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Quickening the Transformation of Combat Capabilities for the Scientific Growth of China's Defence and Military

Following are excerpts of an article written by Wang Xibin who is the President of PLA's National Defence University and which was published in *Qiushi* (Seeking Truth), the policy journal of the Communist Party of China on 01 Dec 2011: -¹.

During China's 12th Five Year Plan i.e. 2011-2015, President Hu Jintao has directed the Chinese armed forces to bring about a transformation in their combat capability. To realize that objective, there are some salient factors which are highlighted here for consideration.

The Urgency of Transforming Combat Capability in the Overall Strategic Scenario

China wants to partake in the global military trend of transforming combat capability through information technologies and systems. It realizes that only through this transition shall China grasp the opportunity lying within the global military development. Besides, it'll also improve China's own military transformation and enable it to meet the contemporary military demands.

With the changing strategic calculus, China's expanding national interests and altering needs of its national security, the Communist Party and Chinese citizens have entrusted China's military with the task of "Providing Three and Developing

One"². Today the Chinese armed forces are expected to effectively respond to both traditional and non-traditional security threats, carry out both war and non-war military operations with high degree of efficiency, and improve its capabilities to respond to multiple security threats and accomplish multifarious military tasks. This expanded mandate for the Chinese military also constitutes the basic direction for improving combat capability under information warfare conditions. Hence, the People's Liberation Army of China has to strongly push ahead with information warfare. It has to discard its earlier outlook of simple augmentation of manpower, weapons or equipment. Instead, it has to bring in overall improvement by meeting the demands of new warfare in each and every aspect of its combat capability.

Right now the PLA is passing through the phase of development combined with mechanization and computerization. The systemic obstacles and organisational contradictions are still comparatively pronounced. There are two major mismatches here: One is that between the level of modernization and the demands of localised combat under information warfare conditions; the other is between China's existing military capability and the demands of the new military tasks.³ These pose as a major challenge for PLA's growth and development. Quickeening the transformation of combat capability and setting up the military system of systems are key to resolving the Two Mismatches and promote the systematic growth of China's defence and that of the PLA. Transformation of combat capability also has deep

and far reaching consequences for reforming the Chinese military organization. It's an application of President Hu Jintao's Scientific Development in the military sphere and is an important innovation of the Party's guidance to the Chinese military.

Grasp the Characteristics, Master the Driving Force

Scientific and technological progress has proved to be the main driving force behind transformation of combat capability. The phenomenal progress of science and technology has put forward higher demands from military personnel. It has popularized a huge number of applications and equipment in military electronics, ultrasonics, space technology, unmanned platforms etc. It has also made revolutionary impact on troop structure, orbat and operational command. This also demands for a totally new orientation in combat capability through integration of man and weapon. Hence, transformation of combat capability should be based firmly on scientific and technological progress and innovation. It is imperative to thoroughly pursue scientific and technological progress and innovation. New concepts like system domination and information primacy should be firmly rooted within China's military thinking. Indigenization and innovation in defence technologies and weapons and equipment should be paid more attention. Improvement of the scientific and technical standard of officers and soldiers, scientific and technical training etc. also have to be addressed more seriously.

The decisive shift of war towards information systems has placed new demands for combat capabilities. China's transformation of military capabilities thus requires further deepening of research on the nature and rules of information warfare. It is necessary to focus efforts on building

information warfare systems, integrated command and training structures and for innovating basic theories of information warfare in order to consistently upgrade the transformation of China's military capabilities.

China's military strategy is based on the doctrine of Active Defence; it is simultaneously shouldering responsibilities like safeguarding national unity, maritime rights, defending strategic locations and maintaining security of space and information. Ergo, it is both defensive and diverse in nature. This stands in contrast to the path taken by major western powers, which was hegemonic; their build up of combat capability was characterized by the worldwide control of information, the global reach of the military and military operations across the world.

Systematic Planning and Faster Transformation

The transformation of combat capability should be based on the overall schema of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics. It is essential to have an integrated planning and development of the national economy and defence; and to have better forward projections and advanced designs. It should strictly abide by systematic development, and lay impact on growth of the forces and each and every aspect of reforms and military preparedness. While analyzing the phase-wise characteristics of China's military growth, it's imperative to have a well coordinated planning of the objectives and the links between the various stages, traditions and innovation. The advantages of a late starter should be utilized and focused. Preference should be given to develop key and core defence technologies and development of new weapons, equipment and accessories which have vital roles to play in every operational field, thus

strengthening the strategic advantage of China's combat capability.

While the central role of information systems is made prominent, newer infotech avenues have to be explored. In order to speed up the transformation of combat capability, it is a must to promote a system in which computerization is the nucleus. The future course of development should be around building a computerized fighting force that can win network-centric wars. Among the key development tasks are building network-centric warfare control system, deterrent information warfare weapons and equipment that can destroy the enemy nodes, main battle equipment that can control battlefield outcome, and, developing key joint warfare support systems. So, first and foremost the existing weaponry has to be modified, simultaneously new generation weaponry has to developed; the level of computerization in main battle weapons has to increased, the development and use of infotech needs to be boosted; finally the objective should be to fuse various operational units, elements and systems into one integrated combat force.

