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# Indian Military's Land Warfare Doctrine 2018 and its Implications for Pakistan



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## Abstract

*Since its inception, Pakistan is under threat from India. The Indian pursuit of hawkish ambitions in the South Asian region is not only compromising the already fragile security environment but also bringing three nuclear-powered states at loggerheads. Although Indian policymakers point towards China as their main adversary, a close examination of their strategic policies indicates that primarily Pakistan is on their radar. From the Nehru doctrine to the Indira doctrine, from Sunderji to the Cold Start doctrine, and from hybrid war to land warfare doctrine India left no stone unturned to harm Pakistan surreptitiously or explicitly. The study is aimed to investigate the latest Indian new land warfare doctrine of 2018. It will also briefly highlight the previous transformative trends in Indian military doctrinal transformations. Furthermore; the study will be concluded by highlighting the major impacts of the new land warfare doctrine on Pakistan.*

**Keywords:** Cold Start Doctrine, integrated battle groups, command and theatre, electronic warfare

## Introduction

Soon after its birth as an independent state, India found the non-alignment policy best suitable for the pursuit of her interests but later this thinking transformed into offensive postures keeping in view the changing South Asian strategic milieu.<sup>1</sup> The Indian strategic arch rivalry on two fronts pushed India to bring necessary transformations in the military strategic setting to play a role in regional politics. Indian strategic setting revolves around both China and Pakistan but the tilt is more towards Pakistan. After the 1962 Sino-Indian war, New Delhi

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propagates China as its main rival but the current military modernisation and doctrinal shift exposes its hegemonic ambitions to bring Pakistan to its knees.

The strategic shift in Indian thinking started in the Nehru era when Nehru proposed to bring economic stability to India and further aimed to resolve bilateral issues with immediate neighbours with political and diplomatic wisdom rather than military means. Nehru doctrine was aimed to dominate the Indian Ocean and keep other powers away from expanding tentacles in this strategically important region. But the 1962 Sino-Indian war and the 1965 Indo-Pak war exposed their internal weaknesses as India requested the US for military assistance and later concluded a friendship treaty with the USSR in the early 1970s.<sup>2</sup>

To overcome these flaws, Indira Gandhi took strategic steps and brought a more aggressive doctrine to pursue Indian hegemonic ambitions by strengthening its military muscles. K Sunderji proposed a 20-year plan for the army by focusing on mechanised infantry, three strike corps, and sophisticated armour divisions.<sup>3</sup> The explicit objectives of these initiatives were to hit Pakistan deep down in its territory. But Pakistan's successful cricket diplomacy and the possibility of acquiring nuclear weapons kept Indians away from any military adventure.

The decade of the 1990s was mired with Kashmir's agitation but the Kargil conflict of 1999 opened new doors in Indian strategic thinking and the concept of 'limited war under a nuclear overhang' emerged. This concept gained more popularity in Indian strategic circles after the failure of the Indian-initiated operation Parakaram<sup>4</sup> in aftermath of the 2001 parliament attack where Indian forces took 27 days to mobilise towards the western border,<sup>5</sup> causing many casualties even before any war.<sup>6</sup>

These failures and the substantial mobilisation time motivated Indian strategists to formulate more viable policies aiming to cut short

the mobilisation time to 72-96 hours (in response to Pakistan's 72 hours) to retain the element of surprise for Pakistan through swift and blitzkrieg-type actions without provoking Pakistan's nuclear threshold. The explicit objectives were confined to capturing small-scale territories by taking Pakistan's military outposts.

This doctrine was termed the cold start doctrine (CSD) in 2004. The Indian forces somehow failed to operationalise the cold start doctrine because Pakistan developed tactical nuclear weapons for swift retaliation and to destroy their planned Division-size forces near the border. For successful implementation of the CSD, India needed more synergy between the land and air forces through advanced equipment and intelligence surveillance reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities which they lacked due to structural and operational weaknesses. This was evident after Indian failure to operationalise CSD after terrorist attacks in Mumbai in November 2008.

The nuclear atmosphere, long border, huge cost of military actions, and Pakistan's timely retaliatory measures restricted Indian ambitions of military manoeuvres. After the Mumbai attacks, India shifted the battlegrounds to hybrid fronts and introduced the renewed hybrid warfare doctrine in 2008. The establishment of a technical services division<sup>7</sup> under the supervision of V K Singh and the deployment of spies to create agitation against the state of Pakistan from the inside are proof of these Indian initiatives.

