

Praveen Swami

LATE one night in the summer of 2009, four improvised 107-millimetre rockets arced over the Pul Kanjari border outpost in Punjab, and exploded in the fields outside the village of Attari. For the first time since the war of 1971, there was an attack across the India-Pakistan border. In September that year, four more rockets were fired; then, in January 2010, there was a third assault.

Now, as Indian and Pakistani troops trade fire along the Line of Control (LoC), it is more important than ever to understand the significance of those events. The rocket attacks, believed to have been carried out by the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, represented a glimpse into a grim future that India's policy of strategic restraint has been designed to avert a war of attrition waged by jihadists that would turn India's western frontiers into a kind of nuclear-fuelled Lebanon.

Ever since January 2008, two months after General Pervez Ashfaq Kayani took over as chief of the Pakistan Army, clashes along the LoC have escalated. India reported 28 ceasefire violations in 2009, 44 in 2010, 60 in 2011, and 117 last year. The traditional explanation -- that these clashes are linked to terrorist infiltration across the LoC borne out by the data: during this period, Jammu and Kashmir has become significantly less violent, not more.

New doctrine

Pakistan's military literature provides some insight into what is going on. The country's generals, it shows, hope heightened tensions with India will help rebuild their legitimacy, extricate themselves from a domestic insurgency they are losing, and push jihadist groups now ranged against the Pakistani state to turn their energies eastwards. India, driven by a barrage of ill-conceived war polemic, is pushing itself into this trap.

Earlier this month, reports emerged that Pakistan had amended its doctrinal manual, called the Green Book, to include a chapter identifying internal insurgent forces as the country's principal national security threat. No one, though, has quoted as much as a single line from the Green Book in question one of several reasons to suspect it might just be a red herring. Pakistani Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf, in a January 4 address at the National Defence University, called on the armed forces to "redesign and redefine our military doctrine" to fight terrorism. It seems reasonable to infer that, on that date, he at least was unaware of a new doctrine.

C. Christine Fair, a Georgetown University scholar who is the preeminent authority on the Pakistan Army's internal doctrinal literature and the first to bring the Green Book series to light is in little doubt that is the case. "This talk of a new doctrine is rubbish," says Dr. Fair, "I think a lot of people who really ought know better

Green Books, red herring and the LoC war

have let themselves be talked into buying snake-oil."

The Green Book isn't, in fact, a doctrinal testament or even, in fact, one book. For the last two decades, as first reported in The Hindu in 2011, the Pakistan Army's general headquarters has published collections of essays by senior officers, with the name assigned to the series. The 2010 Green Book, on information warfare, only became available last year; the next in the biennial series only became available in 2011.

Suspicious of India

From the very first essay in the current Green Book, it becomes clear the Pakistani officer corps' maniacal suspiciousness of India hasn't stilled. Brigadier Umar Farooq Durrani's "Treatise on Indian-backed Psychological Warfare Against Pakistan," asserts that the Research and Analysis Wing "funds many Indian newspapers and even television channels, such as Zee Television, which is considered to be its media headquarters to wage psychological war." The "creation of [the] South Asian Free Media Association a few years back," Brigadier Farooq claims, "was a step in the same direction." Even the eminent scholar Ayesha Siddiqi's work, he insists, is "a classical example of psychological war against Pakistan."

"The most subtle form" of this psychological war, the Brigadier states, "is found in movies where Muslim and Hindu friendship is screened within [sic.] the backdrop of melodrama. Indian soaps and movies are readily welcomed in most households in Pakistan. The effects desired to be achieved through this is to undermine the Two National Theory [as] being a person obsession of [Muhammad Ali] Jinnah."

Had the Green Books not been official publications,

none of this ought to have been a cause of worry. There is, after all, no shortage of delusional paranoiacs on the eastern side of the India-Pakistan border either, in and outside the armed forces.

From the Pakistan Army chief himself, though, we know ideas like those of Brigadier Durrani are considered worthy of serious consideration. In his foreword to the 2010 edition, General Kayani asserts that the essays provide "an effective forum for the leadership to reflect on, identity and define the challenges faced by the Pakistan army, and share possible ways of overcoming them."