In order to quicken the transformation of combat capability China needs to change its very approach towards military organisation. Reforms are needed in the military leadership and management system. A strategic management structure needs to be set up to strengthen strategic management functions and synergise reforms on leadership structures. Again information systems would play a major role in countering the authorized strength approach and enabling necessary reforms in the composition, nature and ratios of combat regiments. Information systems would also strengthen the development of new fighting capabilities and establishing a sound joint warfare command system, a joint training structure and a

joint supply system. The military-civil development model has to be further improved so that the R&D and production facilities become properly functional; limited resources have to be made more efficient so that they become part of the combat power faster.

Finally, if China has to take lead militarily, it has to explore new ways to nurture large pools of new military personnel, since the human factor can never be overemphasized enough in combat capability. Knowledge oriented education and technical skills have to be integrated. The infotech quotient of PLA officers and men has to be improved strongly with a major focus on soldiers with joint warfare command capabilities. Training standards, procedures, linkages and structures have to be modified. Therefore, in order to obtain more reliable fighting forces, the academy based military education should be blended much more with field-based, simulated and network centric war training so that training and education of joint warfare is carried out on a much wider scale.

Comments:

This is an important exposition by a notable and serving Chinese strategic thinker on certain preferred aspects of the future of Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) in China. Lt Gen Wang Xibin is also member of the 17th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. What strikes the reader of the article right away is the express desire for China to possess a military that is commensurate to its status of a major world power.

The author makes an important point by negating the dated approach of treating asset acquisition as a precondition to military development and by prescribing that PLA should instead think of ways to building capabilities to meet the newer military tasks and challenges for which conventional assets

are not essential.

Besides, the Two Mismatches mentioned here have a bearing on the military planning of countries like India, especially pertaining to local wars. However, China is working to overcome these two constraints. It has also been reiterated that it is the Communist Party who is the agent of the change for the PLA.

Development, indigenisation and innovation in defence science & technology; areas of interest in military technology are good take away points for those who have started to study the defence modernisation process in China. The central focus on developing IW capabilities and the strong emphasis on joint warfare and infotech based military training are also worth noting. Finally, there is a call for major reforms in military training based on the scientific & technological progress and the change in the very nature of warfare. China has been continuously investing into the R&D of information warfare. The author has revealed a strong constituency within China which favours developing the required PLA manpower who can win the future battles on the basis of superior information warfare capabilities.

Endnote:

1. http://www.qstheory.cn/zxdk/2011/201123/201111/t20111129_126522.htm accessed on 01 Dec 2011
2. In Chinese strategic lingo this is known as “N*NEc,O0N*NNS%c” (Sange tigong, Yige Fahui: Provide Three, Exert One). It was conceptualized by President Hu Jintao and was declared probably for the first time in September 2005 at a symposium held by the National Defence University in Beijing on the topic “Historical Tasks for the Chinese Military in the New Century & Era”. “Provide Three” means that the military should provide: one, essential guarantee for the Party’s rule in China; two, firm security support for safeguarding national growth during China’s crucial phase of strategic opportunity; and three, strong

strategic support to safeguard national interests. “Exert One” means that the Chinese military should play (exert) a vital role in order to safeguard world peace and to promote common growth.

3. Together these are referred to as the Two Mismatches existing within the PLA right now.

China’s Stealth Fighter J-20: Test Flight Log

China’s fourth generation stealth fighter aircraft J-20 recently underwent its 48th test flight. J-20 is being developed by the Chengdu Aircraft Company (CAC) of the Chengdu Aircraft Industry Group of China. A brief timeline of its test flight and its released images are given below¹: -

11 Jan 2011- J-20 makes its 18-minute debut test flight which is declared successful by the Chinese authorities.

17 Apr 2011- The second test flight was carried out in commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the establishment of modern China’s aviation industry.

05 Aug 2011- J-20 undergoes 25th test flight. China claims that efficiency of the fighter has been continuously rising through such tests and has reached a “very high” level.

14-15 Aug 2011- The 26th and 27th test flights in two consecutive days.

20 Aug 2011- China conducts the 32nd test flight of J-20 while the US Vice President Joe Biden is visiting the very Sichuan Province of China where the fighter is being developed by CAC.

26 Aug 2011- J-20 undergoes another test flight at Chengdu in Sichuan, China displaying some “real capabilities” as reported by the Chinese daily Global Times.

