POINTER

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Editorial

In the first issue of this year, we bring you a varied selection but we give prominence to military history and the lessons we can learn from battles.

The World War II Interpretative Centre at Pepys Road was opened to the public on 15 February this year. For those familiar with Singapore's history, this may bring to mind the Battle of Pasir Panjang, the battle fought so valiantly by the Malay Regiment against the Japanese in February 1942. In *The Battle if Pasir Panjang Revisited*, Mr Lim Choo Hoon takes a trip back in time, to trace the origins of the regiment and the reasons for its establishment in 1933. He then goes on to give an account of how the battle along the Pasir Panjang Ridge and Opium Hill was fought and contents that though it is of little tactical significance, the battle holds important lessons on *esprit de corps*and fighting spirit.

In the same period but halfway round the globe, a very critical war was fought along the Eastern Front. In the *Controversy of Critical Battles Which Defined the German-Russian War of 1941-1943*, LTA (NS) Wong Tze Yung examines the Battle of Moscow, the Battle of Leningrad and the Battle of Kursk and argues that it is the last that is the turning point in the German-Russian war. Mr Roland Hee takes us further back in time. In *Alexander and Genghis Khan: Two World Conquerors Compared*, he gives an interesting insight into the two well-known conquerors. He compares their childhood, suggests what could have been the motivations behind their conquests, looks at the differences in their fighting styles and ways of governance, and examines the legacies they left behind.

Besides discussing past wars, this issue also explores current conflicts and issues such as the anti-terorrism war waged by the US. The US has said that the war on terrorism is not a war on Islam. Is there hope that Islam can co-exist peacefully with the West? What is the role of Islam in global security and is it a political force? In his essay *Islam and the West/Rest: Prespectives on the International Impact of Islam*, Mr Toh Ee Loong examines some of these issues and presents insights into the prespectives of both the *Jihadist* or confrontational school of thought as well as the more moderate elements. MAJ Irvin Lim and his US co-writer LT Douglas Tastad takes us on a deadly drug trail - from Columbia to Myanmar and the Golden Triangle, from Afghanistan to Somalia and Lebanon. In their essay *Global White Powder Kegs - The Smoking Gun of Drug Money and Dirty Wars*, the authors look at the illicit trade in drugs in these regions, the security threat posed by drug production and trafficking; and how drug money has funded the conflicts in these countries.

In *Unclenching the Fisted Hand: Globalisation and Military Multilateralism*, COL Jimmy Tan contends that the tidal wave of globalisation is unstoppable in East Asia, but it has brought in its wake some non-traditional security issues. What is the role of the military in this changed environment? The author argues that the military needs to adopt a multilateral approach. The essay looks at the history of regional security co-operation and discusses some of these approaches.

Exploring MCM Reginoal Co-operation is adapted from a presentation given by LTC Philip Alvar at the 2nd International MCM Seminar hosted by the RSN and attended by 18 regional navies. The article looks at the complexities of mine countermeasures and proposes some initiatives that will enhance MCM co-operation with regional navies. *The Crossbow Project* describes a project put together bu a group of international students from the US Naval Postgraduate School, including eight SAF officers. Originating from the intent to leverage on technology, the concept is one of distributed operations. The article describes the various components of the task force and its advantages.

Together with this main issue is the Supplement on COSCOM. We hope you enjoy both. We have received an encouraging number of entries for the CDF Essay Competitino - 2001 and we would like to thank all

those who have taken time and effort to submit their entries. We will be bringing you the winning entries in the next issue, so do look out for it.

On a final note, I would like to introduce my assistant editor, Mr Toh Ee Loong, who has just taken up the post recently. He holds a BSc in International Relations from the London School of Economics and a MA in War Studies from King's College, London. You can read his essay on Islam in this issue. The former assistant editor, Mr Bhupin Bath, has been posed on to Counselling Centre and we wish him the best in his new appointment.

Editor, *POINTER*

The Battle of Pasir Panjang Revisited

by Mr Lim Choo Hoon

On 15 February 2002, the long awaited World War II Interpretative Centre at Pepys Road was opened to the public.[1] The centre is located in a pre-war building where the last battles of Singapore at the Pasir Panjang Ridge were fought 60 years ago. In these battles, units of the Malay Regiment defended Point 226 gallantly against the Japanese 18th Division troops' attack. The opening of the exhibition centre was timed to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the fall of Singapore on 15 February 1942.

The question of the importance of the Battle of Pasir Panjang and the Malay Regiment has been a controversial one. British military histories provide very little details about this battle. Even the official British historian Woodburn Kirby has only a scant description of the battle.[2] The only British official who commented favourably on the battle and the Malay Regiment was General A. E. Percival, the Commander-in-Chief of the Malayan Command. Commenting after the war, Percival remarked :

"When war broke out in the Far East, the (Malay) Regiment was in process of expansion like many other units of our Imperial Force, (it) was not fully prepared for the ordeal which it was to face. Nevertheless, these young and untried soldiers acquitted themselves in a way which bore comparison with the very best troops in Malaya. In particular, by their stubborn defence of the Pasir Panjang Ridge at the height of the Battle of Singapore, they set an example of steadfastness and endurance which will become a great tradition in the Regiment and an inspiration for the future generations."[3]

Even for the Japanese, most accounts of the Malayan Campaign in World War II have ignored the Battle of Pasir Panjang completely.[4]

Historians in this region, on the other hand, treated the Malay Regiment and the Battle of Pasir Panjang quite differently from their western and Japanese counterparts. They felt that it was one of the fiercest battles fought before Singapore fell and the great sacrifices by officers and men of the Malay Regiment to fight to the last marked the highest form of "honour, duty, and courage" for the professional armed forces.[5]

Who were these Malay Regiment units? How important was this battle to the British? Was the Malay Regiment, one of the smallest units of the British forces, deserving of such attention in this battle? And, in what ways can we justify that the event and the battle site are worth remembering and publicising? This article hopes to look at these questions.

The Malay Regiment Prior to 1941

The Malay Regiment was the only local regular unit maintained and financed by the government of the Federated Malay States before World War II. When the formation of the Malay Regiment was first announced on 1 March 1933, its main aim was to replace the Indian battalion located at Taiping with locally trained Malay troops. This had been a long-term desire of the Sultans in the Federated Malay States, i.e. to use local troops for the defence of the homeland.

Although the British had been recruiting Malays since 1874 as policemen and volunteers, the establishment of a regular Malay military unit took them a long while to decide. The British colonial administrators were reluctant and cautious about arming and training local Malays for regular units. Their apprehension was partly due to the belief that the Malays, with their leisurely temperament and lack of military traditions other than those of guerrilla warfare, were unsuitable for strict military discipline. But more importantly, the British were worried that the well-trained and well-armed Malays might be involved in rivalries among Malay chiefs for power and control of the lucrative tin-mining areas which were widespread in the Malay states. It was only in 1933 that the British finally changed their minds mainly because of the high costs of hiring the

Burma Rifles from India. Hence, the Federal Council of Federated Malay States eventually passed the Malay Regiment Bill on 23 January 1933.[6]

Under the Malay Regiment's proposal announced on 1 March 1933, the total number of the first batch of recruits was only 25. This was supposed to be a "Experimental Company" created to find out how the Malays would react to military discipline and if they could be made into good regular soldiers. The first 25 recruits of the Malay Regiment were men carefully selected from over a thousand applications. The subsequent recruitment exercise was carried out by the district officers with the assistance of the local headmen. The final choice was made by the Regiment Selection Board comprising the Commanding Officer, accompanied by one other officer, a prominent Malay of the state and the regimental doctor.

Enlistment was at first restricted to the four Federated Malay States which bore the cost of the expenditure for the Malay Regiment. But it was soon extended to all the states except Johore (which had its own military units) to project a Malayan composition. Recruits from non-Malay states, however, were not to exceed 20% of the force.[7]

The British appointed MAJ G. McI S. Bruce to be the first Commanding Officer. MAJ Bruce was a wise and liberal officer. Although all military commands were in English, Malay was used widely for instructions. Bruce realised that this arrangement would assist many non-English educated Malays in their learning and it could thus train as many non-commissioned Malay officers to staff the new regiment as possible. British officers from the Commanding Officer downwards were expected to learn Malay and subsequently to know something about Malay customs and the Muslim religion. MAJ Bruce, for instance, took a short Malay language course. In addition, there was also the appointment of a regimental religious teacher in the unit.[8]

Competitions were held frequently to get the best out of the men on parade and in the field. The instructors also aimed at developing in the Malay soldiers a sense of patriotism, a love for their country and loyalty to their rulers. Special attention was paid to food, social recreation and the general welfare of the soldiers.

In keeping the name "Malay Regiment", efforts were made to retain the distinctive Malay character. MAJ Bruce conceived the idea of a Regimental mufti embodying the Malay national dress. He argued that for *esprit de corps*, British personnel serving in the regiment had to wear the Malay Regiment uniform which would identify them from the onset with the Malay Regiment rather than with their own British units. A regimental badge was created containing the motto: "Ta'at dan Setia" (loyal and true).[9] Three regimental colours were chosen for the regiment. They were green representing Islam, yellow for Malay royalty, and red for British army. These unique uniform, motto and regimental colours were well accepted by members of the unit. As expected, the Malay soldiers responded "extremely well" and serious breaches of discipline were rare, according to its Commanding Officer. The high standard of training, sensitive and matured management must have contributed greatly to its special quality.[10]

The basic regimental training was conducted at Port Dickinson base and in other Malay states. It was only in 1937 that the regiment came down to Singapore for advanced training, and took part in one of the biggest inter-service combined operations.[11] The performance of the Malay Regiment was so impressive that there was a call by the locals to establish a similar regular regiment in Singapore.[12]

In January and February 1938, the Malay Regiment once again came to Singapore to conduct battalion and advanced training. In addition, a contingent of fifty men attended the opening of King George VI's Graving Dock at the Singapore Naval Base.[13]

The "Experimental Company" was thus a success. On 1 January 1935, it officially assumed the title of the Malay Company with a strength of 150 men. From there, the strength of the Malay Regiment increased rapidly. By October 1938, it started to form a battalion comprising three rifle coys with one machine-gun support coy and a battalion headquarters. On 1st December 1941, the second battalion of the Malay Regiment was formed but this happened only about six days before the Japanese forces landed at Singora, Pattani and Kota Bharu. Thus, the second battalion might not have enjoyed the quality and cohesiveness of the first.

During the Malayan Campaign, units of the Malay Regiment were deployed in various parts of the Malay Peninsula. However, it was in the Battle of Singapore, and in the defence of Pasir Panjang Ridge, that the Malay Regiments confronted the Japanese troops head-on. It was in this battle that its units fought magnificently but suffered heavy casualties.

Battle of Pasir Panjang Ridge

In the Battle of Pasir Panjang, one name keeps cropping up that has since come to personify the meaning of patriotism and dying for one's country. The young 2LT that led one the platoons of the C Coy in the 1st Malay Regiment against the Japanese troops was 2LT Adnan Saidi.