The eastern enemy

Language of the kind that runs through the 2010 Green Book pervades earlier editions too. In 2002, as Pakistan faced up to the looming war between its armed forces



Commanders of the Indian and Pakistani Armies at a flag meeting in Poonch recently.

launching an effective and robust response against this threat."

The blame for the crisis imposed on Pakistan by religious sectarian groups and jihadists, though, is firmly placed on India. Lieutenant-Colonel Inayatullah Nadeem Butt, using ideas near-identical to those in the current Green Book, asserted that "India has been aggressively involved in subverting the minds of youth through planned propaganda and luring them towards subversive activities."

Even as they considered how to fight religious sectarian groups and revolutionary jihadists, the officers who

contributed to the 2002 Green Book thus focussed on imposing punitive costs on India. Brigadier Muhammad Zia, for example, noted that "India is highly volatile on its internal front due to numerous vulnerabilities which, if agitated, accordingly could yield results out of proportion to the efforts put in." In similar vein, Major Ijaz Ahmad advocated "that [the] Inter-Services Intelligence should launch low profile operations in Indian-held Kashmir and should not allow the freedom movement to die down." "Linguistic, social, religious and communal diversities in India," the officer continued, "should be exploited carefully and imaginatively."

Put another way, even as they considered tactics to defeat insurgents in Pakistan, the officer corps also discussed sponsoring insurgencies in India, to tie down their arch-adversary. General Pervez Musharraf described the 2002 Green Book, as a "valuable document for posterity"; he was right.

Tough challenge

Like all forms of madness, the texts in the Green Book aren't without method: crisis with India is, after all, a precondition for ensuring the Pakistan Army's preeminent position in the country's power structure. 26/11, it is surprisingly little remarked upon, almost did pay off for Pakistan's Army. Less than a week after the attack, a senior Army commander was reported as calling the jihadist chief Baitullah Mehsud a "patriot." The officer said the army's war with the Taliban leaders like Mehsud was merely the result of minor "misunderstandings."

There is plenty of evidence that jihadists in Pakistan are growing more powerful and that organisations like the Tehreek-e-Taliban are seriously considering expanding their operations eastwards. "The practical struggle for a shari'a system that we are carrying out in Pakistan," its deputy chief Maulana Wali-ur-Rahman said in a recently-released video, "the same way we will continue it in Kashmir, and the same way we will implement the shari'a system in India."

It is self-evident that preventing a rapprochement between jihadists and the generals is in India's best interest one reason why Prime Ministers Atal Behari Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh proved willing to pay the political price for a policy of strategic restraint. That the will to continue doing so is fraying in the build-up to the General Election is evident. India has, so far, punished Pakistani aggression with a variety of means, conventional and covert but the seduction of grandiose gestures is growing. Indians must become aware, though, that a more muscular response to Pakistani aggression on the LoC, like all instant gratification, will come with a price that probably isn't worth paying.

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Island nations play China, India

Harsh V. Pant

A quiet Chinese challenge to India's pre-eminence in South Asia through diplomatic and aid effort has now been extended to small island nations dotting the Indian Ocean. While China, Japan, South Korea and Southeast Asian nations fight over specks of islands and reefs in East and South China Sea, mainly because of undersea resources, islands in the Indian Ocean are emerging as a new focus for struggle. The latest hotly contested arena: Maldives, a chain of 26 islands about 1000 kilometers due south from India. With just 320,000 nationals, Maldives has assumed a disproportionately large profile primarily because of its geopolitical position astride strategic sea lines of communication and China's attempt to win influence.

The rivalry was brought to light when Maldives canceled a lucrative contract granted to Indian and Malaysia companies amid speculation that a Chinese company was behind the move, although the reality could be more prosaic. In November, the Maldivian government unilaterally terminated an agreement with India's GMR Infrastructure, Ltd., and Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad to operate and modernize Ibrahim Nasir International Airport in Male, citing irregularities in the award of the \$511 million contract.

