft, ships, armament, and stores was either denied by India or useless junk sent to retard Pakistani efforts to build up a credible military force. As the leaders of the new country struggled to reorganise a 'mutilated, truncated, moth-eaten Pakistan,'¹⁵ India forcibly occupied territories which could have been either part of Pakistan or would have constituted friendly entities; namely, the former princely states of Jammu and Kashmir, Junagarh and Manawadar, and Hyderabad Deccan.

When war broke out in Kashmir in October 1947, the acting commander of the Pakistani Army, British General Gracey, refused to obey Governor General Jinnah's orders to deploy forces in the warzone.¹⁶ Jinnah had to rescind his orders. On April 1, 1948, India stopped the waters flowing out of Ferozepur Headworks to the canals irrigating the *kharif* crops in Pakistan.¹⁷ This was taken as a blatant attempt to economically strangulate Pakistan. In 1951, India threateningly mobilised its forces along the international borders forcing Liaquat Ali Khan to wave his famous mailed fist as a gesture of defiance.

Pakistan was confronted with an existential choice in a tough neighbourhood. It could either accept the hegemony of India and forever be condemned to the status of an underdog or seek help from a powerful ally to stand up to the local bully. Pakistan chose the latter option. These were the initial days of the Cold War and the Americans had adopted the global policy of containing communism. Within this overarching security paradigm, the Americans were in the process of building regional alliances all over the world. Two military partnerships, the Baghdad Pact (renamed the Central Treaty Organisation or the CENTO after Iraq opted out of it) and the SEATO (South East Asian Treaty Organisation) were in the offing.

Pakistan chose to join the Western alliance system as the principal means of security against India. A number of factors influenced the decision of the Pakistani leaders in making this choice. It is not difficult to conclude that Ayub Khan in his capacity as the C-in-C must have played an important role in influencing this strategic decision. In his 'appreciation',¹⁸ Ayub Khan found the obtaining regional situation most appropriate for joining the Baghdad Pact. In his opinion, the resource-rich Middle East was a potential source of "conflict

between the Soviet Union and the Western world.”¹⁹ Such a conflict, he feared, could spread to Pakistan’s borders and seriously endanger its security.

By joining a regional grouping, Ayub Khan hoped to gain a “certain measure of protection...against Indian designs in the Middle East.”²⁰ That would also help Pakistan tsensitise the neighbouring allies about the Indian threat and win “their sympathy and support.”²¹ In all, the objective of joining the Baghdad Pact was “to secure our [Pakistan’s] position” and to contribute towards the peace and security in the region. It was neither meant to divide the Arab world nor to serve the interests of the Western nations.²²

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One wonders, how he could possibly have avoided toeing the American line while drawing on their largesse for his country’s economic and military needs. In his autobiography, Ayub Khan favours CENTO but rejects SEATO. He contends that Foreign Minister Chaudhry Zafarullah Khan had not consulted the military about joining the SEATO and he had learnt about it at the General Headquarters (GHQ) only after the Treaty had been signed.²³ Ayub Khan may have had personal reservations about SEATO but he did not take issue with the government on the subject. Writing for the influential *Foreign Affairs*, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of Pakistan’s joining the Western military partnership; he justified his government’s decision in the following words:

Thus, Pakistan is associated with the United States through not one, but four mutual security arrangements. In this sense, it has been sometimes termed “America’s most allied ally in Asia.” It is the only Asian country which is a member both of SEATO and CENTO.

The strategic location of Pakistan is of some significance in this connection. West Pakistan borders on the Middle East, is close to Soviet Russia’s southern frontier and shares a common border with China. It stands across the great mountain passes through which all land invasions of the Indian sub-continent have taken place in recorded history. East Pakistan, on the other hand, borders on Burma. Thus, West Pakistan and East Pakistan flank India on her northwest and on her northeast. So situated, Pakistan virtually constitutes a defensive shield for India. It constitutes also the gateway to South Asia. It should therefore be in the interest of world peace, particularly of India’s security, that Pakistan remain strong and stable.²⁴