2LT Saidi was born in 1915 in Kajang, Selangor. He received his education in Pekan Sunei Ramal in English. Upon graduation, Adnan was chosen to be a trainee teacher and taught at Pekan Sunei Ramal for a year. In 1933, when he was 18 years old, he joined the Malay Regiment. He was the best recruit for the intake. In 1936, he was promoted to the rank of sergeant. In the following year, he was chosen to represent his platoon in a military parade in London to honour the ascension of King George VI to the throne. Shortly thereafter, Adnan Saidi was promoted yet again to coy-sergeant-major and headed for Singapore for an officer conversion course. Upon graduation as a 2nd lieutenant, he became the commander of 7th Platoon, C Coy of the 1st Malay Regiment.

Following the successful crossing of the Straits of Johore, forces of the Japanese 25th moved rapidly towards the central and southern coastal area of Singapore. By 13 February 1942, two days before the British surrendered to the Japanese, Percival ordered the establishment of a new city perimeter (see Map 1 overleaf)[14]. The final line stretched from Kallang, through Woodleigh, then Thomson Village, MacRitchie Reservoir, Adam Road, Tanglin Halt, and from there to Pasir Panjang. The new defence perimeter cut the supply of rations down to a week and reduced stocks of mortar and artillery ammunition to dangerously low levels. Water supply was also a grave problem. The whole city was now within easy range of enemy guns, and the water distribution system started to collapse.

An even greater soruce of concern was the morale of the British soldiers. Most of the units had by now grasped how close they were to disaster. MG Bennett, who was commanding the Australian forces, decided on his own to form his division into an all-round perimeter to guard its own flanks and rear for a final battle. But the Australian units had been badly rocked, prompting real concern over how many men remained under command.[15] Such concerns were rising over the Indian and British troops as well.

The 1st Malay Bde comprised two Malay Regiments, and was reinforced by 5th Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire (less two coys) from 18th Division as well as an engineer battalion formed from British and Indian engineer units. It formed part of defence perimeter along the junction of West Coast Road and Pasir Panjang Road.

The first battle between the Malay Regiment and Japanese soldiers occured on 13 February at around 1400 hrs.[16] The Japanese 18th Division started to attack the south-western coast along the Pasir Panjang ridge and astride of Raja Road. The Japanese 56th Infantry Regiment, supported by a considerable force of artillery, attacked the ridge during the morning. One of the units defending the line was the B Coy of the Malay Regiment. Under the heavy fire of the Japanese troops supported by artillery and tanks, the B Coy was forced to retreat to the rear. But before all of them could retreat, the Japanese army succeeded in breaking through B Coy's position. In the battle, B Coy troops fought hand-to-hand combat using bayonets against the Japanese. A few from B Coy managed to save themselves while others were caught as prisoners-of-war. This penetration led to the withdrawal after dark of both 44th Indian and 1st Malay Bde to the general line Mount Echo (junction of Raja and Depot Road)Buona Vista (see Map 2 overleaf).

Battle of Opium Hill

On 14th February, the Japanese again launched a heavy attack at 0830 hours, supported by intense mortar and artillery fire, on the front held by the 1st Malay Bde. The defenders beat off this and a number of other

attacks. The fighting included bitter hand-to-hand combat, and losses from both sides were heavy. At 1600 hours an attack supported by tanks eventually succeeded in penetrating the left, and the defenders on this flank were forced back to a line from the junction of the Ayer Rajar and Depot Road through the Brick Works and along the canal to Bukit Chermin. Owing to the failure of units on both its flanks to hold their ground, the 1st Malay Bde withdrew at 1430 hours. It was at this point that C Coy of the Malay Regiment received instructions to move to a new defence positionPt. 226, Opium Hill.

Opium Hill or Bukit Chandu in Malay was named after an opium-processing factory located at the foot of the hill. This was also where C Coy of the Malay Regiment made their final stand against the Japanese attack. Opium Hill was a key defence position for two important reasons. It was situated on high ground overlooking the island to the north; and secondly, if the Japanese gained control of the ridge, it gave them direct passage to the Alexandra area. The British army had its main ammunition and supply depots, military hospital and other key installations located in the Alexandra area.

C Coy's position was separated from D Coy by a big canal. Oil was burning in the canal, which flowed from Normanton Depot. The burning oil prevented C Coy soldiers from retreating further south. C Coy was under the command of CPT Rix, a brave and daring British officer. CPT Rix encouraged the soldiers to defend Opium Hill down to the last soldier. His bravery was exemplified in the battle and he was killed together with many of his Malay Regiment soldiers in the last defence battle at Pasir Panjang.

The Japanese troops pressed their attack on Opium Hill in the afternoon but under the guise of a deception. They sent a group of soldiers, dressed in Punjabi uniforms, passing themselves off as Punjabi soldiers from the British army. C Coy saw through this trick as they knew that the Punjabi soldiers of the British army usually marched in a line of three whereas the Japanese disguised Punjabi soldiers were in a line of four. When the disguised soldiers reached the Malay Regiment's defence line, C Coy's squad opened fire on them with their Lewis machine guns. Some of the Japanese troops were killed and the rest badly wounded. Those who survived rolled and crawled downhill to save themselves.

Two hours later, the Japanese launched an all-out assault in great numbers. The attack overwhelmed the strength of the Malay Regiment. Greatly outnumbered and short of ammunition and supplies, the Malay Regiment continued to resist the Japanese troops. All kinds of arms such as grenades, small arms and bayonets were used by troops of the Malay Regiment. It was reported that 2LT Adnan handled a Lewis machine gun against the Japanese troops. Some soldiers engaged in fierce hand-to-hand combat using bayonets. Yet, they stood their ground frustrating their enemy. In the ensuing battle, men and officers fell. 2LT Adnan was seriously wounded but he refused to retreat and instead encouraged his men to fight to the last. It was this disregard of danger that inspired the coy to stand up gallantly.

Mubin Sheppard, an ex-officer and former POW, had this to say about his friend, the late 2LT Adnan,

"he was heavily outnumbered by the Japanesethey bombed him but he fought on fiercely and inflicted heavy losses on them. Adnan would have never surrendered under any circumstances. He was absolutely dedicated. In fact, just before fighting, he adopted a motto for his platoon, "biar putih tulang, jangan putih mata" (death before dishonour).

Corporal Yaakob, who won a Medal of Gallant after the war, was one of the few who survived Opium Hill. During the chaos of the battle, he fell and landed on top of the bodies of the dead soldiers. He escaped death by lying motionless among the pile of bodies and witnessed the gruesome death of Adnan Saidi. He said that the resistance of the Malay Regiment angered the Japanese, and when they captured 2LT Adnan, they dragged and pushed him into a gunnysack. The Japanese soldiers then hung him by his legs on a cherry tree and then bayoneted him again and again. His throat was slit repeatedly. Even after the battle, no one was allowed to bring his body for burial. No one dared.

Another eyewitness, Burhan Muslim, who had lived along Bukit Chandu, recalled going up the hill with his cousin a few days after the battle. In one of the white bungalows that stood on the hill at Pepys Lane, he saw the dismembered bodies of Malay soldiers everywhere. In one of the rooms laid the body of a Malay

soldier. His throat had been slit several times. His uniform was soaked with blood. Judging from the badges he had on his uniform, Burhan believed that he was an officer. He felt that the body could have been that of 2LT Adnan Saidi.[17]

For the entire Malayan Campaign, but largely on 12, 13 and 14 February 1942 in Singapore, the Malay Regiment suffered a total of 159 killed (six British officers, seven Malay officers, and 146 other ranks) and a large but unspecified number wounded.[18]

Conclusion

From a purely military operational perspective, the Battle of Pasir Panjang had little significance. The battle could not change the outcome of the fate of Singapore and it was a matter of time before the British would surrender to the Japanese 25th Army. Those who look at only the tactical significance, however, will miss a very important lesson. The Battle of Pasir Panjang, and the Battle of Opium Hill in particular, manifested the acme of the fighting spirit in battle. In the words of Noel Barber, the author of *Sinister Twilight*, the Malay Regiment was described thus:

"A regular, locally raised unit, commanded by Malay-speaking British officers, it was a living and dying illustration of the folly of not having raised more such local forces before the war in which men could defend what was their homeland."[19]

And as Percival noted, the Malay Regiment:

"showed what esprit de corps and discipline can achieve. Garrisons of posts held their ground and many of them were wiped out almost to a man."[20]

The 48-hour Battle of Pasir Panjang put up by men and officers of the Malay Regiment exemplified the highest form of "duty, honour and country" that soldiers can show in war. The courage, bravery, and sacrifice to defend Singapore island despite the foregone defeat of British forces will always remain one of the highlights in the story of the Battle of Singapore.

Endnotes

1 Goh Chin Lian, "Stories of Duty, Honour, Courage", *The Straits Times*, 27 Dec 2001 and 7 February 2002.

2 Woodburn S. Kirby, *Singapore: The Chain of Disaster*, London: Cassell, 1971, p. 244; and *War Against Japan*, Vol. 1, Chapter XXIV, p. 414.

3 M. C. Sheppard, *The Malay Regiment, 1937-1947*, Kuala Lumpur, 1947, preface; Dol Ramli, "History of Malay Regiment, 1933-42", Academic Exercise, Department of History, University of Singapore, 1955, p. 104.

4 See for example, Masanobu Tsuji, *Japan's Great Victory, Britain's Worst Defeat*, New York: Sarpedon, 1993;

5 See, for example, M.C. Sheppard, *op cit*.; Dol Ramli, "History of Malay Regiment, 1933-42"; Wan Hashim Haji Wan Teh, *Perang Dunia Kedua: Peranan Askar Melayu,* Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kementerian Pendidikan, Malaysia, 1993.

6 Dol Ramli, *op.cit*., p.19.

7 *Malay Regiment War Diary*, p. 81. Cited in Dol Rmli, p. 24.

8 *Ibid*, p. 27.

9 Sheppard, *op. cit*., p. 6.

10 *Ibid*, p.28.

11 *The Straits Times*, 13 January 1937, cited in Dol Ramli, p. 41.

12 A letter by a Eurasian appeared in *The Strait Times* suggesting the Colonial Government set up a Eurasian Regiment in Singapore. *The Strait Times*, 23 January 1937.

13 Dol Ramli, *op.cit.*, p. 42.

14 See Krby, *The War Against Japan*, Vol. I, pp. 400-415.

15 See for example, Peter Elphick, *The Pregnable Fortress: A Study in Deception, Discord and Desertion*, Great Britian: Hodder and Stoughton, 1995.

16 Extracted from Wan Hashim Haji Wan Teh, *Perang Dunia Kedua: Peranan Askar Melayu,* Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kementerian Pendidikan, Malaysia, 1993, pp.107-113. I would like to thank Ms Rozita of SAFTI Library for her assistance in translating some of the Malay text.

17 Account came from one of C Coy members CPT Din who witnessed the incident. Later they were stabbed by bayonets and left behind for dead. See Wan Hashim Haji Wan Teh, *Perang Dunia Kedua: Peranan Askar Melayu*, pp. 111-3.