The two firms were jointly awarded the 25-year contract in 2010. The largest Indian foreign direct investment in Maldives had huge symbolic importance for India's profile in the atoll nation. GMR took the battle all the way to the Singapore Supreme Court, which ruled that Maldives indeed had the power to take control of the airport. GMR intends to seek compensation of more than \$800 million from the Maldivian government for terminating the deal whereas Male is insisting on a forensic audit from an international firm.

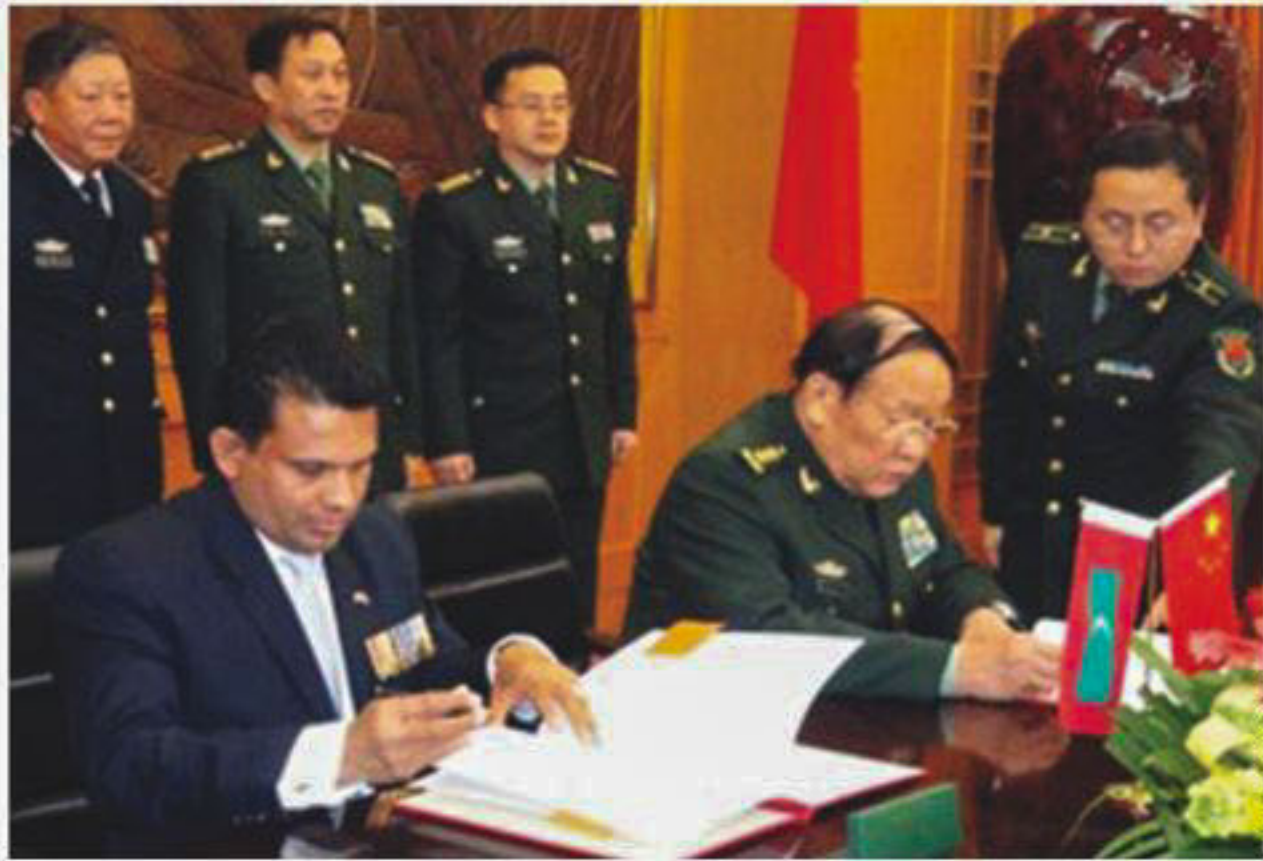
Many in India had expected New Delhi to escalate the conflict, by declining to release annual budgetary support of \$25 million, forcefully reminding Male about its security dependence on India. Ignoring such calls, the Indian government has been quick to convey to Maldives that, if there were political reasons for the contract's cancellation, these "shouldn't spill over into a very, very important relationship, a very valuable relationship" between the two states. Two days after the project's cancellation, the Maldives defense minister flew to Beijing.