Ayub Khan's argument that India's security was dependent on that of Pakistan was meant to draw traction from the Western sentiment which had decidedly turned pro-India after the Sino Indian clash in 1962. Ayub was painfully aware that the border skirmish between India and China had fundamentally altered the international perspective on the regional security situation. India now considered China, a former NAM ally, an enemy and wanted to build up its military against it. This shift in Indian threat perception was important from the American point of view, as it wanted "to leverage on the question of arms aid to India and all its military build-up."²⁵ Pakistan had thus far played out its role as an important coalition partner in the Western anti-communist shield to the hilt. In an earlier article, also penned for the *Foreign Affairs*, Ayub Khan had stated:

The next 15 to 20 years are going to be most crucial for Pakistan. Either we make this grade in this period or we do not. If we fail to make the grade, we are bound to submerge under the tidal wave of communism which is lashing its fury all round us. Since we do not seek this fate, we must move forward and do so quickly. It is here that our eyes turn towards our friends and allies.²⁶

Time was indeed running out for Pakistan, India was about to replace it as the Western bulwark against the larger communist or at least the Chinese part of it. Pakistan had to do something quickly before the TSR matrix was irretrievably turned in India's favour.

The adventure in Kashmir²⁷

The bone of contention between India and Pakistan had always been Kashmir. After the first war in Kashmir In 1947-48, the international efforts to find a peaceful resolution of the issue through the medium of the plebiscite had proved inconclusive due to Indian obduracy. After the 1962 Sino-Indian war, the West had busied itself with arming the Indian forces against the Chinese.

Pakistan felt threatened. Not only was it about to lose its prized position as the most allied ally in the region, it would not be long before it would be forfeiting its qualitative edge over the numerically superior Indian military. If Kashmir had to be liberated by non-political means, it was now or never. This decision was not Ayub Khan's alone. The prime mover behind this kind of thinking was his ambitious foreign minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. The visit of the

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veteran Kashmiri leader Sheikh Abdullah to Pakistan in April-May 1964 had augured well. Ayub was convinced that with a charismatic person like Abdullah on his side, the Kashmir issue could be resolved.²⁸

Unfortunately, Abdullah had to abort his mission due to the sudden demise of his friend and sometime tormentor Nehru. The peaceful resolution of the Kashmir dispute now appeared a distant dream. With Bhutto egging him on, Ayub ordered the foreign office to prepare a plan to ‘defreeze the Kashmir issue’ in consultation with the GHQ. A ‘secret cell’ consisting of senior bureaucrats and intelligence and military officials was constituted to monitor the situation in Kashmir.²⁹

The ground situation must have convinced the members of the cell that the time was ripe to launch a guerrilla campaign to ‘defreeze the Kashmir issue’. The Valley was on the boil. Public sentiments ran high. The move by Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad, the puppet prime minister in occupied Jammu and Kashmir, to alter the special status of the disputed state to that of a regular state of the Indian Union, had caused deep public resentment and uproar.³⁰ In December 1963, there was an outburst of violence after the holy Prophet’s hair was reported stolen from the shrine of Hazrat Bal. The Indian government blamed Pakistani agent provocateurs for fomenting trouble in the Valley. The Pakistani intelligence agencies chose to bask in the “limelight of public approbation,” by silently taking credit for the upheaval in Kashmir.³¹

Young Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, elevated to the status of the foreign minister on January 1, 1964, upped the ante by demanding that Indian occupation forces leave Kashmir. The Indians were bent on reducing the Muslim majority to minority and threatening “the lives, honour and religion of the Muslims” he thundered.

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Although the implications of the military option were considered, the contingency for ‘most dangerous response’ was not prepared. Overall, the

enemy's will and capacity to fight were underestimated and own strengths were overestimated. Most importantly, although the American aid had been restricted after the Rann of Kutch episode,³³ the likelihood of a complete stoppage had not been contemplated. Despite its tactical brilliance, Operation Gibraltar did not follow the basic principles of operational strategy. Had it been war gamed properly, the flaws in the scheme would have become quite apparent. The enemy factor was seen through the prism of the Rann of Kutch skirmish. In the words of Altaf Gauhar, Ayub Khan's trusted Information Secretary; the general staff's assessment about the Indian Army's strength and capabilities was based on the Rann of Kutch encounter. He summed up the mood in GHQ after a briefing given to Ayub Khan on April 10, 1965 in the following word:

The brigadiers and colonels were all quite excited about the way the Indians had abandoned their positions and retreated in total disarray. Now was the opportunity for the Pakistan Army to pursue the enemy deep into his territory. Senior officers repeatedly made the point that the Indians had come in full strength after making full preparations but they took to their heels at first contact with the Pakistani forces lead (*sic*) by their intrepid commanders.³⁴

Based on the inputs from his aides, Ayub Khan concluded that the Indian Army "had expanded too rapidly, and lacked disciplined leadership,"³⁵ to put up a strong fight. The Rann of Kutch episode had only served to reinforce the prevailing myth that the "Hindu had no stomach for a fight."³⁶ In his August 29, 1965, directive to the Pakistan Army, he remarked: "As a general rule the Hindu morale would not stand more than a couple of hard blows delivered at the right time and place."³⁷ The minor success in the Rann had proved to be 'heady wine.'³⁸ The official exuberance was reflected through its official propaganda machinery which had created a 'jingoistic' mood among the masses.³⁹

Ground was being prepared to enlarge the conflict with India without any thought of a realistic 'war ending strategy'. The military and the foreign office wanted to capitalise on the success of the Rann. Ayub Khan was under severe criticism among the army circles and the Foreign Office "for letting the Indians off the hook" and not cutting off their retreat.⁴⁰ In his *Memoir*, Gul Hassan, the Director Military Operations at the time, lamented the fact that Tikka Khan, the local commander, was stopped from going beyond Biar Bet and thus losing the chance of bagging the retreating enemy. He declared this to be an act of undue magnanimity towards an unforgiving enemy.⁴¹

Despite his growing confidence about dealing with Indian Army in the near term, Ayub Khan was extremely cautious by nature.⁴² He was wary of sharing the view of his 'belligerent' generals and the 'hawkish' Foreign Office.⁴³ He told his cabinet that the security of Pakistan should not be jeopardised for the sake of Kashmir. He reasoned that fighting in Kashmir had the potential of escalating

into a war which Pakistan could ill afford to win without outside help. Such help in his reckoning was not forthcoming, since both the U.S. and the USSR were providing military aid to India and the former clearly preferred India over Pakistan.⁴⁴

However, Bhutto and Aziz Ahmed wanted to take advantage of the leadership vacuum in India created by the death of Nehru. The fact that the ground situation was changing, as the Indians had been able to suppress the uprising in Kashmir, was being conveniently ignored. The Foreign Office and the intelligence agencies were “churning out reports of an insurrection in Kashmir,”⁴⁵ and probably believing it too. Prime Minister Shastri’s threat that India would fight Pakistan at a time and place of its own choosing was treated as a bluff by the Military Operations and the Military Intelligence in the GHQ.⁴⁶ There was also a feeling in the Military Operations that post-Kutch, Shastri had gotten even by occupying a few inaccessible Northern Scouts’ posts south of Skardu. These posts were considered so remote and vulnerable that it was thought best not to reoccupy these.⁴⁷ The sense was that he would not retaliate against Pakistan’s counter attack in the Rann.

The general staff’s assessment that any armed conflict with India would be short was self-serving. It was based on the fact that while Pakistan’s defence production capability was non-existent, that of India was also extremely limited. It was felt that in case of outbreak of hostilities, each side would try to seize the initiative before it ran out of ammunition.⁴⁸ The government of Pakistan wanted to avoid an all-out war and the Foreign Office instructed the Army to follow the general policy of “do not provoke, do not escalate.”⁴⁹ The asymmetry in weapons and manpower dictated that the military initiative should remain confined to sub-conventional level by creating low-level disturbances in Kashmir.

The Kashmir Cell headed by foreign secretary Aziz Ahmed, in their bid to ‘defreeze’ the Kashmir issue, instructed the Army to train locals for sabotage activities in Indian-held Kashmir and infiltrate them across the ceasefire line to disrupt conditions in the Valley and to eventually raise armed *lashkars* [contingents] to fight the Indian forces of occupation.⁵⁰ For such operations, Foreign Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto found his man in GOC 12 Division, Major General Akhtar Hussain Malik. Malik was already toying with the idea of sending patrols deep into Indian-held Kashmir to take advantage of the disturbed situation.⁵¹ The concept of long-range patrols behind enemy lines had been successfully practiced by the British in the North African desert during the Second World War.