18 Dol Ramli, "History of Malay Regiment, 1933-42", pp. 104-5.

19 Noel Barber, *Sinister Twilight: The Fall of Singapore*, Great Britain: William Collins Sons & Co, 1968, p. 303.

20 A.E. Percival, *The War in Malaya*, New Delhi: Sagar Publications, 1971, p. 291.

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The Controversy of Critical Battles Which Defined the German-Russian War of 1941-1945

by LTA (NS) Wong Tze Yung

The German-Soviet War of 1941-1945 has been acclaimed as the greatest armed conflict ever fought on a single front. It involved the greatest number of men, weapons, vehicles and equipment in a single theatre of military operations. From 1941 to 1945, more than nine million troops were pitched against each other and at any single time during this war, Germany did not field any less than 55% of its divisions against the Russians[1], a statistic which reveals her commitment on this front. Of all the battlefields of the Second World War, the "War on the Eastern Front" was the one that claimed the greatest number of casualties. The official casualty figures put the numbers of German soldiers who died at 5.5 million and the number of Soviet military and civilian personnel killed at 20 million[2]; together these represent approximately half of the total number of persons killed in World War Two. In fact, researchers in the former Soviet Union have recently estimated Soviet losses in this German-Soviet War to be in the range of 26 - 27 million.[3] However, although the Red Army suffered comparatively more losses than the Wehrmacht (the German Armed Forces) did, they emerged victorious after a series of critical battles. As to which of these battles became the pivotal turning point (a point in time when the fortunes of war change from one side to the opposing side), the debate remains controversial. Some military historians have claimed that the German halt at Moscow in December 1941 was the pivotal point as the Germans advanced no further eastwards after that, making Operation "Barbarossa" screech to a halt. Some others including popular bestselling author Anthony Beevor argue that Stalingrad should be the decisive point as Field Marshal von Paulus' German 6th Army was encircled and annihilated by early 1943 and the Germans could not recover from that staggering loss thereafter. Yet other historians such as European historian Martin Kitchen - claim that Kursk was the one that sealed the fate of the Germans. The purpose of this essay is to shed light on the controversy surrounding this confusion as to which battle should have a legitimate claim to being the turning point of the war.

Thesis

In this essay, I seek to prove that the war really hinged on the Battle of Kursk (July -August 1943), although the outcomes of the other two great battles the Battle of Moscow (December 1941) and the Battle of Stalingrad (August 1942 - February 1943) were also significant in their own right. That all three battles were important there is little dispute (the multitude of published materials on these battles testify to this point). But the key question is, which of these should have its special place in history as the de facto turning point?

Arguments for the Battle of Moscow (Dec 1941) as Turning Point

The *Wehrmacht* was highly successful in the initial phase of the war. When Operation Barbarossa was launched on 22 June 1941, three German army groups led a three-pronged attack, one towards the north (called Army Group North) under Field Marshal von Leeb; this group attacked in the direction of Leningrad. Another group pierced right through the center of Russia (called Army Group center). Under Field Marshal von Bock, this group penetrated through the Ukraine and headed towards Moscow. The third group was directed southwards (called Army Group South) under Field Marshal von Runstedt; this group headed for the Crimea and the Caucasus [See Map 1]. The Germans advanced rapidly through the Soviet Union, using blitzkrieg tactics which combined air attacks from Stuka dive bombers, with fast-moving tanks to penetrate through Soviet enemy lines, supported throughout by German mechanized infantry.

However, due to the sheer size and varying terrain of Russia and hence the distance and difficulty which the Wehrmacht had to negotiate, Field Marshal von Bock's Army Group Center was unable to reach Moscow (the original objective) before winter set in. This was because the Red Army launched a decisive and overwhelming counter-attack outside the city-gates of Moscow in December 1941 in what has now become

known as the Battle of Moscow. The loss was also partly due to overextended German supply lines and the fierce Russian winter, for which the Germans were ill-prepared. As James Lucas reveals in *War on the Eastern Front: The German Soldier in Russia 1941-45*, the German boots were not designed to withstand the harsh Russian winter. To combat the extreme cold, the ideal preparation for the German soldier was to insert straw into his jack boots and on top of that wrap his feet in foot-cloths or even newspaper. [4] But the Germans lacked these resources and could not obtain them either from the barren Russian steppes. As a result, a large number of German soldiers suffered from severe frostbite.[5]

Why was Moscow so important? Being the capital of the Soviet Union, it was a symbol of prestige. If Moscow had fallen into German hands, it could be argued that the Russians would have suffered a massive blow to their morale; it would have been a psychological blow to the Russian people to witness their capital being captured by the enemy. Also, Moscow was where the government of Russia resided. Thus, it was a political asset and it could be argued that much of the communist government's control over its citizens would have been lost had the Germans been able to wrest the city from the Russians.

Why can Moscow be considered a turning point of the war on the Eastern Front? For a start, the German advance into Russia had been halted at the Battle of Moscow. The battle was the Red Army's first major victory against the *Wehrmacht*, which had until then overrun western Russia, including the mineral-rich province of Ukraine, with its blitzkrieg tactics. In addition, the Russians managed to save their capital from falling into enemy hands. So although the Germans still made advances into the southern part of the Soviet Union in the following spring of 1942, capturing the Crimea and some of the oilfields in the Caucasus in the process, Moscow nevertheless represented a major defeat for the Germans as Operation Barbarossa's momentum suddenly came to a standstill. If the Wehrmacht had captured Moscow, they could have used it as a base from which to launch further operations against the Russians, since Moscow was also a center of trade and industry for the Russians. For these various reasons, it is plausible to argue that Moscow was a pivotal point in the war between the *Wehrmacht* and the Red Army. But as events were to show, the Germans were not decisively subdued after the Battle of Moscow.

Arguments for the Battle of Stalingrad (Aug Nov 1942) as Turning Point

In the spring of 1942, the Germans resumed their offensive against the Soviets. But this time round, because the strength and resources of the Wehrmacht were weaker than in spring 1941 (when Operation Barbarossa began), Hitler and his generals decided to concentrate all their efforts on a single major offensive towards the oil-rich Caucasus region and the city of Stalingrad. In order to reach the latter two objectives, the Germans assembled a powerful force of 68 divisions (including 8 panzer and 7 motorized infantry), together with support of their Axis allies, which included 10 Italian divisions, 27 Romanian and 13 Bulgarian divisions although the fighting capability of these axis units was rated as only 50 percent of that of their German counterparts.[6]

Why did the Germans throw their weight into Stalingrad? The reasons were simple. First it was an important communications hub in Russia. It was also the focus of much commercial activities, and served its function as a center of trade for the southern part of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, the city bore Stalin's name; hence the prestige factor accounted for Stalin's desire to defend it at all cost; to Hitler, the capture of Stalingrad was an opportunity to deal the Red Army a blow in morale and "to complete the Soviet Union's reduction to military impotence there, on the River Volga, at the edge of Asia.[7] Last and perhaps most important of all, Stalingrad was of strategic and economic use to the Germans it served as a gateway to the areas surrounding the Caucasus Mountains which were rich in oil resources (see Map 2, illustrations A, B and C). The capture of this region, in turn, would not only give the Germans the oil resources of the Caucasus, but would also give them the chance to link up with Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's (also known as "The Desert Fox" for his remarkable ability to outmaneuver his Allied opponents and defeat them with his numerically inferior armies) Afrika Korps from the south, who were at that time fighting their way eastwards across the desert sands of Libya and Egypt in 1942. Had Rommel captured Cairo, they would certainly have made their way to Palestine, which was only a hair's breath from southern Russia. Thus, the strategic and economic importance of Stalingrad.

The battle for Stalingrad began on 19 August 1942 and the task of taking this city fell on General von Paulus, commander of the German 6th Army. This mission was a most unpleasant one, as it turned out that the fighting became extraordinarily fierce, with every block and every street bitterly contested. Losses were heavy. Between 21 August and 6 October 1942, the 6th Army suffered 40,000 casualties.[8] During the battle, the 6th Army's flanks were covered by the 3rd and 4th Romanian armies, which were inadequately trained and equipped and hence left General von Paulus' flanks vulnerable to attack. Although von Paulus realized this and appealed for more support from OKH (the Army Headquarters), the latter ignored his appeals as they underestimated the strength of the Russians, thinking that the Red Army was too weak to mount such an attack.[9]

The German intelligence machine's underestimation of Russian strength proved fatal, because in reality, Stalin's troops were secretly preparing a massive counter-offensive on the Stalingrad front, involving roughly 60 percent of their available armoured and motorized units and more than twice the artillery fire they used during the December 1941 counter attack at the Battle of Moscow.[10] But the Germans were oblivious of the massive buildup of forces arrayed against them. On 19 November, the Russians launched a pincer shaped counter-attack at the weak points on the German flanks north and south of Stalingrad, which were defended by the 3rd and 4th Romanian armies respectively.[11] By 22 November, the Russian "pincers" succeeded in joining together and trapping some 240,000 troops of the German 6th Army (together with elements of two Romanian armies) in a pocket stretching some 35 miles from the east of Stalingrad to the west and some 20 miles from north and south.[12]

General Paulus, who had under his command twenty divisions, six of them panzer or motorized[13], asked Hitler for permission to break out of Stalingrad. In other words, "let go" of the city. But Hitler, insisting that Stalingrad was "the most substantial achievement of the 1942 campaign"[14] demanded that the Stalingrad pocket be held and promised that more German reinforcements would relieve Paulus' beleaguered army soon. To make this "contact-from-the-outside" possible, Hitler created two panzer divisions, one infantry division and incorporated some remnants of the dispirited Romanian armies into this small army and ordered General von Manstein to relieve the 6th Army.[15] Air Marshal Hermann Goering, commander of the *Luftwaffe* (the German Air Force), pledged to deliver 300 tons of supplies a day to the engulfed German troops of Stalingrad.[16] However, it soon became clear that due to harsh winter conditions, the *Luftwaffe* could not accomplish this task. On average, less than 120 tons (instead of the 300 promised) per day arrived.[17] To make things worse, von Manstein failed to break through the Russian lines to relieve the 6th Army. The siege of Stalingrad lasted until 2 February 1943, by which time von Paulus' army had lost 22 divisions and 160 other units, and had sustained more than 150,000 casualties; in addition, nearly 90,000 prisoners-of-war were taken by the Russians, including 24 German generals.[18]

Why should the Battle of Stalingrad be considered a turning point? Well, from this point onwards, the Germans were largely on the retreat in Russia. They had to pull out of the Caucasus region, abandoning the oil-fields Hitler so valued. In the process, the Germans lost a massive number of men and equipment approximately 240,000 German soldiers in all[19], a devastating and excruciating blow from which they were unable to recover for the remainder of the war. Joachim Wieder and Heinrich Graf von Einsiedel point out that the Battle of Stalingrad had "a strong psychological effect" on both sides. The Red Army began to fight with "increased self-confidence" and "possessed of a greater will to fight the enemy" as they believed they had seized the initiative from then on.[20] So although the Battle of Kursk from July - August 1943 involved more troops and tanks than in any other battle throughout the Second World War and more carnage was done there to the Germans, Stalingrad still stands as one of the symbols of the Red Army's triumph over the *Wehrmacht* a kind of turning point from which the Germans could not recover from then onwards. Or was it?