This strategic military doctrinal transformation is not limited to tackling only Pakistan but growing Chinese power in the Indian Ocean as well. In October 2015, India came up with a new maritime strategy under the title, *Ensuring Secure Seas: Indian Maritime Security Strategy* to exert dominance in the Indian Ocean. Indian collaboration with the US, China's arch-rival, through agreements like Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA),<sup>8</sup> the Logistic Exchange Memorandum Agreement (LEMOA),<sup>9</sup> and Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) and joint military exercises in the

Indian oceans hints at growing Indian hegemonic interest in the Indian Ocean. These conventional capabilities are strengthened by the provision of sophisticated Israeli defence systems such as BARAK-1 and BARAK-8. Similarly, aircraft carriers and nuclear submarines from Russia are enough to disturb the balance of power equation in the South Asian region.

The concept of sub-conventional warfare strategy was introduced by the Indian air force in 2012 and further this was introduced in the joint armed forces doctrine of 2017 which focuses on preserving the Indian integrity, sovereignty, unity, democratic and secular institutions, economic and maritime trade routes, and most importantly the military modernity for securing territorial waters and air space. Subsequently, by merging the previous doctrines, India produced the *Land Warfare Doctrine 2018* to meet new emerging challenges in the region. The *Land Warfare Doctrine 2018* provides for small integrated battle groups to ensure their agility and swiftness to launch shallow manoeuvres remaining under nuclear thresholds.

For the successful implementation of the *Land Warfare Doctrine 2018*, India carried out strategic deals with the US, the Russian Federation, and Israel for necessary logistics and resources. The strong backing of the US for Indian military modernisation against China and Pakistan and support in the United Nations Security Council for permanent membership<sup>10</sup> made India more aggressive and raised Indian morale to become the US's policeman in South Asia. These Indian strategic doctrinal shifts and alliances with major powers are raising grave concerns for Pakistan and regional peace.

Pakistan is pushed to seek a strategic alliance with China and other like-minded states to procure sophisticated technologies and electronic warfare systems to counter growing Indian offensive ambitions. The study, with the help of in-depth interviews and secondary data collection methods, elaborates on the Indian Land Warfare Doctrine of 2018 and highlights its implications for Pakistan.

## **Indian Military Land Warfare Doctrine 2018**

Indian military's continuous doctrinal transformation even after the advent of nuclear weapons in South Asia is aimed to achieve its hegemonic and hawkish ambitions against Pakistan. The contemporary border skirmishes with China pushed India to deploy an effective number of troops at the northern border to counter Chinese military prowess. Indian military failed to operationalise the cold start doctrine due to a hard-hitting response from Pakistan. Later the Indian Air Force doctrine on sub-conventional warfare also failed when Pakistan gave a befitting response in February 2019.

Pakistan's timely measures led Indian strategists to think again about their military posture and bring new necessary transformations in the military-strategic setting. In December 2018, the Indian military introduced its latest doctrine commonly referred to as the *Land Warfare Doctrine 2018*. The new land warfare doctrine explains Indian threat perceptions and military response in case of a limited war. Keeping the failures of the cold start doctrine view, the Land Warfare Doctrine focuses on quick and limited operations by reducing mobility time and operational obstacles.

## **Main Features of the *Land Warfare Doctrine 2018***

The *Land Warfare Doctrine 2018* is produced by amalgamating all main components of the previous military doctrines.<sup>11</sup> Concepts of integrated battle groups, hybrid warfare, network-centric warfare, surgical strikes, and military modernisation are taken from previous doctrines and after fine-tuning these concepts and modernising them according to new challenges, land warfare doctrine was finally launched.



Important tenets of the Indian Land Warfare Doctrine 2018

Source: Islamabad Policy Research Institute

### **Multi-Front War Scenario: The Concept of Integrated Battle Groups**

The main concept on which the Indian military devised their strategies after the advent of nuclear weapons is the limited war concept. To pursue the goals of the limited war, the Indian military needs to cut short their mobilisation time for swift, sharp, and limited manoeuvres. For limited actions, India needs force multipliers to deploy them on borders in case of war or operations on both war fronts: northern and western. While India does face challenges from China,<sup>12</sup> full-scale war is not possible with the latter as both have huge conventional and non-conventional disparities and the nature of conflict is not a serious cause for the escalation of any major war. Therefore, the Indian tilt is more towards Pakistan.