13 Nov 2011- Another test flight of J-20 reported by Chinese netizens.



<http://club.mil.news.sina.com>

19 Nov 2011- The 48th "witnessed" test flight of J-20.



<http://club.mil.news.sina.com>





Comments:

While J-20 is definitely a commendable project for the Chinese defence industry, what needs to be asked is how China is contemplating to use this advanced war machine, in which theatres, and whether it would exacerbate the security dilemma in China's neighbourhood. Since J-20 is being tested in the Chengdu Military Area Command, which borders India, it becomes yet another item of consideration in the India-China security dyad. Countries would also watch closely the actual capabilities of the J-20 in terms of stealth, speed and manoeuvrability, the three broad markers of next generation stealth fighters in operation or being developed in today's world. None of these details have understandably been offered by the Chinese and it is left to experts of aerodynamics, avionics, radars etc. to analyse the J-20 from the images made public. Nonetheless, the numerous test flights mentioned above suggest that J-20 is still a work in progress. China faces severe constraints in importing advanced defence technologies and hardware whereas its own external security threat perception contains formidable challenges like the US, Japan, South China Sea and India many of whom are armed or may involve stealth technologies in case of an armed conflict. Besides, countries would also be interested to know whether J-20, once operable, might be used by militaries other than that of China.

Endnote:

1. http://mil.gmw.cn/2011-11/23/content_3026615.htm accessed on 23 Nov 2012

Strategic Planning Department of PLA Set Up

The Strategic Planning Department (SPD) of the People's Liberation Army of China was set up at a

special ceremony in Beijing on 22 Nov 2011. The event was attended and addressed by the Communist Party of China Politburo Member and Vice Chairman of the Party Central Military Commission (CMC) Gen. Guo Boxiong and CMC Member and Commander of PLA General Staff Department Gen. Chen Bingde.¹

According to press report, the SPD would be the operational authority of PLA's developmental plans and would remain part of the General Staff Department (GSD). Its main tasks would be:-

- (a) Study major strategic issues;
- (b) Organise and plan for PLA's development and reforms;
- (c) Provide proposals for the distribution and macro-management of strategic materials for China's military;
- (d) Coordinate resolution on issues concerning multiple general departments (of PLA) and areas;
- (e) Examine and audit the outcomes of military development plans.

In his address Gen. Guo Boxiong said that the establishment of the SPD was necessary amongst others to systematically carry out the development of China's military and ensure its victory in future wars for which the SPD would give quality strategic inputs. He urged the PLA to proceed with the correct political ideology. Both Gen. Guo and Gen. Chen emphasized that this decision of the Party Central Committee, CMC and President Hu Jintao should be thoroughly implemented so that an operationally smooth and efficient system is set up. "The process should utilise the services of the Strategic Planning Advisory Committee of the military, the available human resources, and

approach the task systematically and an open mind to provide advice on CMC's systematic and democratic decision making", mentioned Gen. Guo.

Commenting on the development, Senior Col. Li Jie, a well known Chinese military expert and professor at PLA Navy Military Studies Institute explained that SPD would be a full Group Army (Corps) level organisation and as such would serve as the apex planning body of the entire Chinese military.² He said, earlier strategic planning was mainly in the hands of the Military Operations Directorate of GSD. But since the MO Dte did not have the required establishment and human resources, the task of strategic planning was actually distributed among the various departments/wings thereby lacking an integrated solution. Here on, SPD being a tier-2 organ of GSD, would transform the earlier "to each on its own" combat scenario of the forces. Functioning from an integrated full Group Army level platform of the GSD, it would be easier for SPD to interact and coordinate with other units and formations. On coordinating resolution of issues involving multiple PLA departments and areas, Sr. Col. Li said it authorises SPD to deal with not only PLA entities but also Party and civilian government bodies. He cited the example of the 05 Oct 2011 killing of 13 Chinese sailors in Mekong River after which the Chinese Defence Minister Gen. Liang Guanglie had offered "military support" if necessary.³ In future such incidents requiring coordination can be handled by SPD, opined Sr. Col. Li.

Comments:

As already stated, the earlier disjoint process of strategic planning has proceeded towards integration and as such this is an important progress for the PLA. Apart from saving valuable

time, jointness and macro-management would also bring in much needed objectivity in strategic military planning. Being in charge of both implementation and auditing of development plans, SPD would be the authority just below the level of CMC controlling China's military modernisation. Moreover, the mandate which the SPD gained over "strategic material" and coordination & resolution is noteworthy. During wartime PLA would enjoy maximum traction. Strategic material, without any definition, may include a wide array of things. As advisor, SPD would have considerable authority over the countrywide distribution and administration of all "strategic" material of China during peace or war. Again, the mandate to coordinate between the military, Party and civilian administration bodies to resolve an issue is also a significant authority. Both these roles will see PLA being in commanding position over Chinese civilian counterparts. There are however indications that the transition would not be smooth. The fact that both Gen. Guo and Gen. Chen (one in the Party Politburo and the latter currently leading the PLA) reminding the PLA audience that the decision on SPD has been taken by President Hu, Party Central Committee and the CMC, and that it be accepted with the correct mindset and implemented thoroughly and systematically, indicate that there may be undercurrents of resistance and recalcitrance which the PLA suffers from in matters of political reform of the military. It is also likely that the PLA is still some way behind from satisfying China's leaders on optimum utilisation of human resources and systematic functioning.