Arguments for The Battle of Kursk (Jul Aug 1943) as Turning Point

In *War From the Top: German and British Military Decision Making in World War Two*, Alan Wilt notes that "despite [the defeat at Stalingrad], the *Wehrmacht* was still a substantial force which could hold its own against any enemy."[21] He suggests that the Germans may not have lost the initiative of the war yet even at this point, although the Russians were increasingly gaining the upper hand as they possessed the resources to put more troops, tanks, planes and ships into the war and produced them at a faster rate than the

German war machine. The Battle of Kursk, also known as Operation Citadel, began in July 1943 and had the distinction of being "the greatest tank battle of all time". At the height of the battle (that is, from 5 to 13 July), there were close to 3,000 tanks on the move at the same time.[22] It was from first to last, a colossal armoured battle of attrition; Alan Clark describes it as "a slugging match which swayed to and fro across a narrow belt of territory seldom more than 15 miles deep" and "in which mines, firepower, and weight of explosives (rather than mobility and leadership) were the decisive factors."[23]

The Germans initiated this massive armoured attack on the Russians on 5 July 1943. The strategy was simple: the Germans planned to use a gigantic pincer movement involving two army groups Army Group North and Army Group Center to cut into the neck of the Kursk salient (see Map 3); Army Group North (under Field Marshal von Kluge) which comprised of General Model's 9th Army consisting of armoured and mechanized infantry divisions was to attack from the north, while Army Group South (under Field Marshal von Manstein) comprising of General Hoth's 4th Panzer Army was to attack from the south of the salient.[24] In the process, the German High Command hoped to level off the "bulge" and destroy the Soviet forces within the Kursk salient.

In terms of numbers, the Germans were slightly disadvantaged. They fielded approximately 700,000 troops, 2,700 tanks and assault guns, and about 1,800 aircraft, the largest concentration of forces within such a confined area on the Eastern Front.[25] On the other hand, the Russians, under Generals Rokossovsky and Vatutin (both of whom Stalin had dispatched to deal with the German threat), had with them a total of 1.3 million troops, 3,400 tanks and assault guns and 2,100 aircraft.[26] Therefore, by comparison, the Soviets had a far greater number which gave them an edge from the start of the battle. There is a conventional wisdom (which exists in many countries including the SAF) that the attacker should go into battle with at least a three-to-one advantage in men and material. The Germans flouted this rule blatantly. But so eager was Hitler and the German High Command to launch an offensive somewhere on the Eastern Front so as to seize the initiative in the war that the Battle of Kursk was arguably quite inevitable although the site of the battle could have been different. Indeed, it was Hitler and his generals' deep desire to "extract a psychological leverage and possibly intimidate the Stalin's Soviet Command" in the summer of 1943 that led to the decision to attack the Kursk salient.[27]

In terms of weapon technology, both sides were about even in this battle. They had some of the most deadly weapons the world had seen. The Russians had their KV-85 tank (85mm self-propelled guns very high caliber guns at that time) ready at the right positions and their renowned T-34 tanks were well-armoured, possessed heavy firepower (76-/85-mm guns) and were swift and maneuverable; they came into battle prepared for the German Tigers and Panther tanks, also considered state-of-the-art at that point in the Second World War.[28]

Unfortunately for the Germans, the Russians possessed superior military intelligence just prior to the battle and were able to anticipate the German strike; they reinforced the Kursk salient heavily with anti-tank defences, artillery, and sent some of their best armoured units (such as the 21st and 64th armies two veteran armies which fought victoriously at Stalingrad) to the points where they anticipated the Germans would attack.[29] Moreover, the Russian defences were extremely difficult and costly to penetrate. The whole front was crisscrossed by earthworks, while the Soviet anti-tank batteries (some of the finest in the world) were organised as single units[30]; because these units "discharged concentrated salvoes of shots at single tanks in the German spearheads"[31], many German losses in tanks and personnel were incurred.

Furthermore, the Russian field commanders prepared themselves well to deal with a German attack by continuously conducting battle drills regularly. A Red Army captain described how his brigade prepared thoroughly for the impending German attack:

"we anticipated five possible places where they [the Germans] may strike and at each of them we know alongside whom we shall be fighting, our replacements and command posts. The brigade is stationed in the rear, but our trenches and shelters are ready up in front, and the routes by which we are to get there are marked out. The ground, of which we have made a topographical survey, has been provided with guide marks. The depths of fords, the maximum loads of bridges are known to us. Liaisons with division have been

doubled, codes and signals are arranged. Often alerted by day or night, our men are familiarised with their task in any eventuality."[32]

Such was the preparation of the Soviet forces that the Germans could not match their well-drilled adversaries.

What sealed the German army's fate was Zhukov's and Vasilevsky's (two of Stalin's premier Russian generals) decisive counter-attacks immediately after the initial German pincer attack by Model and Hoth. [See Map 4]. With all the factors mentioned above giving the Red Army the edge in the battle, the Russians were able to level out the flanks of the Kursk salient by 18 August 1943.[33]

Kursk cost the Germans dearly. For instance, by 13 July, the *Wehrmacht's* 3rd, 17th and 19th Panzer Divisions had only 100 tanks between them, instead of the 450 with which they began with on 5 July.[34] Although Guderian (the *Wehrmacht's* Inspector of Panzer Troops) and Speer (Germany's Economic War Minister) lobbied for German industries to produce 1,000 tanks per month for 1943, they managed to produce on average, only 330.[35] Hence, more tanks had been lost by the Germans in the Battle of Kursk than the German war machine could replenish.

The Red Army, on the other hand, had the benefit of being served by "a burgeoning output of heavy industry" located beyond the Urals. These well-sheltered factories were producing tanks at a rate of 2,500 per month in 1944, a number far greater than the average they lost monthly[36]; thus the Soviets were constantly increasing their net complement of armoured formations, while the Germans were on the whole experiencing a decrease. The sheer scale of damage incurred by the Germans during the Battle of Kursk and their subsequent inability to replenish their losses quickly enough, coupled with the successful Allied landings in Sicily in July 1943, combined to force Hitler to cancel Operation Citadel on 13 July.[37] This order carried with it the implication that Operation Citadel had failed! Rather than eradicating the Kursk salient and pushing the Russians further eastwards, the Red Army actually leveled out the bulge westwards and pushed the *Wehrmacht* into retreat for the remainder of the war [See Map 4 again].

Conclusion

In conclusion, although Moscow may have been the battle where the German advance into Russia was halted for the first time and Stalingrad was truly a staggering defeat for the Germans which resulted in horrendous losses for the latter, it was Kursk which dealt the final blow to the Germans. Up until the time of Kursk, the Germans still enjoyed the liberty to choose and decide the locations of the major battles, while the Russians merely responded, albeit successfully at Moscow and Stalingrad. For both these battles, the *Wehrmacht* merely suffered setbacks, but was far from defeated. The third Battle of Kharkov in March 1943 fought in the time period between the Battles of Stalingrad in late-1942 and Kursk in mid-1943 showed that the German army was still an awesome, professional fighting machine "full of aggressive spirit."[38] It was not until the Battle of Kursk that the Russians defeated the Germans at the game the latter knew best that is, mechanized tank warfare. At Kursk, the *Wehrmacht's* elite armoured units, equipped with the latest Panzer models and strengthened by fresh troops, were destroyed. From then on, the strategic initiative truly belonged to the Russians. Even Heinrich Himmler, Hitler's right-hand man, saw that "the failure of the German offensive in Operation Citadel meant that the war on the Eastern front was lost."[39] The question then was not where should Germany next strike in order to regain the initiative in this bloody front of the war, but rather, how to moderate defeat at the hands of avenging Red Army soldiers! Thus, in my opinion, it is Kursk and not Moscow or Stalingrad that should rightfully be given the title of "Turning Point in the War on the Eastern Front" because from that point on, the Germans were on the retreat throughout the entire German-Soviet front, from Leningrad and the Gulf of Finland in the north to the Crimea and the Sea of Azov in the south. Indeed, after the Battle of Kursk, it was Stalin's Russia, rather than Hitler's Germany, which was calling the shots in that war.

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Endnotes

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Alexander and Genghis Khan: Two World Conquerors Compared

by Mr Ronald Hee

When one thinks of would-be world conquerors, the name Alexander the Great is likely to emerge on the first attempt. By many measures, the man who came closest to achieving this goal, with an empire that at its height, stretched from Budapest to the Sea of Japan, was Genghis Khan. They were alike enough for the historian Rene Grousset to refer to the Khan as "the barbarian Alexander". Certainly in their own ways and in their times, both men shook the world. But while one man built an empire and ruled it by the sword, the other built an empire and tried to rule by persuasion and conciliation.

Growing Up to be Conquerors

In examining the early years of both men, one can get a sense of why one became a destroyer of nations while the other was much more benign. Both were born to relatively barbarian and backward tribes, next to great civilizations Macedon lay north of the Greek states, the Mongolian tribes lay north of China. There the similarity ended before both men would be born, their tribes' relationships with their neighbours would already play a critical role.

For generations, Macedon had adopted Greek ways so much as to be practically indistinguishable. The magnificent Macedonian fighting machine wielded by Alexander was a creation of his father, Philip, who in turn, had copied and then refined it based on the Greek model. Significantly, the Greeks were squabbling sister states, and could offer limited resistance to a unified Macedon under Philip.

Alexander was born into a life of wealth and privilege due the son of a conquering hero. Philip took great pains to groom his son to be his successor, constantly challenging him, and providing for him the pick of the kingdom as his playmates and competitors. And while himself a man of little learning, Philip arranged for the wisest man in Greece to tutor his son, none other than Aristotle. By the time of Philip's death in 336 BC, Alexander, aged 20, had already earned his spurs. He stood as regent in his father's absence at the age of 16. At the age of 18, he already had his baptism of fire and of command, leading a cavalry regiment in the successful Battle of Chaeronea. In two years of battle and diplomacy, Alexander managed to consolidate his power base in Greece and was ready to embark on a career of conquest.

By comparison, the man who would be Genghis Khan was born Temuchin, the son of a minor Mongolian chieftain. The Mongols were extremely poor and divided tribes, struggling to survive. Arrayed against them was a strong China, a China that had built the greatest defence line in history to keep these barbarians at bay and as barbarians the Mongols were treated.

Like Alexander, Temuchin's father was also murdered. However, Temuchin is said to be only eight at the time. Rather than living the life of a prince, Temuchin was sold into slavery and hardship. There would be no Chinese Aristotle to influence the young boy. It took 36 long years of ruthlessness, diplomacy and treachery to finally unite the Mongol tribes and for him to be declared as their leader. The name "Genghis Khan" was then conferred, roughly translated as "divine and perfect warrior-king".

Motivation for Conquest

Alexander, for his part, was heavily influenced by his tutor, and wanted to become the philosopher-king. He "believed that he had a mission from the deity to harmonize men generally and be the reconciler of the world, mixing men's lives and customs as in a loving cup, and treating the good as his kin, the bad as strangers; for he thought that the good man was the real Greek and the bad man the real barbarian."[1]

It is interesting to note that he saw being Greek not so much as an ethnic concept, but more as a cultural one a cultured man is a good man, and a cultured man is a Greek. It followed that all non-Greeks were "barbarians" simply because they had not yet been exposed to Greek culture and Greek learning, in much they way the Macedonians had been. Alexander therefore saw his role as being to bring Greek enlightenment to the world.