The changing dynamics of regional security, especially regarding a collective approach of Pakistan and China towards South Asia, have alerted Indian strategists. To cope with emerging security challenges on both fronts, India came up with more innovative military strategies.<sup>13</sup> The introduction of integrated battle groups (IBGs) is

significant for all. The idea was first coined in the 2004-05 period when the Indian military introduced its cold start doctrine.

The cold start doctrine, an older version of the Land Warfare Doctrine 2018, also predominately focused on limited, sharp, shallow, and swift military actions across the border to seize a small chunk of the enemy territory which can later be used as a bargaining chip on different issues. During the cold start doctrine, the pivot corps were introduced along with the restructuring of the defence corps. The size of one battle group in cold start doctrine was kept around 20,000-25,000 personnel per IBG. But the Indian army failed to achieve the required target regarding mobilisation time.<sup>14</sup>

Learning from the failures of the cold start doctrine, Indian strategists reduced the size of IBGs in the Land Warfare Doctrine 2018, where 8,000 to 10,000 personnel were included in one IBG. These IBGs are well-equipped with modern and sophisticated weapons. For aerial support during close combats, a strong air defence and fighter jets are included in each IBG along with advanced personnel carriers. The composition of each IBG varies depending on terrain, target, and mission, but the common elements in all IBGs are infantry battalions, artillery regiments, engineering and signal corps, fighter jets, and gunship helicopters.<sup>15</sup>

The main theme of the land warfare doctrine is to launch limited and quick military actions. For this purpose, the Indian army requires the latest and modernised weaponry.<sup>16</sup> Former army chief applauded the inclusion of modern gunship helicopters such as Apache which are better known for their performance during American wars and are commonly called 'tank killers'. All IBGs are not the same but divided as per the requirements of terrain and the nature of the target. The former Indian army chief (late) Bipin Rawat clarified that there would be two types of IBGs: smaller ones for mountainous regions and bigger ones for plains and deserts.<sup>17</sup>

These IBGs are designed to cut short the mobility time and enhance agility for launching limited action to retain the element of surprise for Pakistan. India carried out approximately 10 military exercises after introducing the cold start doctrine in 2004. Indian military claims to have achieved the targeted mobility time of approximately 48 hours, which is the deployment time of Pakistan, in military exercises code-named Vijayee Bhava in 2011. The modified composition of contemporary IBGs in land warfare doctrine was also tested and examined during exercises in 2019.

Indian army commanders are advised to create IBGs in their respective areas keeping the terrain, threat, task, and resources (TTTR) in focus.<sup>18</sup> In the first phase, the Indian army hinted at creating 2-3 IBGs in the western command, which will be Pakistan-specific. These IBGs will be further divided into two categories: one is designed to take out targets across borders and will be equipped with more offensive weapons and the second is defensive. Keeping in mind the future developments and war scenarios, it is assumed that future IBGs will be different as Pakistan is also coming up with timely responses.

The significant difference between the IBGs of the cold start doctrine and the land warfare doctrine is that the latter also deals with mountainous terrains unlike the previous one. The mountain terrain-specific IBGs are created by taking elements from 17 Corps. The main objective is to prepare the selected IBGs for intense mountainous warfare. Indian military carried out exercises at almost 10,000 ft altitude, where they tested to make bridgeheads and crossing rivers for any possible military action against Pakistan and China. These mountainous exercises were mostly carried out in areas adjacent to the Line of Control (LOC) where the chances of escalation of a limited conflict are already high.<sup>19</sup>

The reports depict that the Indian military, since 2016, is stockpiling essential weaponry including missiles and artillery ammunition to remain prepared for launching a ten-day intense war



across the LOC. The DG military operations are seen visiting areas along the LOC and the international border with Pakistan. The consistent efforts to launch the land warfare doctrine are slowly and gradually enabling India to go for any limited military manoeuvres.

Indian army's western command is looking after all the IBGs aiming at Pakistan in their command areas stretching from Punjab, Delhi, and Haryana to Himachal Pradesh. The IBGs are deployed according to command areas under the command of Major General rank officers. For instance, the IBGs deployed in Punjab and Rajasthan desert will be equipped with modern tanks while those deployed in mountainous terrains will be equipped with long-range modern artillery.