The proponents of irregular warfare in the Pakistani military had read about the exploits of the Long Range Desert Group (LRDG) in *Popski’s Private Army*.⁵² From the annals of guerrilla warfare they knew that small groups had the

capacity to strategically dissipate large forces. In 1947, Pakistani officers ‘on leave’ had witnessed first-hand that ragtag tribal *lashkars* had reached the outskirts of Srinagar in a sudden and inspired burst of energy.⁵³

The obtaining ground situation, public and military sentiment and historical evidence dictated that such kind of operation could be undertaken. However, the chances of success were not calculated in a realistic manner. In early 1965, the government’s decision to undertake guerrilla operations in Indian-held Kashmir was communicated directly to the general commanding 12 Division.⁵⁴ Before preparing his operational plans, Malik wanted a civilian intelligence appreciation to fathom the Indian reaction to guerrilla operations. If the Indians decided to react strongly, he feared the Kashmiris would be left in a lurch and that that Kashmir could be lost forever.⁵⁵

The planning staff at the 12 Division Headquarters had warned the sector commanders of such an eventuality and cautioned them to take necessary measures against an Indian riposte in the formation’s area of responsibility. No such warnings were issued at the Army or inter-services level. In fact, a strange sense of complacency prevailed.

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Although a fallback plan codenamed Operation Grand Slam⁵⁸ had been prepared in the eventuality that Gibraltar petered out, and war plans for an Indian offensive in the Punjab had been prepared,⁵⁹ not many people were aware of the impending operations. Joint planning with the air force and navy was nothing short of abject.⁶⁰ The air and naval chiefs were not in the decision-making loop. For the sake of secrecy and expediency, GOC 12 Division wanted a small executive group under the C-in-C to be responsible for directing the operations, to the exclusion of the ministries. Such a policy would have disastrous results. Not only would the Indians attack across the ceasefire line, they would follow up with a multi-pronged offensive across the international border.

The Indian counter offensive belied the general staff’s estimate that the Indian Army was not ready for war. In a briefing to the formation commanders in the third week of April 1965, the Director Military Intelligence gave the impression that the Indian Army was still in the process of rebuilding after the

1962 debacle and was not in a position to go to war for another two to three years.

However, keeping in mind that it had grown exponentially from nine to nineteen divisions in the span of the previous couple of years, he made four recommendations: 1. Pakistan Army need to build up qualitatively and quantitatively. 2. Serious attention should be paid to Indian nuclear potential. 3. Pakistan should put pressure on India during the next two to three years that it was militarily unbalanced. 4. Relations with Afghanistan need to be improved.⁶¹ The last suggestion indicates that the Military Intelligence was not unaware of the potential of trouble on the western border. A few years earlier, the Afghan government had sponsored an insurgency in the Dir-Bajaur area.⁶²

On May 9, GOC 12 Division wrote to the Chief of the General Staff that he would be ready to undertake operations within ten weeks of getting the green signal, but if the operations were delayed beyond October, these would have to be postponed till the next campaigning season.⁶³ The C-in-C wanted to delay the operations to build up the combat strength of the Army; however, since General Malik sounded optimistic and the Kashmir Cell wanted the insurgency to begin post haste,⁶⁴ the decision was taken to go ahead with Operation Gibraltar.