Endnote:

1. [http://mil.gms.cn/2011-11/23/
content_3024084.htm](http://mil.gms.cn/2011-11/23/content_3024084.htm)
2. [http://nf.nfdaily.cn/nfdsb/content/2011-11/23/
content_33691717.htm](http://nf.nfdaily.cn/nfdsb/content/2011-11/23/content_33691717.htm)

3. On 05 Oct 2011 unidentified people killed all thirteen crew members of two Chinese cargo vessels on the waters of Mekong River somewhere near the borders of Myanmar, Thailand and Laos. The Thai anti-narcotics troops consequently claimed to recover \$ 6 million worth of contraband drugs from these two Chinese vessels which were reportedly destined for an unknown destination downstream. Later the Interpol issued a warrant for Sai Naw Kham, a freshwater pirate and a Myanmar national, suspected for committing this unprecedented crime. The Chinese defence minister reacted on 31 Oct 2011 by suggesting that the Chinese military is ready to deal with the case (<http://www.top81.com.cn/2011/1031/29716.htm>). After the incident international shipping was suspended from Guanlei Port (Yunnan, China) on Mekong R. It resumed after joint security patrols by police forces of China, Laos, Myanmar and Thailand carried out during 10-11 Dec 2011. 300 armed Chinese paramilitary troops with several boats had participated in that patrol. For more see Andrew R.C. Marshall, "In Mekong, Chinese murders and bloody diplomacy", in <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/01/27/us-special-report-mekong-idUSTRE80Q00G20120127>, Special Report, 27 January 2012

"Friendship 2011" China-Pakistan Joint Anti-Terrorism Drill Ends

The "Friendship (YOUJI) 2011" China-Pakistan joint anti-terrorism drill came to an end on 24 November 2011 after a comprehensive exercise at Jhelum in Pakistan. Hou Shusen, Deputy Chief of General Staff of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), led the Chinese military delegation which was attended by Gen Kayani, Pak COAS. The comprehensive drill was made up of four parts: aerial reconnaissance, peripheral blockade and control, air raid and suppression. It was assumed to be an air-ground joint suppression against the terrorist camp located in hilly areas. Before the comprehensive drill, the two sides had conducted drills such as intelligence exchange, the long-distance manoeuvre, the establishment of a

joint command organization, the adaptive training and theoretical exchange. More than 500 Chinese and Pakistani commandoes participated in this exercise. Wang Kebin, Deputy Director of the Operation Department of the General Staff Headquarter (GSH) of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), said that there were three major highlights of this exercise in comparison with the previous ones. Firstly, this was the first time that the exercise was held at a brigade level which is the highest level of anti-terrorism joint exercise command carried out by the two armies in recent years. Secondly, new subjects were introduced like cross-border exchange of intelligence, inter-communication and strengthening of the course and methods of the drill. The third is the high level of difficulty. During the comprehensive drill phase of the joint training, the two sides jointly organized the two Chinese special combat platoons to start from China, parachute into the mission area, and work in close cooperation with the ground troops to launch a cleanup operation. This not only tested the capability of the participating troops, but also served as an opportunity to examine the coordinated command capability of the joint command comprised of both sides. Attached are some of the images of the Friendship-2011 counter-terrorism exercises:²

Comments:

The Pakistan-China Joint Military Exercise YOUJI-IV, spread over a period of two weeks, is aimed at sharing mutual exchange of experience and information through a comprehensive training programme between the Special Forces of both countries. This exercise was the fourth in the series while three earlier exercises have been conducted including two in China and one in Pakistan. Pakistan ISPR is quoted as saying that YOUJI-IV



Deputy Chief of PLA General Staff Lt Gen Hou Shusen and Chief of Pakistan Army Gen Kayani at the closing ceremony of Friendship-2011 exercise on 24-11-2012.



Pak CoAS Gen Kayani meeting the Commander of PLA contingent participating in Friendship-2011 exercises.



Lt Gen Muzamil of Pakistan Army meeting the deputy commander of the PLA contingent at the Friendship-2011 exercises



Special Forces of China and Pakistan returning after completing the Friendship-2011 counter-terrorism exercises.



Officers and soldiers of PLA and Pakistan Army after the Friendship-2011 exercises.

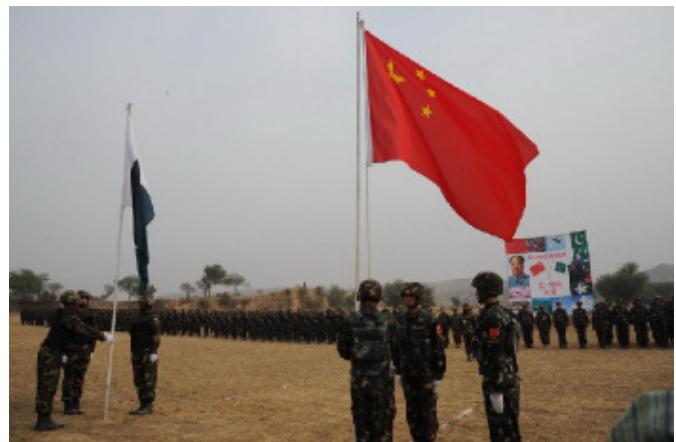


PLA female special force soldiers with Pakistani female security personnel at the venue.