Genghis Khan also saw he had a divine mission: "Heaven has appointed me to rule all the nations."[2] But the goals of conquest for the Khan were not lofty, they were earthy: "The greatest happiness is to vanquish your enemies and chase them before you, to rob them of their wealth and see those dear to them bathed in tears, to ride their horses and clasp to your bosom their wives and daughters."[3]

For Alexander, all men, once they had seen the Greek light, were reasonable beings who could be united into one great commonwealth. There were no known cases of slaughter after battle, with the exception of the sack of Tyre, meant as a warning against other cities for opposing the Macedonians.

For the Khan, all others, including Mongols from other tribes, could never be trusted "the vanquished can never be the friends of the victors; the death of the former is necessary therefore for the safety of the latter."[4] The Mongols believed in the systematic use of terror; "every man, woman, child and beast in the path of the Mongol army was butchered, and every building burnt down "; "their cruelty was bestial, their blood-lust insatiable; and Genghis Khan's victims must be numbered in the tens perhaps scores of millions."[5] It is believed that in China alone, as many as 18 million may have been put to the sword.[6]

Fighting Style

Both the Macedonian and Mongolian armies were the best of their times; the instruments by which two great empires were carved. Both depended heavily on excellent cavalry as the principle striking arm. Both embarked on their first major campaigns against powerful but decaying empires; Persia for Alexander, and China for Genghis.

Alexander's army was very small, usually numbering in the region of 30-60,000. This size enabled Alexander to wield tight personal control, both on and off the battle field. The army was never divided into smaller parts; it fought as one unit, with each combat element well-drilled to do its role as part of a larger action. The king's command style was marked by audacity, flexibility and resourcefulness. The key battles were set piece actions Granicus and Arbela where the entire army fought outnumbered against its foe, and won. With an army this small, it was no surprise that elitism permeated the ranks.[7] Apart from smaller contingents of archers, slingers, and others, typically 'light artillery' formations, the army was made up primarily of the phalanx and the cavalry; the latter composed largely of the boyhood noble playmates of the king, known as the Companions. While the phalanx would be the immovable object that fixed the enemy in place, the cavalry would ride out at the key moment to outflank and smash the enemy.

The army of the Mongols was also not large for its time, usually numbering about 100,000. At its peak, during the Persian campaign, the army was said to have numbered 250,000. It was made up almost entirely of heavy and light horses, with later, a small engineering formation to destroy fortified cities. The army of the Khan operated in separate columns, separate 'armies' that would unite at the key point to destroy the enemy, often surrounding him in the process. Direct confrontation was to be avoided, the direct opposite of the Macedonian style. Instead, the Mongol way of war was to strike where unexpected. The invasion of the kingdom of Khwarizm, the first major offensive after the conquest of China, was a key example.

The Shah of Khwarizm outnumbered the Mongols 2:1. He entrenched his troops along the most likely route of advance, the River Jaxartes. To his surprise, rather than a head-on assault, three columns of Mongol troops smashed into his left flank, forcing him to turn and meet the threat to his rear. At that point, emerging seemingly out of thin air from across an "impassable" desert, a fourth column, led by the Khan himself, again smashed into his rear. In five months, the kingdom fell.[8] In the style of combat, this campaign bore a striking resemblance to the German attack on Poland in 1939. Indeed, the Khan's "genius lay in

forging as his weapon of conquest the most disciplined army in the world, and wielding it with sophisticated precision in the first example of blitzkrieg warfare known to history."[9]

Like the Macedonians, the army of the Khan did have elite units too. The Khan's best unit was similar to the Companions the Imperial Guard. There was also the Old Elite Life Guards, which served the additional function of something of a staff college no commander could reach a senior appointment except by serving in the Life Guards. Interestingly, while some places were reserved based on class and clan, the bulk of the positions were selected on merit.

Occupation Policy

With his philosophy of uniting all men, Alexander took what was for his time, extraordinary steps to rule his empire. He deliberately adopted Persian customs, sometimes to the disgruntlement of his Greek and Macedonian followers. He even took to marrying an Indian princess and a Persian one as well. "His Phihellenism was perhaps a natural enthusiasm, while his orientalism was a matter of policy, aimed at conciliating a conquered people."[10] Unfortunately, Alexander died soon after these wars of conquest. He was only 33. He did not have the time to set into place the machinery to administer his empire. He did not appoint a clear heir. Little wonder that his empire broke apart, making way for an even greater empire, based from Rome.

Genghis Khan, on the other hand, lived to the age of approximately 65. His conquest of China was completed in stages, from 1211 to 1226, providing him plenty of time to build the machinery of empire. Alexander's conquest of Persia, by comparison, took only 42 months. Based on the Mongol nomadic tradition, the Khan established a system of 'yams', or staging posts, throughout the empire. These posts, about 40 kilometres apart, were the distant feelers of the empire, providing a corps of imperial messengers, food, shelter and fresh horses.[11] These messengers quickly communicated instructions and intelligence as required. The Khan also saw to the development of a code of law, called the *yassaq*. The Mongols' harsh methods did yield them a pacified empire, and the Khan seemed to allow anything that did not affect the security of the Mongols, such as freedom of religion. "Under my rule everyone may pray to any god he pleases."[12]

Legacy and Speculation

Alexander is generally considered to have had a huge civilizing influence. His wars of conquest are seen as having opened up commerce between Europe and the Middle East and beyond[13]; and his transmission of Greek culture across the Mediterranean is seen as not only laying the foundation for the Roman Empire, but also for the growth of Christianity.[14] So many of today's languages have roots that are Greek or Latin in origin; so much of the world's storehouse of knowledge began with the Greeks.

Alexander also founded 70 cities, the most famous of which was Alexandria in Egypt, in 331 BC. This was to have been his world capital, and his successors accumulated there the greatest library in ancient times. The library may have contained anywhere from 200,000 to half a million volumes. It was at Alexandria, for example, that scientists first worked out the circumference of the world. Its subsequent destruction in 642 AD was perhaps the greatest act of vandalism in history, and contributed to the nadir of the Dark Ages.

In summation, Alexander's wars of conquest served to break the barriers preventing the spread of culture, religion, knowledge, and peoples. If Alexander did not die so young and so suddenly, it is reasonable to assume that he would have embarked on other wars of conquest his next target was Arabia, and he was starting to worry about the Italian peninsula, for example. It is also reasonable to assume that he would have built a suitable imperial machinery, based on tolerance and respect. It may well have been that the thousand year empire of the Romans would have had a different capital.

If we see the spread of Greek culture as Alexander's legacy, and the city of Alexandria as his monument, what comparable monument marks the passage of Genghis Khan? The report card is somewhat mixed. There were the deserts of Central Asia, where the Mongols deliberately massacred entire peoples, and

destroyed irrigation works. There was also the opening of the famous trade routes between Europe and China, possible only because of the peace across Asia imposed by the Mongols.

Unlike the Macedonians, the magnificent fighting machine built by Genghis Khan would continue on to greater glory, for the next 150 years. It is reasonable to speculate that if the Khan had not lived so long, the Mongol empire might have crumbled just as quickly as the Macedonians. The descendants of millions of innocents might well be alive today.

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Islam and the West/Rest: Perspectives on the International Impact of Islam

Mr Toh Ee Loong

The Sep 11 attacks have focused public attention on the role of religion in global security and, more specifically, on the impact of the rise of Islam as a significant political force in the international and domestic arenas. This article will first give an overview of the jihadist or confrontational interpretation of Islamic-Western relations. In contrast to this school of thought, the ideas of the proponents of 'inter-civilisational dialogue' will be discussed. Finally, this article concludes with some observations about the relevance and importance of these debates to Singapore.

Leaders and supporters of the war on terrorism have repeatedly emphasised that although the perpetrators mostly claimed belief in Islam, the war on terrorism is not a war on Islam. They took pains to stress that US-led military, diplomatic and economic action against the terrorists was not the consequence of a 'clash of civilisations'. The aforementioned phrase was popularised by Samuel P. Huntington's 1993 Foreign Affairs article 'The Clash of Civilisations?' and his 1997 book The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order. Huntington's work is seen as the most prominent statement on why Islamic-Western relations are and will be confrontational and even violent.

Jihad vs. MacWorld[1]

Huntington stated that religion is 'a central defining characteristic of civilisations'[2] and therefore at the centre of the 'clash of civilisations'. He questioned the assumption that the West and Islam can live peacefully together, and that the West only has problems with Islamic extremists who resort to violence. He claimed hat 'fourteen hundred years of history demonstrate otherwise'[3] citing the Crusades, the re-conquest of the Iberian peninsula, the weakening of the Ottoman Empire and the march of Western colonialism. Further-more, he discussed how Islam and the Christian-infused West have serious differences over the relationship between religion and the state the former seeing Islam as a 'way of life transcending and uniting religion and politics versus the Western Christian concept of separate realms of God and Caesar.'[4] The Islamist concept of *din wa dawla*(unity of religion and state) underlies the sovereignty of *Allah* as the source of governance, with human legislation considered as heresy which questions *Allah*'s sovereignty.[5] Huntington also reasoned that as both Islam and Christianity are monotheistic (seeing things in black-and-white, "us-vs.-the-damned" terms), universalistic (claiming a monopoly of truth for all humans) and missionary (seeking to convert all to their faith), intolerance of the other easily erupts into *jihad* or crusade.[6]

Furthermore, Huntington cites numerous factors that, he claims, exacerbated conflict between Islam and the West in the 20th century. First, he points to the Muslim demographic bulge of young and disaffected people making rich recruiting grounds for Islamic extremists. Second, he finds renewed faith and assertiveness of Muslims in their distinctiveness and worth *vis-a-vis* the West. Thirdly, international Western (US-led) hegemony, founded on its military, economic, financial and technological power has bred tremendous envy and resentment in the Muslim world, especially when that power is used against Islamic interests (Western support for Israel against the Palestinians is one such grievance). Fourth, the end of the Cold War and the defeat of Communism had caused the West and Islam to lose a common enemy. Fifth, he claims that increased interaction between Western and Muslim societies may have actually increased mutual senses of difference and caused decline in mutual tolerance.[7]

In addition, the confrontation school of thought often cites how the Islamic interpretation of international relations divides the world into *dar al Islam* (the House of Islam) and *dar al Harb* (the House of the Sword). The former would be internally peaceful but would be perpetually at war with the latter.[8] In this vein, Qutb argued that Islam only recognised two societies: the Islamic society and *jahili* (wilfully ignorant of Islam)

society. In the Islamic society, Islam is followed in 'creed, practice, rules of life, institutions, morals and behaviour. The *jahili* society is the society in which Islam is not followed.'[9] The Muslim is surrounded by wilful ignorance or active opposition to Islam and *jihad* continues until the Day of Judgement.