The sense of urgency got the better of good judgment and deliberate planning. Special operations need time for preparation. An extensive network of local supporters has to be created prior to instigating an insurgency. Shortage of time and excessive secrecy had precluded the cultivation of partisans within the occupied territories. It was vainly hoped that the local populations would not remain idle when they would see substantive action taking place around them. The operational commanders were under orders not to divulge the plans to those who could be appointed leaders on the ground for reasons of security.⁶⁵

Signals from potential leaders of resistance were ignored. In March 1965, Sheikh Abdullah met A. B. Awan, the Director of Intelligence Bureau, in Saudi Arabia and suggested that if Pakistan was planning guerrilla action in Kashmir, arrangements should be made for him to either stay in the Northern Areas of Pakistan or somewhere in Europe from where he could support and encourage the liberation movement. The proposal was not considered by the Foreign Office.⁶⁶ This lack of coordination with the local people and their leaders would compromise the fate of the infiltrators. The first ones to report suspicious activity to the police were shepherds grazing cattle near the routes of the infiltrators. Most of them were quickly rounded up like an earlier group launched into Kashmir in 1964 to carryout sabotage activity.⁶⁷

Politically, the Pakistani adventure into Kashmir did momentarily did 'defreeze' the issue. After the cessation of hostilities, talks were held between the

President Ayub and Prime Minister Shastri in Tashkent, through the good offices of the Soviet Union. It was agreed to resolve all outstanding issues including Kashmir. Unfortunately, however, Indian Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri died even before the ink had dried on the agreement. Back home, Bhutto launched a successful campaign to oust Ayub Khan for his alleged 'sell-out' at Tashkent.⁶⁸ All hopes to make progress on the resolution of the Kashmir amicably were lost.

The implications of the 1965 War in East Pakistan were critical. It reinforced their feeling of neglect. The strategy of 'Defence of the East lay in the West' left them practically at the mercy of hostile forces. As a result, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in his famous Six Points, not only demanded greater political and financial autonomy for East Pakistan, he stressed for the need of having provincial militias or paramilitary forces.⁶⁹ Indira Gandhi found it expedient to play on the Bengalis' sense of deprivation. She actively supported a separatist movement in East Pakistan and after having weakened the Pakistan Army through a bloody civil war, launched a short military campaign to sever East from the West in December 1971. She would then boast before the *Lok Sabha* (the lower house of parliament) that the emergence of Bangladesh had falsified the two nation theory.⁷⁰

Analysis

In hindsight, the Pakistani decision-making process was far from realistic. It was based on the military appreciation format and suffered from the *idée fixe* that the military was the panacea of all ills in society, and given the right kind of equipment, it could prove more than a match to the much larger Indian Army. Pakistan Army neither had the capability to run the country nor liberate Kashmir through a combination of an insurgency and open warfare.

The Western alliance system was considered the shortest route to acquire advanced military hardware and training to counter India, but this was only a short term solution. It was not as if the money and materiel would continue pouring in forever, but no thought was given to evaluate for how long the U.S. would remain a ready source of military and economic aid was. No attention was paid to developing an indigenous weapons production capability and strategies to make the economy self-reliant.

With a Prussian mindset, appreciation of the situation was used to produce self-fulfilling prophecies. The reasoning and logic used to justify the ends smacked of over-confidence. The answers were predictable and betrayed a stereotypical and hackneyed thinking. Solutions in line with the existing thinking were preferred. Individual thinking and objectivity was overshadowed by dogmatic attitudes.

Discussion and debate was dominated by hawks. Dissent was avoided, lest it was taken as a sign of weakness. There were no conscientious objectors. There was a tendency to obey orders blindly. The culture of 'not to reason why' permeated through the ranks. Secrecy was cited as the reason for not sharing the full picture with the sister services. The military's thought process was confined to limiting factors like time, logistics, numerical and material asymmetries, and domestic and international reactions. Remaining within these constraints, sometimes the thought process was rushed and plans heavily reliant on early breakthroughs were finalised.

Complex difficulties were seen through the simplistic lens of a table-top exercise. Problems were depicted in neat battle array with infantry soldiers, battle tanks, artillery guns, warships and aircraft lined up to execute well known manoeuvres. Immediate battlefield threat blurred external factors like economic dividends and international reactions. There was a complete lack of inter-services integration. The services remained largely autonomous and the army had the final say in operational matters.