Joint press conference at the end of Friendship-2011 exercises.

exercise will be a true manifestation of a famous Chinese phrase “Pakistan China friendship is higher than the mountains and deeper than oceans”, indicating the importance it attaches to its military friendship with the PLA. While the exercise appears quite routine in its conduct, its importance is noteworthy due to two reasons; the presence of the Pak COAS and the fact that PLA troops “started from China” and parachuted into Pakistan territory indicating their long range transportation capability and the possibility of carrying out joint operations against Chinese insurgents hiding in Pakistan or Pak-based terrorist camps/bases. It is a known fact that a section of Uyghurs fighting for independence of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China are receiving training and aid from terrorists based in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Such China-Pak joint anti-terrorism exercises are aimed at demonstrating to such audience the resolve of both the governments to jointly use retaliatory force against terrorism. If such action does actually take place sometime in the future, China will be the first non-NATO country with whom Pakistan would undertake counter-terrorism operation. It would also be the first time that China uses military force beyond its borders and more so within its all weather friend Pakistan’s territory.



Flags of China and Pakistan being brought down after the Friendship-2011 exercises.



Gen Kayani and Lt Gen Hou taking the salute while the flags are brought down.

Endnote:

1. http://chn.chinamil.com.cn/tjjs/2011-11/25/content_4722048.htm
2. Ibid; http://tp.chinamil.com.cn/2011/2011-11/25/content_4722784.htm

Military Leaders of China and Nepal Meet

Member of the Central Military Commission of the Communist Party of China and Chief of General Staff of the People’s Liberation Army of China Gen. Chen Bingde met the visiting Chief of Staff of the Nepalese Army Gen. Chhatra Man Singh Gurung on 31 Oct 2011 at the Bayi (01 August) Building in

Beijing.¹ The meeting was also attended by PLA's Deputy Chief of General Staff Gen Ma Xiaotian, Commander of China's People's Armed Police Force (PAPF) Wang Jianping and the Nepalese Ambassador to China Mr. Tanka Prasad Karki. During the meeting the two sides discussed bilateral relations and cooperation between the two militaries in non-traditional security risks and health and medical areas. Gen. Chen said that China highly appreciates and is thankful for Nepal's resolute stand and sincere cooperation with China on the issue of Tibet. He hoped that both the countries could continue to proceed on the overall friendly prospects between China and Nepal, carry on mutual cooperation and respond to difficulties and challenges together, protect the common interests of both the countries and promote regional peace and development. He also said that China would always be a good neighbour, friend and partner to Nepal on the basis of China's policy of "Benevolence towards Neighbours, Neighbours as Partners".² Gurung said that Nepal views China as a "friend for all time." He added that the Nepalese government consistently follows a One China Policy and would never allow any force to use Nepalese territory for anti-China activities. During another meeting between Gen. Gurung and Gen. Xu Caihou, Vice Chairman of China's Central Military Commission on 01 Nov 2011, discussions were held on similar points.³ The Nepalese Chief of Army Staff had headed a six member delegation to China during 30 Oct – 06 Nov 2011. During this trip, CoAS Gen. Gurung had visited the No. 3 Division of Beijing Garrison,

National Defense University (NDU) of China, a Chinese Military Hospital and Kunming Military Academy. He had also attended separate receptions organized by Zhenjiang Provincial Military Command and Yunnan Provincial Military Command.⁴

Comments:

It is clear that Tibet dominated the agenda of the meeting and Nepal's assistance to China on the same serves as a condition for China's help to Nepal in all other areas. A lasting resolution of the political issue nonetheless remains elusive. However, cooperation on non-traditional security risks like disaster management might also have added to the agenda of cooperation between both the sides. The presence of China's PAPF on both counts is notable since it is this paramilitary force of China which deals with Tibetan unrest both within the Tibetan inhabited areas of China and at its borders.

Endnote:

1. http://chn.chinamil.com.cn/head/2011-11/01/content_4706986.htm accessed on 01 Nov 2011.
2. <http://english.chinamil.com.cn/> dt 01-11-2011 accessed on 01 Nov 2011.
3. http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-11/01/c_131224560.htm accessed on 01 Nov 2011.
4. <http://www.nepalarmy.mil.np/view-news.php?newsid=226&type=press&lang=eng&year=2011> accessed on 07 Nov 2011.