Yusuf al-Qaradawi, a prominent Islamist writer, has also been cited as advocating the overthrow of the existing international order which is predicated on *hulul mustawaradah* (imported models) and replaced by *hall al-Islami* (Islamic solution) which seems to repudiate the concept of popular sovereignty and democracy upon which most modern states today are based on. The current international order, embodied by the *al-asr al Ameriki* (the American Age or *pax Americana*), should be supplanted with *hakimiyyat Allah* (rule of Allah) and *nizam Islami* (Islamic system of government) based on assumptions of divine order rather than temporal political legitimacy. The establishment of such a global Islamic system would be the one and only guarantee of 'world peace'.[10]

With such thundering and provocative proclamations, it is not surprising that, for some, Islamic fundamentalism or Political Islam are the next big threat after Communism and that armed conflict between Western and Islamic societies is seen as inevitable. *Jihad* is seen to be 'so powerful that, unlike most modern states, it has no difficulty finding volunteers ready to commit suicide for its sake'[11] and, in this context, Islam is seen as the motivating ideology behind the Sep 11 attacks. However, 'the realities of Muslim politics reflect a far more complex and dynamic reality. Voices of conflict and confrontation are accompanied in significant ways by those of dialogue and cooperation.'[12]

Possibilities of Peaceful Co-existence

In the wake of the Sep 11 attacks, the *jihadist* view has extended its inroads into the popular imagination of the non-Islamic world. The invocation of Islam by the perpetrators of Sep 11 and by their backers, like Osama Bin Laden and the Taliban, has only added to the impression that the *jihadist* explanation is the most feasible one. The terrorists might even have hoped to draw an unfocused over-reaction from the US against Muslims in general, setting off a 'clash of civilisations' and thus embroil Muslim populations, societies and states in violent conflict against their Western counterparts.

In order to move beyond a *jihadist* perspective, a more sophisticated understanding of the Islamic view of international relations needs to be discussed. For example, the categories of *dar al Islam* and *dar al Harb*, as cited above, are seen to be proof of Islam's inherently uncompromising and aggressive nature. However, in Islamic scholarship, there exists a third category of *dar al sulh* which is used to 'designate states which, though not themselves subscribing to the faith, had entered into treaty relations with the Muslim world.'[13] This is an example of one of the possibilities, internal to Islamic thinking, that allows for peaceful relations between Muslim and non-Muslim polities.

Fred Halliday, Professor of International Relations at the London School of Economics, has pointed out that 'the Islamic tradition distinguishes between *jihad*, which is legitimate, and *ghazu*, invasion, or *adwan*, aggression, which are not.'[14] He saw no inherent association between Islam and terrorism, stating that 'it is nonsense to seek the *causes*, as distinct from *legitimation*, of violence in the texts or tradition of any religion.'[15]

With respect to the incompatibility of Islam and the modern, secular state as supposed by those who point to the Islamic non-separation of faith and state (*din wa dawla*), Husain Fawzi al-Najjar has been cited as arguing that no one authentic text in the classical Islamic sources supports the above concept. He said that there is 'nothing in the Islamic *sharia* that compels one to bind religion to any state setting. The *sharia* does not deal with any specific system of government.' Furthermore, he argued 'we do not believe that Muhammad came to establish a kingdom or a state. He was simply a Prophet and messenger to all mankind Islam does not oblige the people to submit to this mission The Koran clearly says, "There shall be no compulsion in religion" (*sura* al-Baqarah, verse 256).'[16]

More recent moderate perspectives can also be garnered from the writings of Anwar Ibrahim, former deputy prime minister of Malaysia, and Mohammad Khatami, president of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Anwar

prioritised economic and social justice over the imposition of Islamic statehood and law, arguing that through the pursuit of economic and social justice as well as equality, people could transcend their differences without eliminating their distinctiveness. Through *ijtihad* (informed independent analysis) and the values of *al-adl* (justice), *al-tasamuh* (tolerance) and *al-rahmah* (compassion), Huntington's basic assumption of 'profound and unbridgeable differences between civilisations'[17] could be rejected. Civilisational dialogue, as 'an encounter among equals, between cherished ideals and values that will serve to challenge our pride and end our prejudices'[18], is necessary for human survival and progress and 'a precondition for the establishment of a *convivencia*, a harmonious and enriching experience of living together among people of diverse religions and cultures.'[19]

Khatami condemned 'vicious terrorists who concoct weapons out of religion' as 'superficial literalists clinging to simplistic ideas' and were unable to understand how they were playing into the hands of nihilistic philosophies and the 'most decadent ideologies'.[20] Navigating between Westoxicated and tradition-bound approaches, he stressed that 'civilisations change and there is no such thing as an ultimate and eternal civilisation.'[21] He attached great importance to dialogue as a way to avoid destructive conflict. In this vein, all humans were invited to join their efforts in *ta'awon*, that is, solidarity to do good. However, dialogue is 'not a passive policy of accommodation, it is a competitive strategy for strengthening and transforming Islamic civilisation [absorbing] the good qualities of the West while rejecting its negative aspects'[22] leading one to draw possible parallels with Meiji Japan's formula of 'Western technology, Japanese spirit.'

These above thinkers show that there is no monolithic Islamic civilisation (as there is no monolithic 'Western' civilisation). They share a common faith, at times articulate a worldview inspired by Islamic ideas, and draw on Islam as a source of legitimacy and mobilisation. 'Still, their visions, goals, and strategies are shaped as much by specific historical and socio-political contexts as by faith.'[23] Most importantly, for the purposes of this article, they argue that peaceful relations between Islam and the rest of humanity is not only possible but also desirable, and that a 'clash of civilisations' is by no means inevitable or essential to the nature of Islam.

Conclusion

Back home, the vocal support of Singapore for the US-led war on terrorism and the Internal Security Department's (ISD) arrests of the members of a local Jemaah Islamiah terrorist cell[24] gives substance and immediacy to the above debates. A holistic understanding of Islam and its international impact is necessary for good relations with Malaysia and Indonesia as well as for internal inter-racial and inter-religious harmony. As many non-Muslims do not have a very close understanding of Islam, those who have only been exposed to the confrontational side of the debate may come to assume that Muslims becoming more religious is a sufficient condition or a necessary condition for an increase in violence and terrorism to occur.[25] Therefore purely *jihadist* perspectives need to be critically examined and balanced against other interpretations.

Brought to prominence by the Sep 11 attacks, the *jihadist* or confrontational interpretation of Islam's international impact emphasises the incompatibilities between Islamic and Western political cultures, stressing unbridgeable differences leading inevitably to violent conflict. The 'dialogue' school of thought, while recognising differences and grievances, argues that Islam is not unavoidably headed for a 'clash of civilisations' with the West/rest. This latter point of view, sometimes drawing on sources internal to Islamic scholarship, is important to keeping a balanced perspective of Islam in international politics and ethno-religiously diverse societies.

Endnotes

1 Title of Benjamin Barber's 1995 book.

2 Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Touchstone Simon and Schuster, 1997), 47.

3 Ibid, 209.

4 Ibid, 210.

5 Bassam Tibi, 'Post-Bipolar Order in Crisis: The Challenge of Political Islam', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 29, no.3 (2000): 850, 852.

6 Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilisations*, 210-1.

7 Ibid, 211.

8 Martin van Creveld, *The Transformation of War* (London: Free Press, 1991), 139. Also see Geoffrey Stern's *The Structure of International Society* (London: Pinter, 2000) and Bassam Tibi, 'Post-Bipolar Order in Crisis: The Challenge of Political Islam', 849.

9 Sayyid Qutb, quoted in John L. Esposito and John O. Voll, 'Islam and the West: Muslim Voices of Dialogue', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 29, no.3 (2000): 615-6. Qutb was executed in 1966.

10 Bassam Tibi, 'Post-Bipolar Order in Crisis: The Challenge of Political Islam', 848-9.

11 Martin van Creveld, *The Transformation of War*, 142.

12 John L. Esposito and John O. Voll, 'Islam and the West: Muslim Voices of Dialogue', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 29, no.3 (2000): 637.

13 Martin van Creveld, *The Transformation of War*, 139.

14 Fred Halliday, *Nation and Religion in the Middle East* (London: Saqi Books, 2000), 80.

15 ibid, 79. Emphasis added.

16 Husain Fawzi al-Najjar (1977) quoted in Bassam Tibi, 'Post-Bipolar Order in Crisis: The Challenge of Political Islam', 852. A similar argument is expressed by Abd al-Raziq's *al-Islam wa usul al-hukm* (1925).

17 John L. Esposito and John O. Voll, 'Islam and the West: Muslim Voices of Dialogue', 624.

18 Quoted from Anwar Ibrahim, *The Asian Renaissance* (Singapore: Times Books International, 1996) in ibid.

19 Quoted from Anwar Ibrahim, *The Need for Civilisational Dialogue* in ibid.

20 'Khatami's view', *The Economist*, 24 Nov 2001.

21 Khatami, *Islam, Liberty and Development* quoted in ibid, 628-9.

22 Ibid, 629.

23 Ibid, 638.

24 *The Straits Times*, 11 Jan 2002.

25 Condition, necessary/sufficient: In logic, 'if p is a necessary condition of q, then q cannot be true unless p is true. If p is a sufficient condition of q, then given that p is true, q is so as well. Thus steering well is a necessary condition of driving well, but it is not sufficient, for one can steer well but drive badly for other reasons. Confusion may result if the distinction is not heeded.' Simon Blackburn, *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 73. In causal relations, a necessary condition for the occurrence of an event is a state of affairs without which the event cannot happen, while a sufficient condition is a state of affairs that guarantees that it will happen.

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Unclenching the Fisted Hand: Globalisation and Military Multilateralism

by COL Jimmy Tan

The current era of globalisation may have been slowed down by the general economic downturn and side-tracked by the tragic 9-11 attacks, but it is unlikely to be derailed. As the emerging economic creed of the 21st century, it continues to look every bit as unstoppable as the advancing tide of human history. To many people, globalisation is synonymous with "the spread of free-market capitalism to virtually every country in the world."[1] It feeds on one central idea, that of hyper-capitalist gains through a freeing up of global trade and capital flows. It rides on a powerful medium of transmission, that of borderless global communications and information technology, at internet speed. Even as dissenting voices reverberate in protest from Seattle to Sydney to Doha, globalisation is holding out, if not winning out. This is the stark reality in East Asia. Countries, which once worshipped autarky and import-substitution, have now all, in varying degrees of (dis)comfort, converted to the free-market faith.

But globalisation is not just an economic phenomenon; it has social, political and military ramifications. Where the military nexus is concerned, it used to be that the "fisted hand" was what broke down the barriers to trade before the "invisible hand" of commerce took over. This was pointedly the case during the Age of Colonisation and Empires where gun-boat diplomacy ruled the waves and armies marched to carve out the landscape into economic pies. The "invisible hand" followed the "fisted hand", not the other way round. Then, "might was right" and economically profitable. Now it seems the sequence does not matter anymore; the "invisible hand" is asserting itself rather independently of all considerations. Globalisation, as the "invisible hand" of geoeconomics, is contagious as much as it remains contentious. Indeed, a point of view has emerged that the "invisible hand" of geoeconomics has unclenched the "fisted hand" of geopolitics so much that the role of the military has been recast. Where do East Asian militaries stand on this issue?

Globalisation as Destiny?