To successfully launch land warfare doctrine India needs to procure modern and latest technologies which will enable its troops to reach the target location, launch assaults, and quickly exit within a short period. India needs modern cargo planes such as Global Master or Hercules to carry a large number of troops in one go, Apache gunship helicopters for deadly air support, and modern signals and engineering units along with the latest intelligence reconnaissance and surveillance technologies.

Pakistan always gave a befitting response to Indian offensive doctrines. Pakistan came up with exercises Azm-e-Nou where Pakistan also tested quick swift and limited war tactics. It has become difficult for India to launch its land warfare doctrine because Pakistan has also got some modern capabilities in the field of airborne early warning systems, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and modern updated fighter jets.

### **Military Modernisation and Military Diplomacy**

The second most important tenet of the *Land Warfare Doctrine 2018* is to upgrade military technology with the help of like-minded states like Israel, Russia, and the US.<sup>20</sup> Sometimes states modernise their military forces to retain deterrence against their

adversary and later use this military muscle to secure political gains. The other obvious reason is to strengthen the defence lines of the state. In the case of the South Asian strategic milieu, the arms race and military competition can intensify the security dilemma. The delicate strategic fabric of the region is already facing continuous hard blows as three nuclear powers share borders.<sup>21</sup>

The land warfare doctrine introduced new tactics and concepts: IBGs, integrated command and network command centres, tri-services collaboration, etc. The Indian army needs more sophisticated and latest military technology to successfully implement these war tactics as these tactics demand more agility, swiftness, sharpness, and firepower. The Indian military, to procure the latest arms and weaponry, is strengthening strategic ties with the US, Russia and Israel. India along with the US, its main defence supplier, shares a common strategic threat and that is the rise of China. The US enhanced its military support to India after the signing of the pact which is commonly referred to as the Defence Technology and Trade Initiative 2005. Currently, the US is supplying C-130J Super Hercules, C-17 Global Master, Chinook heavy weightlifter helicopters, and tank killer Apaches to India.<sup>22</sup> The modern air lifters are used to carry a large number of troops from strike corps and to drop them near the border where they can operate in the shape of IBGs, the heavy weightlifting helicopters are used to carry artillery weapons and even tanks within a short time. The Apache helicopters are used to provide close air support.

The second major weapon supplier to India is the Russian Federation. The Indo-Russian strategic partnership is rooted in the cold war period when India adopted the policy of non-alignment and hence enjoyed partnerships with both blocs. The Indian partnership with Russia got a new dimension in the 1970s after the signing of the friendship treaty. After adopting modern military doctrines, India needs more advanced weaponry and technology to pursue its

hegemonic interests in the region. Currently, India got an aircraft carrier from the Russian Federation which would be deployed in the Indian Ocean ultimately giving an upper hand to the Indian navy over Pakistan in the Arabian Sea region. Apart from this, India got a nuclear engine-operated submarine Akula-2 on lease from Russia.

**Table 1:**  
**Indian Strategic and Defence Collaborations<sup>23</sup>**

	Aircraft	Main Battle Tanks/AT GMs	Air Defence	Spy Satellites /UAVs	Advance Artillery	Gunship Helicopters	Weapon Locating Radars
1	SU-30 MKI	T-90S MBTs	Russian S-400	Risat-II	American M777- Ultra Light	Apache helicopters	Long-Range Reconnaissance & Observation Systems
2	Rafale	Modern APCs	Israeli Barak-8	GSAT-7A Satellite	Dhanush Artillery Guns- 1&2	Chinook Helicopters	Swathi Weapon Locating Radars
3		NAG ATGMs		GSAT-6	South Korean- K9 Vajra Howitzers		Battlefield Surveillance Radars
4		Israeli Spike ATGMs		Heron TP UAV			
5				Harpy UAV Missile			
6				Harop UAV Missile			

The Russian Federation is known as the real developer of the Indian conventional military capabilities. Russia provided advanced tanks to India; T-90S which are the backbone of the Indian army. The Indian air force also got modernised with help of Russia. Modern fighter jets such as SU-30MKI are supplied by Russia. Russia also provides refurbishment services to India as well. The latest hypersonic missile technology BRAHMOS is being developed with the combined efforts of India and Russia.<sup>24</sup> The strong and sophisticated air defence system worth \$5 billion called S-400 is supplied to India by Russia. The S-400 can detect the coming missiles and UAVs at a distance of 600 km

and can shoot at a distance of 400 km with a speed of 7,000 km per hour by locking 36 targets simultaneously.