TIBET

Massive Changes Planned in Nyingchi through Agriculture, Pharmaceuticals, Hydropower & Tourism

The Nyingchi (Linzhi in Chinese) Prefecture of the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) of China would undergo major development through expansion, reforms and liberalisation of sectors like hydropower, agriculture, livestock, Tibetan pharmaceuticals and tourism. This was disclosed by Zhao He, Secretary of the Nyingchi Prefectural Party Committee while attending the Eighth Party Congress of TAR which was held during 12-15 Nov 2011.¹

In hydropower, Nyingchi would become the base for realising the Western Power to Eastern China project. For that, power projects on the Brahmaputra, Nyang (Niyang), Salween (Nujiang) and Parlung Zangbu rivers would be further accelerated and developed. Nyingchi's power generation capacity has been targeted to 30000 kW by 2015.

Nature tourism would also be developed in the prefecture so that it becomes a major destination for the Chinese as well as the international tourists. Infrastructure, products and services would accordingly be developed so that tourism can lead the service sector of the area. The targets till 2015 are 3 million tourists, RMB 2.4 billion of revenues and 20% of annual GDP.

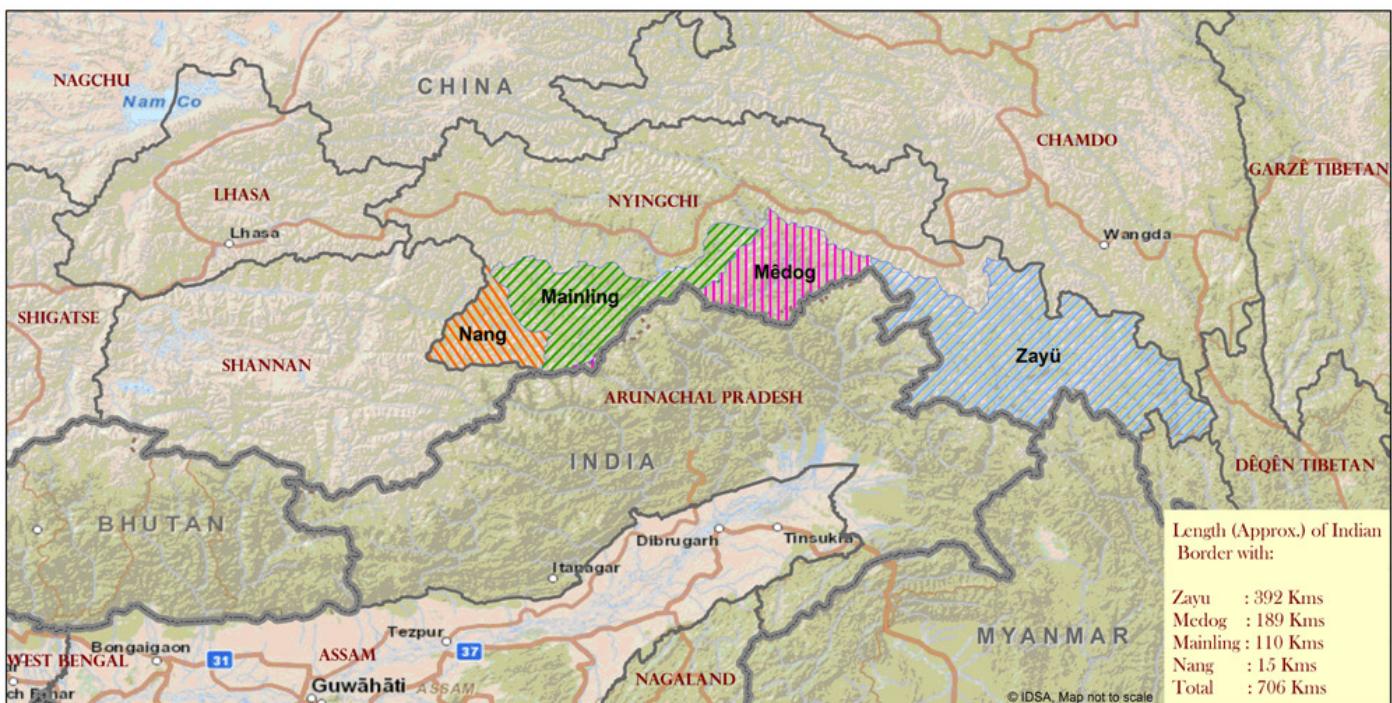
Agriculture would also be boosted to make Nyingchi the fruit, flower and vegetable basket for TAR. Livestock would also be attended to along

with boosting animal products and processing industries. RMB 1 billion has been the total target earning from agriculture and livestock by the end of the 12th Five Year Plan of China (2011-2015).

Plans are also there to modernize and develop the R&D, production and sale of traditional Tibetan medicines. For other industries, plans have been made to set up industrial parks by inviting capital and business from elsewhere. Authorities hope that all these changes would bring far reaching changes in the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors of Nyingchi's economy with an appropriate mix of the area's traditions and that modern science. Arranging the required funds and motivating the local leadership would be the main challenges.