Globalisation has been a blessing and a disruption to East Asia's growth trajectory. At the height of East Asia's growth in the 80s and 90s, huge capital inflows were fuelling impressive economic expansion; and almost as dramatically as the funds had flowed in, they suddenly took flight in mid-97, triggering a financial crisis. In many parts of East Asia, political instability then set in. The crisis has since bottomed out, and things are looking more stable, if not up. Globalisation's record in East Asia has thus far been mixed, but the drift towards increased globalisation is undeniable. Indeed, given some signs of an economic recovery and an apparent regional political will to restore pre-crisis growth rates, many countries in East Asia are signalling that the waves of globalisation can no longer be dammed. In fact, there is a need to quickly learn to surf them well, with greater transparency and openness. For the alternative is a retrogressive slide into impoverishment based on misguided economic nationalism. In globalising its economies, East Asia has let in the vices along with the virtues; as Deng Xiaoping once said in opening up China, "Open the windows, breathe the fresh air and at the same time fight the flies and insects."[2]

If globalisation is East Asia's destiny, the question is what it portends for the region's future. Taking the long view of history, East Asia has never been more interconnected than it is today. To a large extent, this is because we are now more e-connected and e-enabled in the digital age of globalisation. Rather than the digital divide, we may just reap the digital dividend. As the dividend multiplies across a broadening spectrum of globalised transactions, the mutual dependence of East Asian countries would grow. The more complex the interdependence, the more deeply entwined would be the fates of East Asian states. The interlocking of mutual national fates should logically be peace enhancing. To be sure, interdependence does not prevent war but it does restrain tendencies for conflict, all things being equal. The thesis is simple enough: as the benefits of peace rise, so do the costs of war; when cold calculation puts a high price tag on war, states will be disinclined to fight them. Still, war is not banished, because even the deepest

interdependence cannot eliminate insecurity or vanquish latent nationalism. Thus when Norman Angell wrote in *The Great Illusion* before 1914 that "elaborate interdependence, not only in the economic sense, but in every sense" among the Powers of that era, guaranteed "the good behaviour of one state to another"[3], World War One, which followed, was to shatter the great illusion.

Reality of Globalisation in the Security Environment of East Asia

With this caveat, the expanding web of interdependence in East Asia today should not lead us into thinking that war is *passe* - certainly not when there is a legacy of unresolved inter-state problems. Instead, the role of the military is not to add to regional anxieties but to build a climate of trust to overlay the conflict-dampening effect of interdependence. The potential for inter-state conflicts within the East Asian region has remained fundamentally the same despite some positive developments. As the economic, military and political relations among the major powers continue to shift, there is likelihood for greater tension to arise from unresolved disputes in the region. The potential flashpoints remain in the disputes in the South China Seas, the Taiwan Straits and the Korean Peninsula. The most serious of these flashpoints, the Spratlys islands, has the potential to forment armed conflict between the claimant states because of the problematic nature of the sovereignty and resource issues which lie at the heart of the dispute.

The growing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their delivery systems also poses a grave security threat. The spread of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons has an adverse impact on the non-proliferation regime and could unleash an arms race. If such weapons become more widely available, the risk they pose to unstable, tension-ridden areas will increase. Although they may have receded a little into the background as globalisation creates new opportunities for co-operation, these old security threats of territorial disputes and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction continue to be a concern for many East Asian states.

There is a preponderance of intra-state conflicts, which are fuelled by ethnicity, religion and the challenge against central authority. There have also been upheavals and unrest that come with political transitions, such as in Cambodia, Indonesia and East Timor. Such political and social upheavals continue to fuel pockets of instability throughout the East Asian region. The impact of such intra-state political and social unrest may not be confined within national borders. They can spill over to affect the security of neighbouring states. Political instability in Indonesia has not been confined to East Timor. There were serious outbreaks of ethnic and religious violence in Aceh, Kalimantan and Ambon in 1998 and 1999, which on several occasions, spilled over and affected Indonesia's relations with neighbouring states. Furthermore, the rise in the Southeast Asian region of cross-border terrorism activities linked to global terrorist networks pose an increasingly serious challenge to state authority and law enforcement agencies. The seemingly intractable domestic political problems of some states in Southeast Asia, compounded by the terrorism problem, remain a primary source for regional instability and loss in confidence.

Non-traditional security issues are increasingly shifting from the periphery to the centre of security concerns of states and people. These issues are multidimensional, complex and inter-connected. The same globalising forces that have brought us closer together in the marketplace have brought with them security threats of a diverse nature ranging from environmental problems to terrorist acts. Many countries are finding that they cannot resolve these security challenges on their own, as they transcend borders and cannot be dealt with except through co-operative efforts across borders. Several transnational issues will have long-term security implications for East Asia. Population increases and environmental degradation will increase the likelihood of future conflicts over scarce natural resources, such as fish and oil.

Crime has also intruded into the strategic domain, blurring the distinction between military and law enforcement issues and changing the way security is conceptualised. People smuggling, drug trafficking and poaching by foreign fishing vessels so-called "threats without enemies" -represent another kind of security problem for the region. The activities and power of transnational organised crime has grown enormously in the globalised world. This is an area where there may increasingly be calls for a role for the military. Transnational criminal activities such as piracy, sea-robberies, drug trafficking and cross border terrorist attacks pose a challenge in terms of the para-military nature as well as the problem of cross border

jurisdiction. The Filipino military undertook operations in Jolo Island to try to suppress the radical Muslim Abu Sayyaf gang which claimed to be seeking independence from the predominantly Christian Philippines. The kidnapping and hostage taking activities of the gang and the potential exodus of refugees were perceived to be serious enough for the Malaysians to declare it a threat to its sovereignty, thereby putting the response under the purview of the military. The criminal nature of such insurgent movements in Southeast Asia that were once motivated primarily by ideology is a disturbing feature of the new security environment. Countries in this region need to be more active in condemning and countering kidnappings, hostage-taking, drug trafficking and other criminal practices like terrorism because they are undermining Southeast Asia's previously hard won reputation as a region of peace and co-operation.

Another phenomenon of the security environment is the increased need for humanitarian assistance. Hardships are imposed on the people hit by natural disasters like earthquakes and man-made disasters like civil conflicts. Military forces are playing a major role in humanitarian and disaster relief operations, as they are ideally suited for these types of operations. They bring an 'instantaneous infrastructure' to a disaster location because of their ability to repair structures, provide communications and health services, and conduct food distribution, among other roles.

Whither the Military in East Asia?

Certainly the changing inter-state relationships, the broadening definition of security and the new security challenges is putting increasing pressure and expectations on the military to re-examine its traditional role as protector of national sovereignty and territorial integrity. However, this is not to suggest that the military will find its traditional role redundant. It was Napoleon who said, "Uncertainty is the essence of war; surprise its rule."[4] Military history is rich with surprise attacks and preserving conventional military capability is still vital if for no reasons other than deterrence. Given the geo-politics of the East Asian region, with its diversity, its historical suspicions, the shifting power balance, and the many unresolved conflicts, it would be prudent for regional military forces to continue to maintain a conventional capability and traditional strategy of deterrence.

Nevertheless, military forces in the region must now, in addition, pay serious attention to non-traditional forms of conflicts. In an age of interdependence, these non-traditional conflicts are a potential threat to regional stability. Many of these non-traditional security problems in East Asia are multinational in nature and will demand multilateral solutions e.g. the regional haze problem and security issues such as arms trafficking and terrorism. Tackling these threats would require co-operation and co-ordination among many agencies. Such co-operation would have to take place both at the national as well as at the regional level. More often than not, military forces would have to work hand-in-hand with military forces and civil security agencies of overseas partners in a regional security co-operative framework involving several countries, as no single country can tackle the many new threats effectively. This means that the military must embrace multilateral co-operation and dialogue on issues of security concern ranging from piracy to disaster relief.

Apart from the changing threat perception, other geopolitical developments support the case for greater regional security co-operation in East Asia. With growing interdependence, regions and regional approaches will become more acceptable and important in East Asia. Although economic interdependence is not a guarantee of peace, it has transformed international relations in East Asia and laid the initial foundation for more advanced forms of security co-operation and the primacy of rule of law. The role of the US military presence in ensuring regional security may someday diminish in scope, however unlikely for now, as a result of a shift in domestic politics and the emphasis on economic prosperity. In such an event, regional peace would have to be underwritten by some form of co-operative regional security architecture that is likely to be multilateral in nature. Even if the US military remains the key player in the region, its overall effectiveness would still rely on regional consensus and mechanisms for policy co-ordination and consultation.

History of Regional Security Co-operation

In the effort to further regional security co-operation, regional military forces can draw on the record of the region's history of security co-operation, both multilaterally and bilaterally. There are already some existing multilateral and bilateral institutions that have served us well. Progress has been made in the institutionalisation of post Cold War multilateral security co-operation in this region. Indeed, these multilateral regional security institutions will grow in importance, as security challenges become more diverse and trans-border in nature. During the past decade, bilateral co-operation between regional countries has grown in depth and scope.

The longevity of the Five-Power Defence Arrangement (FPDA) demonstrates the importance and effectiveness of working and training together. Originally set up in 1971 for the defence of Singapore and Malaysia following Britain's decision to pull out of the region, the FPDA continues to be relevant today. Although the strategic environment has changed, FPDA members have succeeded in keeping the arrangements relevant. FPDA acts as a psychological and political deterrent to aggression against Singapore and Malaysia. The regular exercises conducted by the FPDA are also of professional value to the member countries. It has also acted as a platform for many professional exchanges and training to enhance inter-operability. The FPDA countries in general contribute to regional stability. Last year's *Ex Stardex*, one of a series of combined and joint maritime and air exercises, is another successful example of military co-operation among the countries of the FPDA.

Despite the many criticisms levelled at ASEAN, it remains a useful political forum and dialogue opportunity for member states. By accommodating the needs of its member states and its multi-track approach, it has continued to provide multiple channels for co-operation and dialogue. In the absence of a better alternative, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) remains a useful mechanism for developing confidence and understanding between regional countries and extra-regional partners on security issues. It started modestly as a political dialogue mechanism but has made considerable progress over the years using a three-stage roadmap from confidence-building to preventive diplomacy to elaboration of approaches to conflict. Its importance may appear to have wavered somewhat at the start of the new millennium with growing criticisms over its lack of visible progress and image as a talk-shop. But there is still sustained interest in it as a key forum for substantive discussions on political and security issues in the region. A myriad of confidence building measures (CBM) in the areas of disaster relief, search and rescue, and peacekeeping is now conducted under the ARF's ambit and initial progress is also being made in the area of preventive diplomacy. Further areas for multilateral co-operation in combating transnational crime like piracy and terrorism breathe fresh promise for the forum. In respect of which, the ARF's agenda has also already expanded to include transnational issues such as smuggling of small arms, piracy and illegal migration. At a recent key speech, Singapore's DPM Tony Tan stressed that in an age where terrorism has become a "cancer of global proportion more can still be done to enhance multilateral security structures". In other words, nations must also co-operate and share intelligence and information. And with regards to the ARF: "There is scope for defence officials to play a more effective role in the ARF to improve the robustness of our responses to the security challenges in the 21st century."[5]

Aside from formal institutions such as the FPDA and ARF, there is a growing trend towards multilateral activities involving the military. These activities promote regional interaction among military personnel in the region. The SAF hosted several multilateral forums such as the Pacific Army Chiefs Conference, the Millennium Air Power Conference and the Combined Humanitarian Assistance Response Training (CHART). The Royal Australian Navy hosted a Mine Countermeasure seminar. Japan too has hosted a number of seminars, such as the Asia Pacific Security Seminar, the International Seminar for Military Science and the Multilateral Logistics Staff Talks. These have provided an opportunity for regional military personnel to interact in an informal setting. Such interactions would provide a strong foundation for any future co-operation.

