

THE OUTLINES OF A NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY

Relevant for: Security Related Matters | Topic: Basics of Cyber Security and related matters

National security concepts have, in the two decades of the 21st century, undergone fundamental changes. These fundamental changes reveal that a large country, in terms of size of geography, population and GDP, will not deter any country. Cyber warfare has vastly reduced the deterrent value of these sizes since cyber weaponry will be available even to small island countries, and the capacity to cause devastation to a large nation by cyber warfare is within the reach of even small and poorer nations.

Innovations in weapons moved from stones in the pre-historic era, to bows and arrows, and later to cannons and guns in the 19th century. These were followed by aeroplanes, nuclear bombs, and intercontinental missiles in the 20th century. In the 21st century, the world is moving to cyber weapons-based warfare which will also immobilise current tangible advanced weapon systems in a war.

The national security discourse is changing

Therefore, in the 21st century, after cybertechnology enters as an important variable in nations' defence policies, the size of a country will cease to matter. Sri Lanka, or North Korea, empowered by cybertechnology, will be equal to the United States, Russia, India or China, in their capability to cause unacceptable damage. Weapons in the 21st century will merely mean a cyber button on the desk of the nation's military and the leader of the government. Geographical land size or GDP size will be irrelevant in war-making capacity or deterrence.

These fundamental changes are entirely due to the earlier 20th century innovations in cybertechnology and software developments. Drones, robots, satellites and advanced computers as weapons are already in use. More innovations are around the corner. Some examples of further innovations are artificial intelligence and nanotechnology.

Warfare, therefore, will be no more just mobilisation of weapons or be dependent on the size of the armed forces of men. It will be cyber warfare. From remote controlled drones to artificial intelligence driven weapons systems, etc., will matter in the 21st century.

Security meet discusses cyberattacks from China

Hence, national security in the 21st century covers not merely the overt and covert operations but, more crucially, electronic operations from a remote centre beyond the front lines of ground forces or air power to track enemy assets by these newly weaponised cyber instruments of technology. Tracking those cyber warfare centres of the adversary will need a new national security policy.

By credible accounts, China, recently, publicly cautioned Indians to sit up and take notice by using cybertechnology to shut down Mumbai's electric supply in populated areas of the city, for a few hours. This was to overawe Indians as we were clueless for hours as to what went wrong till reports emerged about a possible cyberattack. Thus, each nation will have to prepare more for bilateral conflicts in the 21st century that are based on cyber warfare rather than in multilateral acts of conventional war or rely on military blocs for mobilisation.

National security at its root in the 21st century will depend on mind-boggling skills in four dimensions:

Objectives: the objective of the National Security Policy in the 21st century is to define what assets are required to be defended, the identity of opponents who seek to overawe the people of a target nation, by unfamiliar moves to cause disorientation of people. Although the novel coronavirus is perhaps accidental, it has completely destabilised peoples globally and their governments in all nations of the world over, and also derailed the global economy because nations were most unprepared for such a pandemic, even conceptually. So far, nearly two years of the pandemic have left several millions [or more] dead with most economies having been driven to the edge of disaster. Normal life has been disrupted. Never before has there been such a virus attack of this dimension. This is a preview of the kinds of threats that await us in the coming decades which a national security policy will have to address by choosing a nation's priorities.

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Priorities: In such scenarios of uncertainties about the future in the 21st century, national security priorities will require new departments for supporting several frontiers of innovation and technologies such as hydrogen fuel cells, desalination of seawater, thorium for nuclear technology, anti-computer viruses, and new immunity-creating medicines. This focus on a new priority will require compulsory science and mathematics education, especially in applications for analytical subjects. Every citizen will have to be alerted to new remote controlled military technology and be ready for it.

Strategy: The strategy required for this new national security policy will be to anticipate our enemies in many dimensions and by demonstrative but limited pre-emptive strikes by developing a strategy of deterrence of the enemy.

For India, it will be the China cyber capability factor which is the new threat for which it has to devise a new strategy.

The hacking of Indian democracy

The agenda for the new strategy will be critical and emerging technologies, connectivity and infrastructure, cyber security and maritime security. But, alas, India by trying to befriend nations on both sides of the divide ended up with no serious ally internationally. The position of India is much like that of the bat species in the *Panchatantra*.

Resource mobilisation: The macroeconomics of resource mobilisation depends on whether a nation has 'demand' as an economic deficit or not. That means, for example, if demand for a commodity or service is in deficit or insufficient to clear the market of the available supply of the same, then liberal printing of currency and placing it in the hands of consumers is recommended for the economy to recover the demand supply parity. This then is one way of facilitating resource mobilisation in a demand supply balanced market. A way to increase demand is by lowering the interest rate on bank loans or raising the rates in fixed deposits which will enable banks to obtain liquidity and lend liberally for enhancing investment for production.

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If it is 'supply' that is short or in deficit compared to demand, then special measures are required to incentivise to encourage an increase in supply. The bottomline is that except for endowments of nature, a true economist adept in macroeconomics and inter-sectoral impact, will not despair for a lack of resources. Macroeconomics has many ways to generate resources without taxation. Printing of notes of currency is one way when there is a demand shortage.

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Our code of editorial values

Russian companies have the potential to be long-term partners with India in aiding its energy transformation

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