New Delhi recognizes the strategic importance of Maldives. Any escalation by India would have only fanned anti-India sentiments in the island nation, allowing other powers, especially China, to further entrench themselves at India's expense. It's possible that the military government's move to cancel the contract was primarily political, setting the stage for 2013 elections. After ousting the democratically elected Mohamed Nasheed in what was in effect a coup

in February 2012, current President Mohamed Waheed is expected to contest the presidential polls in 2013. The pressure of competitive politics may have led him to exploit anti-India sentiment being fanned by extremist groups in this Muslim nation.

New Delhi has also hinted at the possibility of external forces playing a role in the contract's cancellation, with suggestions that the Maldivian government wanted to push out the Indian company, replacing it with a Chinese firm. Waheed's coalition partner, the radical Islamic Adhaalath Party, made it clear that it would "rather give the airport contract to our friends in China."

That Male's move surprised New Delhi is an understatement. The Indian defense minister was in Maldives in October, ostensibly strengthening security ties. At that time, the two sides decided to elevate defense cooperation: New Delhi is stationing a Defence Attaché in Male, extending deployment of its ALH Dhruv helicopter by two more years, providing training to the Maldivian Air Wing, positioning an Indian Navy Afloat Support Team to train Maldivian naval



personnel and providing assistance for surveillance of the Exclusive Economic Zone. New Delhi and Male underscored these measures as sign of a united front against the challenges of terrorism and non-state actors.

India refused to take sides when Nasheed, the first democratically elected president of Maldives, was ousted from power and immediately reached out to the new President, assuring him of continuing cooperation. The reason is simple: India simply cannot afford to alienate the government in Male given China's growing reach. The president of Maldives was in China in October when Beijing announced a \$500 million package of economic assistance for Male. New Delhi views Maldives as central to the emerging strategic landscape in the Indian Ocean.

India had always viewed Maldives as important for maintaining security in the Indian Ocean region, but attempts by Beijing to expand its footprint in Maldives and the region have raised the stakes for New Delhi. China has also been busy forging special ties with other island nations on India's periphery including Sri Lanka, Seychelles and Mauritius.

China's attempt to gain a foothold in the Indian Ocean came into stark relief last year when reports emerged of an offer from Seychelles another strategically located island nation in the Indian Ocean to China for a base to provide relief and resupply facilities to the People's Liberation Army Navy. Though promptly denied by Beijing, the offer underscored the changing balance of power in the region. India has traditionally been the main defense provider for Seychelles providing armaments and training to its Peoples' Defence Forces, or SPDF. India extended a \$50 million line of credit and \$25 million grant to Seychelles in 2012 in an attempt to cement strategic ties.

China has been proactive in courting Seychelles since former Chinese President Hu Jintao's visit to the island nation in 2007. Much to India's consternation, Beijing now participates in training SPDF and provides military hardware. China has expanded military cooperation with Seychelles, providing two Y-2 turboprop aircrafts for surveillance of the economic exclusion zone.

The Chinese defense minister was in Sri Lanka in October to offer support worth \$100 million for various welfare projects in northern and eastern Sri Lanka, areas beset with Tamil insurgency. At a time when domestic political constraints have made it difficult for New Delhi to reach out to Colombo, Beijing has been quick to fill that vacuum. Even Mauritius, the security of which is virtually guaranteed by Indian naval presence, can't resist the lure of Beijing funds.