Comments:

Nyingchi Prefecture has a unique ecology with three major trans-boundary rivers flowing through it – Brahmaputra, Irrawaddy and Salween. Four counties of Nyingchi also make up approximately 706 km of the 1080 km of India-China border of Arunachal Pradesh (see map). The east to west break-up of India's borders with these four counties of Nyingchi is: 392 km with Zayu (Chayu), 189 km with Medog (Motuo), 110 km with Mainling (Milin) and 15 km with Nang (Lang). Hence Nyingchi has immense strategic value. Plans to develop hydropower facilities on trans-boundary rivers in Nyingchi should take on board the lower riparian countries as a matter of principle, notably India and Bangladesh. Further, it is time that a regional mechanism is put in place which shall discuss issues relating to water in South and South-east Asia. It is only through such



transparent cooperative mechanisms that the future of the regional development holds promise. Chinese authorities have earlier given such an assurance keeping in mind the concerns and objections of lower riparian countries saying that China does not have any plan to divert waters from the rivers rising out of the Tibetan region. Three of the four rivers earmarked for power development (excluding Nyang) have their waters crossing the boundaries into other countries. The Parlung Zangbu is a major tributary of the Brahmaputra which joins the latter at the Great Bend with a substantial discharge. Other plans on agriculture,

tourism etc. are welcome for the benefits of the local population. However, setting up of industry and wide based tourism could also affect the fragile and unique environment of the area which would have a cascading effect over a large contiguous zone. So, a proper environmental audit should be carried out at the regional level before changing one of the last virgin areas of earth.

Endnote:

1. http://www.chinatibetnews.com/xizang/2011-11/12/content_815733.htm accessed on 12 Nov 2011

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

India's Look East Policy in Full Flow, China should be Alarmed – Chinese Editorial

An article in the influential Guangming Daily of China says that China should be alarmed of the full potential of India's Look East Policy.¹ It says that by aiming to further complicate the South China Sea dispute, India is quickening its inroads eastward, thereby containing China's progress. It thinks that India is impatiently looking for joint oil exploration with Vietnam in South China Sea. On 10 Dec 2011, the Indian PM and the Vietnamese President have concluded an agreement on petroleum development. The two leaders have also initiated a security dialogue mechanism to expand the bilateral strategic partnership. It has also taken note of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's statement that India and Vietnam have agreed to continue to protect the security of SLOCs.

Besides India's Look East diplomatic initiatives, the article has also highlighted some military developments and statements made from India of which China should be concerned about. Some of these relate to the India-China border region, like: India's decision to deploy cruise missiles there; a force accretion plan of one lakh troops within five years; and the relentless pressure by Indian media to strengthen border defence facilities to deal with the "China threat". All these reflect the "sinister intentions of a defeated country", it says. According to a recent Indian media report, its border paramilitary force (probably ITBP) would procure and deploy high speed assault boats in the border region with China. A minister of Arunachal

Pradesh has also stated that in order to counter the Chinese military threat, India should expeditiously build a "Himalayan Corps".

The article also cites Indian media reports saying that faced with the Himalayas and a "combative" China, India should hasten defence works in the eastern part of Ladakh region to give shape to the disputed Line of Actual Control. One of India's worries is that China might invade the Ladakh Plain on the pretext of the different perceptions of the LAC, it says. It has also cited the Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh demanding a "Himalayan Corps" to be able to fast counter the Chinese military threat.

On the naval front the article has cited a recent piece written by Vice Admiral Kumar Singh, who retired as Commander of the Indian Navy's Eastern Fleet in which he reportedly said that India and China's competition in the ocean has already started quite early. The retired naval commander has also suggested a number of measures to resist and contain the influence of the Chinese navy, it claims. These include setting up of an "Asia Pacific Maritime Task Force", establishing a logistics supply base in Vietnam and bring about a four fold increase in the budget of the India Navy by 2030. To meet the expenses of this new strategy, he reportedly has proposed selling anti-ship cruise missiles to Vietnam, South Korea and even Taiwan, and purchase the second production line of submarines and a few submarines as well. Also proposed are deployment of fighter aircrafts, radars and anti-ship missiles on India's numerous islands, making them an unsinkable aircraft carrier.

The article has also tried to project that the Indian military and media are concerned about India's defence modernization and preparedness as compared to the military modernization programmes of China and Pakistan. The India Defence Ministry has recently started on a Rs. 64000 crore defence modernization programme to "catch up with China", under which 90000 new troops would be inducted, all on the India-China border, it said.

Comments:

India's Look East Policy is borne out of its own economic reforms and civilisational ties. It is not adversely aimed at any country, least of all China with whom India enjoys a relation spanning 2000-3000 years and which is set to become a major determinant of future international relations. India has had relations over millennia with most of the South-east and East Asian countries and such an adjustment was long overdue in the interest of bilateral ties and regional development. China is the biggest country in the eastern hemisphere and India's relations and cooperation with it has undergone unprecedented growth which can hardly be compared with any other dyad.