Conclusion

Without incorporating the results of past mistakes, decision-making can become a painful repeat of blunders. Within the Pakistani system of decision-making, there has been a serious shortage of accountability. Soul searching is avoided for fear of censure and opprobrium. There is no institutionalised method of lessons-learnt. The famous Hamood Rehman Commission Report instituted to find out the reasons for the military defeat in 1971 War remained buried in official archives for 25 years until an Indian newspaper revealed its findings.⁷¹

The two decisions of joining the Western alliance system and that of launching an insurgency in Kashmir span the beginning and the end of the first cycle of the Pakistan-U.S. alliance system. Pakistan would on three more occasions allow itself to be aligned with the U.S.; that is, Yahya Khan's help and facilitation in opening up the People's Republic of China to the U.S., Zia ul Haque's acceptance of military and economic aid during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and Pervez Musharraf's readiness to side with the Americans in their war in Afghanistan.

The decision making process in Pakistan at the national and institutional levels needs to include a formal analysis of past decisions. Policy-makers and their aides must understand that they owe it to the nation and the future generations to make the correct decisions based on national interests. The system of accountability must be inbuilt, not to cause an analysis paralysis but to encourage honest debate before strategic choices are made.

Notes & References

- ¹ For details, read John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern, *Theory of Games and Economic Behavior*, 2nd ed. (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1947).
- ² Sven Ove Hansson, "Decision Theory: A Brief Introduction," Department of Philosophy and the History of Technology, Royal Institute of Technology (KTH) Stockholm, August 1994 (revised 2005-08-23), 7.
- ³ This is the eponymous title of Altaf Gauhar, *Ayub Khan: Pakistan's First Military Ruler* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 1993).
- ⁴ Howard B. Schaffer and Teresita C. Schaffer, *How Pakistan Negotiates with the United States: Riding the Roller Coaster* (Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 2011), 52.
- ⁵ This appreciation has been reproduced in Mohammad Ayub Khan, *Friends Not Masters: A Political Autobiography* (Karachi: Oxford University Press Pakistan, 1967), 186-191.
- ⁶ The title page of Ayub Khan's political autobiography *Friends Not Masters*, published in 1967 towards the closing years of his presidency, carried the pungent quote: 'People in developing countries seek assistance, but on the basis of mutual respect; they want to have friends not masters.'
- ⁷ Margret Bourke-White, *Halfway to Freedom: A Report on the New India In the Words and Pictures of Margaret Bourke-White* (New York, Simon and Schuster, 1949) cited by Kamran Shafi, 'Carrying on Regardless,' *Dawn*, March 8, 2011, accessed March 9, 2011, www.dawn.com/2011/03/08/carrying-on-regardless.html.
- ⁸ For details of the American aid to the Soviet Union through the Alaska Siberia Lend Lease Agreement read Fern Chandonnet ed., *Alaska at War, 1941-1945: The Forgotten War Remembered* (Alaska: University of Alaska Press, 2008).
- ⁹ Ayub Khan in his own turn would be fêted to a state banquet at George Washington's Mount Vernon residence, a unique honour bestowed on no other world leader before or after him.
- ¹⁰ K. M. Arif, Ch: 13, 'An Unequal Friendship,' *Working with Zia: Pakistan's Power Politics* (Karachi: Oxford University, 1995), 331-348.
- ¹¹ Suharwady was staunchly 'pro-Western.' Read 'PAKISTAN: The Complete Politician,' *Time*, September 24, 1958, accessed March 3, 2011, www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,867113,00.html. During the Suez Canal Crisis he had (in)famously remarked: "The question is asked: why don't we get together rather than be tied to a big power like the UK or America? My answer to that is that zero plus zero plus zero plus zero is after all equal to zero. We have, therefore, to go farther afield rather than get all the zeros together," cited in Ardeshir Cowasjee, 'Hypocrites to the Core,' *Dawn*, December 19, 2010, accessed March 3, 2011, www.dawn.com/2010/12/19/hypocrites-to-the-core-2.html.
- ¹² Ayub Khan, *Friends Not Masters*, 116.
- ¹³ *Ibid*, 155.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid*, 21.
- ¹⁵ Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, The Muslim League and Demand for Pakistan* (New York: University of Cambridge Press, 1994), 187.
- ¹⁶ Russel Brines, *The Indo-Pakistan Conflict* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1968), 63.