With the rise in the military capabilities of China and India, the two are increasingly rubbing against each other; China expands its presence in the Indian Ocean region and India makes its presence felt in East and Southeast Asia. In this context, Indian External Affairs Minister Salman Khurshid recently suggested that India must accept "the new reality" of China's presence in areas it considers exclusive, seeming acknowledgement that both the South Asian and Indian Ocean regions are rapidly being shaped by the Chinese presence.

China's rising profile in South Asia and the Indian Ocean region isn't news. What's significant is the diminishing role of India and the rapidity with which New Delhi has ceded strategic space to Beijing in regions traditionally considered India's periphery. This quiet assertion of China has allowed various smaller countries to play China off against India. Most states in the region now use the China card to balance against India's predominance. Forced to exist between two giant neighbors, the smaller states have responded with a careful balancing act. The recent spat between New Delhi and Male merely reflects the evolving ground realities in the Indian Ocean region.

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Mahan, bean-counting and ideas

James R. Holmes

ZOUNDS! It seems ideas really do matter in international politics and strategy. The South China Morning Post carried a long article last week confirming the influence Alfred Thayer Mahan now exercises in China. Someone should run with that topic -- forthwith! Not that Chinese scholars or practitioners of a nautical bent are bashful about advertising their enthusiasm for Mahanian theory. America's sea-power prophet has been a fixture in Chinese strategic discourses about the sea for at least a decade.

Indeed, The Economist's pseudonymous Asia correspondent, Banyan, reports that a Mahanite leaps out these days whenever you poke a military man hailing from India or China. Mahan, it seems, proffers the trident to any nation that bears some resemblance to the America of his day -- the natural hegemon on the rise that's endowed with certain building blocks of sea power and covets a dominant say over events in its nautical near abroad. His influence is nothing new. Great powers on the make, including Imperial Germany and Imperial Japan, seized on Mahan's writings during his lifetime, using them as a guide to constructing fleets and making strategy.

Strange to say, but the idea that ideas count is a contested one in the groves of academe. Many international-relations scholars voice discomfort at differences between states and societies. One of the deans of the realist school likens nation-states to billiard balls. His sports metaphor implies that nation-states are basically the same size and shape, have the same dimensions, and bounce off one another in regular, predictable ways. Right ... that's why IR scholars routinely and faultlessly foretell international interactions.

The mania for quantitative analysis that grips our field also helps explain scholars' allergy to intangibles like strategic thought and human motives. How do you measure an idea? What units of measurement do you assign when forecasting the doings of governments or institutions? Better to measure what we can measure. Counting ships and aircraft or tallying up technical characteristics like ranges and payloads is straightforward relative to estimating how a different society -- or, in the cases of India and China, a different civilization within a state -- thinks about maritime endeavors and seeks its destiny on the wine-dark sea.

Give me decidedly non-quantitative scholars like Mahan's contemporary Sir Julian Corbett any day. Sir Julian was fascinated with how navies had configured fleets and men-of-war over the centuries. Looking back as far as Henry VIII's reign, he devoted inordinate attention to such intricacies as the evolving meaning of ship classifications like "battleship" and "cruiser." Change didn't arise solely from material factors like new propulsion or weapons technology. Corbett vouchsafes that "the classes of ships which constitute a fleet are, or ought to be, the expression in material of the strategic and tactical ideas that prevail at any given time."

The make-up of ships and fleets, then, varies not just with "the material in vogue" but with how people think about amassing and using naval power. Even in the centuries before warriors and statesmen studied the profession of arms systematically, writes Corbett, "nebulous and intangible" theories about battle on the main "seem to have exerted an ascertainable influence on the constitution of fleets." And indeed, it's a comforting thought that seagoing powers don't just build ships and armaments at random, then improvise tactics, operational methods, and strategy on the fly. They formulate ideas about what the nation needs to accomplish, then try to match forces to political and strategic goals.

So by all means, let's keep track of the material dimension. No one disputes its importance. But let's also bear in mind that bean-counting comprises only part of the strategic picture. A wise US Air Force officer once proclaimed that people, ideas, and hardware -- in that order -- are the determinants of martial encounters between societies. Just so. Concentrating purely on one factor, to the exclusion of the others, begets myopia.

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