The third major defence trading partner of India is Israel. Indo-Israel defence collaboration can be of grave concern for Pakistan. The Israeli defence ties with India date back to the early 2000s, including network-centric warfare and electronic warfare weaponry. In the army domain, Israel is providing refurbishment facilities for the Indian army's T-90 tanks along with fighter jets. Modern infantry vehicles and sophisticated guns such as Galil sniper and Tavor Tar guns, for close combats. In the air force domain, Israel is providing air defence systems (short and medium) with the refurbishment of the old Russian fighter jets. Ehud AACMI training simulators and long-tracking radars are also part of Indo-Israel defence collaboration in the air force domain. Another important measure taken by both states is to combine the training of their fighter pilots.<sup>25</sup>

In the naval domain, Israel provided a defence shield comprising of Barak-1 and Barak-8 missiles which can provide a defence shield to naval assets from any Pakistani missile or UAV attack. For close naval combat, super Dvora and INFAC T-82 special boats are supplied by Israel along with helicopters for surveillance and detection of submarines.

In the domain of space, Israel and India jointly launched several projects to secure Indian space as Israel has done against her enemies. Cooperation in TechSAR, GSAT-6, GSAT-7, and RISAT-2 spy satellites are some significant examples.<sup>26</sup> Israel is providing special assistance in the development of Indian network-centric and electronic warfare systems. Defence shields like the Iron Dome and Israeli Arrow-2 systems are installed at the Indian military installations. Special drones such as Heron, Harop, and Harpy are provided to India which are capable of carrying small warheads and destroying Pakistani radars.<sup>27</sup> Apart from weaponry, Israel is extending her support to India in counter-terrorism measures by providing night vision goggles, long-

range reconnaissance and observatory systems, and special training to RAW agents.

*Surgical Strikes: Punitive Response*

The Land Warfare Doctrine 2018 was formulated by combining important elements of all previous doctrines. In 2012, the Indian Air Force introduced its doctrine of non-conventional warfare which was based on the surgical strikes option. The aim was to carry short, limited, and quick air strikes inside Pakistani territory to destroy the purported launching pads of terrorist outfits. The same element was reintroduced in the land warfare doctrine. This time the aim was not only to destroy the perceived terrorists' safe havens in Pakistani territory but also to maintain deterrence against Pakistan along the international border and the LOC.

The possibility of a full-scale war is diminished as both possess nuclear weapons. Therefore, surgical strikes option at a limited level is possible.<sup>28</sup> Renowned scholars such as Harsh V Pant and Gurmeet Kanwal support the idea of surgical strikes.<sup>29</sup> A significant example is from 2016 when Indian Air Force claimed to have carried out successful surgical strikes, but Pakistan denied the Indian claim. In February 2019, the Indian Air Force carried out a misadventure near the LOC area and claimed to have achieved the objectives. But according to various international media sources and think tank reports, India lost two fighter jets, one crashed into Pakistani territory and the pilot was captured.

The possibility of Indian surgical strikes is diminishing as Pakistan is showing response preparedness. Pakistan has adopted countermeasures to contain Indian aggression. Upgrading of JF-17 thunder and purchase of an air defence system from China along with new fighter jets is making Pakistan's defence stronger. Pakistan has successfully maintained its area dominance against India.

## **Hybrid Warfare Strategy**

Indian strategists lost all options against Pakistan as Pakistan was coming up with appropriate and timely responses. Modern warfare, which has been included in the land warfare doctrine of 2018, is a hybrid warfare strategy. The hybrid warfare strategy deals with non-declaratory and covert operations which are aimed at weakening the adversary from the inside rather than launching an attack across the international border.<sup>30</sup> The hybrid warfare strategy is composed of a few basic elements such as covert missions by spies, spreading of disinformation, manipulation of ethnic and religious divisions, targeting marginalised segments of society, carrying out terrorist activities in enemy states, sponsoring anti-state elements and isolating the state at international platforms by adopting offensive diplomacy.

### *Deterrence through Military Exercises and Joint Operations*

Sometimes states carry out military exercises to demonstrate their military capabilities to deter the adversary. The other core objective of military exercises is to prepare military equipment for the successful execution of doctrines. The Indian military, after introducing the cold start doctrine, carried out approximately 10 exercises in the plains of Punjab and Rajasthan. These areas were chosen because of their geography, and their possibility as war theatres in case of any conflict or war between Pakistan and India.<sup>31</sup> In military exercises, the Indian military focused on preparedness of their defensive and strike corps formations, positioning of their weaponry, operations from helicopters, night vision capabilities of their tanks, IRS capabilities, network-centric warfare capabilities, electronic warfare systems capabilities, formation, and deployment of IBGs.