Similarly, India's defence modernization was also long awaited. It is actually being carried out at the bare threshold levels sometimes at the tragic cost of life and material in the struggle against terrorism kindled by state and non-state actors. The defence modernization plan, like India's defence policy, has also been purely for non-aggressive self defence and safeguarding peace. Besides, the article has also fairly pointed out the other military cooperation and modernization going on in the region is in fact the precursor to the persistent security dilemma which India and the world face. It is thus expected that editorial commentaries take an objective look at the entire gamut of India's modernization programmes against the backdrop of the prevailing regional situation, before commenting upon international issues in a civil manner. Media on both sides should have proper understanding and empathy of the issues concerning the two nations in the interest of better bilateral relations. Reiterating the stereotype shall not help where as independent interactions and exchanges definitely shall.

Endnote:

1. http://mil.gmw.cn/2011-11/04/content_2906677.htm accessed on 04 Nov 2011.

POLITICS

Corruption Watchdog Active amid China's Leadership Transition

In the run up to the 18th Party Congress which shall put in place China's fifth generation leadership, the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI), China's corruption watchdog, has launched a routine drive to check corrupt practices from prejudicing the leadership transition process. On 01 November 2011, He Guoqiang, Secretary, CCDI and Member of the Communist Party of China Central Committee Political Bureau Standing Committee, held a meeting in the South-western city of Guiyang with officials from subordinate local offices.¹ During the meeting Mr. He noted that the anti-corruption drive has yielded new results and progress and instructed the officials to carry on the mission with a long-term timeframe. He especially asked the officials to address issues at the grassroots and those on which public opinion is most vociferous. The target of work was invariably members of the Communist Party of China, especially those holding organisational positions. The major aspects of focus were their political discipline, educating them on the same and strengthening the vigilance and investigations against defaulters. The drive aims to prosecute all cases of violation of political

discipline, thereby safeguarding the unity of the Party and China and cleansing the leadership selection process in the long run. In the short run it aims to ensure that the local leadership transition at all levels throughout China take place properly, verification of the nominated leaders is done thoroughly, and, strengthening the monitoring mechanism of implementation of the major decisions of the Party Central Committee. In this mission, Mr. He said that the "2008-2012 Work Plan on Establishing a Sound System for Penalty and Prevention of Corruption" and the essence of the Sixth Plenary Session of the 17th Party Congress be adhered to. The Sixth Plenary Session of the 17th Party Congress, among others, had espoused reforming China's cultural system and setting up a Socialist Core Value System including the norm of Eight Dos and Don'ts which dealt with corruption as a moral issue. The meet was attended by CCDI officials from the centrally administered municipalities of Beijing, Shanghai, Chongqing, the provinces of Heilongjiang, Guangdong, Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan, Qinghai and the Tibet Autonomous Region.

Endnote:

1. http://www.qstheory.cn/yw/201111/t20111102_121179.htm accessed on 02 Nov 2011.

REGIONAL

Taiwan Reduces Conscription amid Better Relations with China

Taiwan has reduced compulsory military service for all its male citizens born after 1995 from one year to four months. This was announced by the Taiwanese Defence Ministry on 14 Dec 2012. The Legislative Yuan, Taiwan's parliament passed the new law with three amendments including its name on 13 Dec 2012.¹ Details of the new law would be declared after joint consultations between the Defence Ministry and the National Conscription Agency of the Interior Ministry of Taiwan. According to the defence ministry statement, a small group of legislators within the Legislative Yuan are working on the details and the new law would possibly be implemented with a one year notice period.

Comments:

This is a historic development in Cross Strait relations. The history of conscription on both sides of the Taiwan Strait had to do with the seemingly paradoxical will to reclaim the other by force and the need to defend against such an aggression. However, Taiwan-China relations have shown marked improvement since Ma Ying-jeou of the Kuomindang (Nationalist Party) became President

of Taiwan in 2008. Originally it was President Ma's election promise that he would end conscription in Taiwan. Burgeoning trade, business, cultural, educational and tourism contacts ever since have all but annihilated the animus between these two Cold War entities otherwise sharing the language, culture and history of Han Chinese. Ultimately improved ties with mainland China has enabled Taiwan to gradually reduce conscription from the earlier 2 years to 4 months. Taiwan aims to end conscription and start fully volunteered armed forces from 2014 onwards. That would not only create a more streamlined and specialised force structure, but would also free the workforce for more gainful employment which is much needed for accelerating economic growth. However, such a shift would also need abiding peace to reign in the region bruised by old wounds and future security predicaments. This is testified by the fact that as much as 10 countries in the East and South-east Asia apart from China and Taiwan practise conscription in some form or the other. China too retains conscription by Article 55 of its constitution though it's not implemented rigorously.

Endnote:

1. <http://iservice.libertytimes.com.tw/liveNews/news.php?no=579764&type=%E6%94%BF%E6%B2%BB>

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