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- 17 Salman M. A. Salman & Kishor Uprety, *Conflict and Cooperation on South Asia's International Rivers: A Legal Perspective* (USA: World Bank Publications, 2002), 42.
- 18 Ayub Khan, *Friends Not Masters*, 155.
- 19 Ibid 155.
- 20 Ibid, 155.
- 21 Ibid, 155.
- 22 Ibid, 155.
- 23 Ibid, 157
- 24 Mohammed Ayub Khan, 'The Pakistan-American Alliance: Stresses and Strains,' *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 42, No. 2 (January 1964), accessed March 3, 2011, www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/...ayub-khan/the-pakistan-american-alliance.
- 25 Ayub Khan, *Friends Not Masters*, 159-60.
- 26 Mohammed Ayub Khan, 'Pakistan Perspective,' *Foreign Affairs*, (July 1960), 549, cited by Mansoor Akbar Kundi, 'US-Pakistan Relations under Ayub Khan 1958-69: Impact on South Asia,' *South Asian Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (July-December 2009), 192-203.
- 27 Gauhar, Ch: 8, 'Pakistan's Adventure in Kashmir,' *First Military Ruler*, 307.
- 28 Ibid, 314.
- 29 Ibid, 318.
- 30 Ibid, 253-54.
- 31 Ibid, 256.
- 32 Ibid, 255.
- 33 Gul Hassan, *Memoirs of Lt Gen Gul Hassan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1993), 173.
- 34 Gauhar, *First Military Ruler*, 307.
- 35 Ibid, 269.
- 36 Ibid, 312.
- 37 Mahmud Ahmed, *History of Indo Pak War – 1965* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2006), 82.
- 38 Hassan, *Memoirs*, 162.
- 39 Gauhar, *First Military Ruler*, 307.
- 40 Ibid, 312.
- 41 Hassan, *Memoirs*, 165& 166.
- 42 Gauhar, *First Military Ruler* 313.
- 43 Ibid, 269.
- 44 Shaukat Riza, *The Pakistan Army – War 1965* (Lahore: Wajidalis, 1984), 19-20.
- 45 Gauhar, *First Military Ruler*, 315.
- 46 Ibid, 315.
- 47 Hassan, *Memoirs*, 167-68.
- 48 Ibid, 173.
- 49 Ibid, 168 & 174.
- 50 Ibid, 178.
- 51 Ahmed, *Indo Pak War – 1965*, 27.
- 52 Officers in the Pakistan Army were widely encouraged to read Vladimir Peniakoff, *Popski's Private Army* (GB: Jonathan Cape, 1950). Reprints of the book were distributed through the Army Book Club in the 1970s.

- 53 The account of the forays of the Pashtun tribesmen into Kashmir in support of the spontaneous uprising of the Kashmiris against the Dogra rule has been covered in M. Akbar Khan, *Raiders in Kashmir* (Karachi: Pak Publishers, 1970).
- 54 Ahmed, *Indo Pak War – 1965*, 27.
- 55 Ibid, 28.
- 56 Ibid, 30.
- 57 Hassan, *Memoirs*, 170-72.
- 58 Grand Slam was the military offensive to capture the strategic town of Akhnur. Read Ahmed, *Kashmir IV: Operation Grand Slam*, *Indo Pak War – 1965*, 82-83.
- 59 Hassan, *Memoirs*, 173-77.
- 60 Ibid, 177.
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- 62 Read Hasan Abbas, “Militancy in Pakistan’s Borderlands: Implications for the Nation and for Afghan Policy,” *A Century Foundation Report* (New York: The Century Foundation, 2010), 11, www.tcf.org.
- 63 Ibid, 28.
- 64 Ibid, 28.
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- 68 The feeling that the Tashkent Agreement failed to solidify the gains made in the 1965 War also existed in the Indian side. Read for instance, the interview of Lieutenant General Kamaleshwar Dawar of the Indian Army in Richard Bonney, Tridivesh Singh Maini and Tahir Malik eds, *Warriors after War: Indian and Pakistani Retired Military Leaders Reflect on Relations between Two Countries, Past Present and Future* (Bern: Peter Lang AG, 2011), 71.
- 69 Salahddin Ahmed, *Bangladesh: Past and Present* (New Delhi: APH Publication House, 2004), 159-160.
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