Indian hawkish ambitions to become regional hegemonic power are leading to an arms race in the region.<sup>33</sup> Pakistan's economy is not sufficient to bear the growing burden of the military budget. Hence, Pakistan has to depend on non-conventional capabilities. These growing asymmetries may become a prelude to any major war. To pursue modern war doctrines, India has to procure modern weaponry and ammunition such as modern fighter jets, long-range artillery guns, refurbished tanks, modern air defence systems, etc.

### **Creation of IBGs: The Threat of a Limited War**

India and Pakistan share a long border, divided into many segments, such as the international border, the working boundary, and the line of control. Silent Indian moves after the introduction of the cold start doctrine, hybrid warfare doctrine, and the new land warfare doctrine may threaten the security of Pakistan.<sup>34</sup> India is dividing its large strike corps into smaller IBGs for quick action. While on other hand Pakistan's military is stretched. After 9/11 and the war on terror, the western border is as dangerous as the eastern border. More than 200,000 troops are deployed on the western border which is not only costly but also diverts Pakistan's resources and attention.

Pakistan has always supported the Kashmir cause on all forums. In response, India accused Pakistan of backing terrorist outfits operating in Kashmir and carrying out attacks in India. The incidents of the parliamentary attack in 2001, the Mumbai attacks in 2008, the Pathankot in 2016, and the Pulwama attacks in 2019 sparked tensions between both states. India often threatens Pakistan with severe consequences.<sup>35</sup> Keeping all these developments in view, we can assume how Indian military aggression and doctrinal transformation can be dangerous for Pakistan. On the other hand, the Indian aggression is forcing Pakistan to adopt a quid pro quo plus response.

### **Two Front Dilemmas**

Pakistan's military is deployed on the western and eastern borders. Both are equally volatile. Indian spies have frequently used



Afghan soil for planning terrorist activities against Pakistan. On the eastern front, Pakistan is facing threats of IBGs which are deployed all along the international border at various locations. These IBGs are equipped with modern tanks and fighter jets which can carry out deep thrusts inside Pakistani territory.<sup>36</sup>

After introducing the cold start doctrine, the reformation was carried out in defensive or holding corps by adding some offensive elements in them. The purpose was to make the holding corps capable enough to divert the attention of Pakistan's military and this time would be utilised by the strikes corps to attack at different locations. Pakistan's military is mostly depending on conventional capabilities but new deals with China are underway which will provide Pakistan with modern air defence systems. To cope with emerging challenges at the border, Pakistan needs to improve its economy which can later be used to procure the latest military weapons.

### **Growing Conventional Asymmetries Leading to Security Dilemma**

The biggest challenge that may hit Pakistan is the growing arms race in the region.<sup>37</sup> India, since independence, has pursued offensive ambitions against Pakistan by procuring more and more military hardware. During Indira Gandhi's tenure, India launched an offensive doctrine, the results of which can be seen in the 1971 war. Later, Sunderji introduced a new doctrine based on tank warfare. India at that time procured the latest tanks from Russia.

After the introduction of the cold start doctrine and the land warfare doctrine of 2018, India procured weaponry which is suitable for the execution of limited, quick, short, and shallow manoeuvres. India procured defence systems such as S-400 and Barak-1 and 8 from Russia and Israel, respectively. Also, India acquired nuclear submarines and an aircraft carrier from Russia. Moreover, India is adding modern jets, tanks, UAVs, and spy satellites to its military, which can create a security dilemma for Pakistan. Pakistan, on other hand, is also coming up with appropriate measures. When India introduced IBGs in the cold

start doctrine, Pakistan came up with the development of tactical nuclear weapons, Hatf and Nasr, which are capable of delivering warheads at a short distance and destroying the Indian division-size force. Similarly, in response to the Indian S-400 missile defence, Pakistan developed the Ababeel multiple independent re-entry vehicles (MIRVs), which are capable of carrying multiple warheads at the same time.<sup>38</sup>

This arms race initiative by India against hegemonies in the South Asian region may bring serious implications for the whole region. New Delhi's behaviour is compelling the neighbours to increase their military spending. This will result in cutting the development budget of states where a huge population is living below the poverty line.

### **Politically Motivated Surgical Strikes: Threats of a Limited War**

The concept of a limited war under the nuclear overhang emerged in the early 2000s, which was included in the cold start doctrine. Indian military and policymakers always denied the possibility of a limited war concept in the Indian military doctrines but later in 2017 the then army chief (late) Bipin Rawat accepted that such strategy did exist in the Indian military thinking. The new land warfare doctrine put great emphasis on limited manoeuvres. One of the basic tenets of land warfare doctrine is surgical strikes. The Indian military under Modi's regime largely blamed Pakistan's government and state institutions for backing or supporting terrorist activities in India by extending their support to Kashmiri mujahideen.

It could be argued that Modi's government, to gather sympathies from the public, may launch politically motivated false flag surgical strikes.<sup>39</sup> These strikes would aim to malign Pakistan for its alleged terror-sponsoring activities on international platforms and to diplomatically isolate Pakistan through offensive diplomacy, which is another important tenet of the land warfare doctrine.

### **Renewed Hybrid Warfare**

After facing humiliating defeats on all platforms, India changed its strategy to weaken Pakistan internally. This strategy is often referred to as hybrid warfare which was launched in 2008-09 after the Mumbai attacks. Under the supervision of the Indian National Security Adviser Ajit Doval a Technical Services Division Cell was established to monitor anti-Pakistan activities. In land warfare doctrine this concept is again included by modifying its execution strategies. This time renewed hybrid warfare is aimed at two important objectives: to destabilise the economic, political, religious, and ethnic fault lines of Pakistan; and to isolate Pakistan on international platforms by spreading disinformation and offensive diplomacy.

According to Zubair Mahmud Hayat, the Indian spy agency, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) has established a covert wing worth \$500 million to carry out attacks on CPEC and related economic projects by funding anti-state actors in Pakistan.<sup>40</sup> The attacks on the Mehran air base where terrorists attacked Naval surveillance air crafts, the arrest of Kulbhushan Yadav, and terrorist activities of BLA, BLF and TTP are signalling Indian interference in Pakistan's internal matters.

In recent times the tactics of war have changed from conventional to nuclear and from nuclear to hybrid warfare which is also commonly termed fifth-generation warfare. Brussels-based NGO "EU Disinfo Lab" exposed the Indian groups Srivastava and Asian News International which were spreading false information against Pakistan by resurrecting dead NGOs, famous personalities, and media outlets by publishing its Indian Chronicles report.

### **Options for Pakistan**

Pakistan has faced Indian aggression since 1947 and all the time proved itself a resilient state. Whether it is the 1965 war, the 1971 military debacle, the Indian Brasstacks war games of 1986-87, or the nuclear tests of India, Pakistan always gave a befitting response. The Indian military in 2001, during operation Parakram, failed to achieve

the element of surprise against Pakistan because of Pakistan's appropriate response. Similarly, in the aftermath of the Mumbai attacks in 2008, India accused Pakistan of sponsoring terrorists but could not achieve anything. The same thing was repeated in the shape of fake and politically motivated surgical strikes of 2016 after the Pathankot incident. Pakistan retaliated with a crushing response when the Indian Air Force crossed the Line of Control in February 2019. On the other hand, Indian policymakers are continuously making the Indian military stronger and stronger with each passing day by bringing new doctrines and war strategies. Pakistan has, until now, successfully repelled Indian threats of limited war but by closely examining Indian growing military might and hawkish ambitions Pakistan may get into hot waters in future.<sup>41</sup>

### **Improve Electronic Warfare and Network-centric Warfare Systems**

After the nuclear weapons, the nature of war changed in South Asia. Former Indian army chief VP Malik argued in his writings that Pakistan first introduced us to the limited war concept in the shape of the Kargil conflict. Later, Indian military doctrines like the cold start doctrine, land warfare doctrine, etc., were aimed at limited, shallow, and quick military manoeuvres remaining under the nuclear threshold of Pakistan. These doctrines required new advanced electronic and network-centric weaponry to collect real-time information about the enemy which could help commanders in making good decisions without confusion. Indian network-centric capabilities include suicidal drones, UAVs, spy satellites, and the IRS system, most of which is supplied by Israel. Pakistan, as compared to India, is lagging in this field, which has given India an upper hand in information collection. In modern times, wars are won and lost because of information about the enemy. Pakistan should develop its network-centric capabilities by extending strategic relations with China and the Russian Federation.<sup>42</sup>

### **Change in Military Posture**

Indian policymakers introduced a couple of changes in their military postures to divert Pakistan's attention. After the cold start doctrine, offensive elements were introduced in the holding corps, the purpose was to engage Pakistan's military at the time of war at different locations. This time will be consumed by strike corps to launch attacks on different locations. Pakistan should adopt similar changes by bringing necessary transformations in a military-strategic setting. Pakistan can also introduce IBGs and position them at different locations to repel Indian threats of limited incursions.

### **Military Diplomacy and Strategic Alliances**

In this globalised world, states cannot survive by isolating themselves from the rest of the world. The prosperous states enjoy cordial relations with other states. India extended its relations with major arms suppliers, which helped it strengthen its military backbone. Currently, India is procuring arms from France, Germany, Israel, Russia, and the US. India's successful military diplomacy has helped it in getting modern warfare weapons. Pakistan can also procure the latest arms by deepening strategic ties with these states.<sup>43</sup> The China-Pakistan partnership is an attempt at filling the gaps but more efforts are required to compete with India.

### **Conclusion**

Every state in the world adopts different military strategies to gain supremacy against enemies. After the end of British rule, the sub-continent became a war-prone region of the world. Relations between India and Pakistan have remained strained since the emergence of the two as independent and sovereign states. Both states perceive each other as the enemy. In these circumstances, to create and retain successful and credible deterrence, both states transformed their militaries. Indian military doctrinal transformation is mainly aimed at

making the Indian military an offensive force which should be capable of carrying out offensive attacks against their main adversary, Pakistan.

This analysis given in the above lines points towards the trends of Indian military doctrinal transformation particularly focusing on the Indian new land warfare doctrine of 2018. The main findings of this study are, first, the Indian military doctrinal transformation is mainly geared towards Pakistan. India perceives Pakistan as her main rival even though in its latest warfare doctrine India also highlighted China as a rival on the northern front. Second, the theory of limited warfare is turning into a reality over time. The Indian preparations witnessed in their military exercises from 2004 to 2018 manifest their intentions and objectives. The former Indian Chief of Defence Staff, in 2017, accepted that limited war strategy did exist in the Indian military strategic thinking. Third, a close examination of the Indian military doctrinal transformational trajectory shows that soon India may bring renewed and modified warfare systems to tackle Pakistan and China at the same time. The Sunderji doctrine introduced concepts of mechanised infantry along with tank warfare, but the Indian military could not operationalise it because of Pakistan's response preparedness. Afterwards, the cold start also failed to yield the expected outcomes. Therefore, the Indian military came up with the *Land Warfare Doctrine 2018* aimed at carrying out limited strikes. But Pakistan also developed multiple independent re-entry vehicles to counter Indian offensive warfare strategies. Fourth; the process of theatrisation and creation of IBGs indicate that India wants to manipulate Pakistan's operational gaps. This change in the Indian military force posture may prove threatening for Pakistan as Pakistan's economy is unable to bear the burden of a growing military budget. Fifth, the transformational trajectory also illustrates that Indian strategic thinking is shifting from conventional to electronic warfare and network-centric warfare. India is procuring the latest electronic warfare equipment from Israel and the US to enhance its defensive and offensive capabilities.

A closer study of Indian military doctrinal transformation indicates that, in the near future, India may introduce a new doctrine in which the possibility of changing its military posture is expected. Before this, the Indian military failed to implement IBG and limited warfare tactics. On other hand, Pakistan is also coming up with appropriate and timely responses. Recent reports and data show that Pakistan is lagging in the arms race with India as the latter is acquiring modern warfare systems and capabilities because its economy can bear such a burden while Pakistan has to depend on conventional and nuclear deterrence.

Pakistan, in the recent past, has successfully deterred India through its timely response. In retaliation to the cold start doctrine, Pakistan developed tactical nuclear weapons, capable to take out forward-moving strike corps and IBGs. The Indian transformational trajectory entered a new phase after the Mumbai attacks when the Indian military failed to implement CSD. Indian policymakers at that time shifted to hybrid warfare but once again Pakistan's secret agencies proved their best and gave a befitting response. To counter Indian aggression, Pakistan needs to develop new strategies. The modern age of warfare is shifting to hybrid and electronic warfare. Therefore, Pakistan should procure and develop electronic warfare and network-centric warfare systems with help of strategic partners.

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