Another form of multilateral activity is through exercises involving several regional military forces. The past few years' *Ex Cobra Gold*, an US-Thai exercise (in which Singapore became a full participant in 2000), have included an increasing number of observers from regional armed forces.*Ex Pacific Reach*, a multilateral submarine rescue exercise conducted in 2000 involved navies from the US, Japan, South Korea and

Singapore as well as several regional observers. In 2001, *Ex Team Challenge* built on existing bilateral exercises and linked them in a regional exercise framework, designed to improve interoperability among the military forces of Thailand, Singapore, Australia and the US. Such exercises and forums such as PACC and MAPC provide a neutral basis on which dialogue and subsequently more substantive co-operation can take place. Teamwork, developed through military dialogue and regional exercises on common tasks, such as SAR, peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, promotes understanding, interoperability and builds confidence in each other's capabilities. More multilateral exercises are being planned for the future.

Bilateral exercises and co-operation also supplement the multilateral effort in building a regional security framework and promoting military co-operation. The SAF conducts bilateral exercises and training with armed forces in the region. We have exercises with our neighbours such as Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand as well as with extra-regional countries such as the US, Australia and New Zealand. The Indonesia-Singapore Co-ordinated Patrol (or ISCP) has helped reduce the incidence of sea robbery in the Singapore Strait. Under the ISCP arrangement, Singapore and Indonesia established direct communications channels to facilitate the exchange of information with regard to sea robbery activities and the procedure for cross-border pursuit.

Critical Success Factors

A quick glimpse into the thinking behind security co-operation in the region provides clues to some of the critical success factors. The development of such regional security co-operative frameworks in East Asia will have to consider the unique historical and cultural roots. East Asia has not developed the kinds of regional security mechanisms and institutions as those in Europe. Notwithstanding the growing emphasis on regional security co-operative initiatives that require a focus on mutual interests, the geo-strategic landscape in East Asia is pre-dominantly based on a realist perspective where national interests define relations between states. As such, the design and progress of security co-operation should not threaten or infringe on the core national interests of another nation. These include territorial claims and sovereignty issues, defence capabilities, and internal politics. To sum up, the formulation and progress of such regional co-operative arrangements is illustrated in the "ASEAN way". This means progress is made at a gradual pace and based on a building block approach. According to the ARF Concept Paper, "The ARF should progress at a pace comfortable to all participants."[6] The ASEAN way also means that decisions are made by consensus after extensive consultations. Although this is often a laborious process a constant source of criticism - it is a necessary one as some progress towards regional security co-operation would only be possible if an individual country's legitimate concerns are addressed and regional sensitivities are respected. For all purposes and intents, multilateralism cannot be forced. It therefore cannot help but be inclusive and not exclusive in orientation. The trick is not to let it stall but to move it along getting somewhere is perhaps better than getting nowhere.

The Way Ahead for the Military

Military forces have an integral role in shaping a co-operative security architecture, which we will need to ensure the continued peace and stability of this region. Within a regional framework, the military should build on the existing foundation of bilateral and multilateral co-operative mechanisms. The military can help to strengthen this foundation through forging closer defence ties and promoting military exchanges and exercises. The opportunity for greater interaction, afforded by these bilateral and multilateral mechanisms, enable the military to enhance mutual trust and confidence. Without greater mutual trust and confidence, states cannot effectively pool their sovereignty together to deal with common security challenges.

The military's role in defence diplomacy also provide useful platforms like defence dialogue and interactions, which serve as additional channels for countries to resolve differences and clarify misunderstandings. This will help to prevent miscalculations, and entrench a culture of peaceful resolution of disputes in the region. Such opportunities for increased interaction and networking can also form the basis for exploring new areas of co-operation. A starting point could be a bilateral or multilateral forum that is existing or organised specifically to deal with a particular issue. This could graduate on to regional exercises and training.

Consequently a comfort level may be reached to explore the formulation of an operational framework. In a sense, this proposed approach *willy nilly* reflects, not rejects, the reality of the so-called ASEAN way of co-operation.

For the near term, some possible ways to move forward in multilateral co-operation can be explored. The military should consider more effective participation and greater profile at regional security forums. A Defence Ministers' Meeting could be organised under the auspices of the ARF. The hosting of existing regional forums could perhaps be rotated to more countries in the region and to involve participants at different levels of the hierarchy. This would allow greater opportunities for the participants to better appreciate the particular situations in different countries. We could also build upon existing exercises to involve more regional countries. For example, *Ex Pacific Reach* could be a model for establishing a regional SAR exercise. On the more informal basis, we could follow the example of the ASEAN Rifle Meet by organising a regional Armed Forces Friendship Games, where servicemen and women at all levels could meet and compete in friendly competition.

For the long term, there should perhaps be an initiative to outline a roadmap for security co-operation among regional military forces. This would have to adopt an evolutionary approach similar to that taken by the ARF in a three-stage process of going from confidence building through preventive diplomacy to elaboration of approaches to conflict. Military co-operation at the regional level could evolve from confidence building in the near term through regular exchanges and forums. This can gradually move on to some limited operational mechanism for dealing with some of the non-conventional security threats. This could eventually evolve into the build-up of some form of combined operational capability for regional security in the long term.

Conclusion

Globalisation has thrown up new challenges for military forces in East Asia. At present many East Asian states are grappling with the challenge of determining the appropriate role for military forces in the new globalised security environment. Given the realpolitik in East Asia, core warfighting capabilities would have to be maintained. While the international security environment is changing, its direction and outcome are not clear. As a result, there is a greater requirement for military and political leaders to work together so as to smoothen the transition for the military into its new role. With globalisation, there will be a greater role for military forces to actively enhance peace rather than to merely deter war. Military forces in East Asia would have to seriously consider unclenching at least one of their "fisted hands" to offer a handshake of defence diplomacy to lock in the peace dividend of interdependence. The near-term objective would be transparency and confidence building and the longer-term objective would be regional peace and stability. Military forces in the region would do well to leverage on the existing bilateral and multilateral mechanisms to strengthen the region's capacity to deal collectively with transnational security challenges within a regional security co-operative framework.

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Endnotes

1. Thomas Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (London: Harper Collins, 1999), 8.

2. George J. Church, "Man of the Year Deng Xiaoping: Deng Xiaoping leads a far-reaching, audacious but risky Second Revolution," *Time*, Vol. 127 No. 1, 6 January 1986, 16.

3. Norman Angell, *The Great Illusion*, (London, 1913), quoted in Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War* (London: Penguin Books, 1998), 21.

4. Michael Handel, "Intelligence and the Problem of Strategic Surprise," *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, September 1984, 270.

5. DPM Tony Tan was delivering the inaugural address (on 24 Feb 2002), ahead of the following day's Asia-Pacific Security Conference, held alongside the Asian Aerospace 2002 exhibition in Singapore. See *The Straits Times*, (25 Feb 2002), p. 1.

6. ASEAN Senior Officials, "The ASEAN Regional Forum: A Concept Paper," May 1995, 4.

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1. Angell, Norman, *The Great Illusion*. London, 1913, quoted in Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War*. London: Penguin Books, 1998.

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Global White Powder Kegs the Smoking Gun of Drug Money & Dirty Wars

by MAJ Irvin Lim Fang Jau & LT Douglas Tastad

Many view economic interdependence as a vital imperative for promoting worldwide peace and stability. The world should therefore become more borderless and open to trade. There is however one problem; there is one trade that is neither beneficial nor respectful of borders, and is deeply inimical to peace and stability. In several regions of the world, the largest security threat emanates from the trade in drugs. Part of a broad swathe of transnational security problems known as "Grey-Area Phenomena"[1], the relatively huge sums of money that can be made in the illicit drug business are, in many instances, used to subvert or topple shaky governments. In some cases, governments themselves become involved in the trade to stave off defeat at the hands of rebels funded by narcotics. As the demand for drugs in the West is as strong as ever, the money available to combatants in the drug producing areas continues to grow. While drugs along with the dirty money they inject into the underground economy may not be at the heart of many of the conflicts in which they play a part, the money made off narcotics production and trafficking certainly acts to both catalyze and sustain conflict. Increasingly, the problems stemming from these conflicts inflamed by drug production and trafficking are not contained within the host country. With whole regions hanging in the balance, there seem to be few viable solutions to this ever-increasing problem.

There are several conflicts of a very diverse nature in which drugs have played a part or are continuing to have an impact. The examples in this paper centre round countries that have experienced or are currently experiencing conflict in which narcotics has played a key funding role. Colombia continues to be embroiled in a life and death struggle between the government and narco-guerrillas that are increasing in strength day after day. Myanmar is an example of government that is itself tapping revenues from drug production to battle the several drug producing rebel groups that it faces. Afghanistan is a country that is overrun by feuding groups utilizing profits from the huge amounts of heroin produced in the country. Until recently at least, the Taliban regime that was in power in Afghanistan had produced and taxed heroin at an expanding rate as it fought to consolidate its power. By most accounts, the drug problem there has not ended with the recent Taliban overthrow, and has the potential to create further destabilization. Somalia experienced a conflict fueled by the importation rather than the export of a drug. At other end of the drug needle, Lebanon is one of the early examples of drug-financed conflict and is one of the few success stories. For years, heroin and hashish production in the Bekaa valley had sustained the different elements vying for power within the fractious country. But the drug problem has since been 'desecuritized', if not completely eradicated. All in all, the five countries selected as examples of drug induced and sustained conflicts paint a grave picture for areas of the Third World with the means to produce drugs or a culture of drug-trafficking. Each one of the above conflict scenarios is different; however, each is to some degree a product of the interaction between drugs, money and groups willing to use the power that comes out of the barrel of a gun to achieve their aims.

Colombia

Colombia sits on the northern coast of South America just a few hours by plane from the United States. Its climate, terrain and geographic position make it ideal for the production of cocaine and heroin. Colombia produces 80% of the cocaine and 60% of the heroin making its way into the United States.[2] Those figures represent billions of dollars a year flowing into Colombia. Previously, the vast majority of this money went to the drug cartels that controlled the business. However, the cartels were to some degree neutralized by joint American and Colombian efforts. The Marxist rebel groups that have been fighting the Colombian government for decades have stepped in to fill the vacuum. There are two rebel groups along with several right wing paramilitary groups fighting for control over Colombia's vast drug producing interior. All of these groups derive a large portion of their income from the drug trade. The Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) rebel group is the military wing of the Colombian Communist party and has 15,000 troops. Another rebel

group is the National Liberation Army (ELN) with some 5,000 fighters.[3] Ostensibly, the rebels are fighting to install a Marxist socialist regime in Colombia based on the Cuban revolution. After 34 years of fighting, the revolutionaries now control nearly half of Colombia's territory. Over 38,000 people have been killed in the civil war, and over two million people have been displaced.[4]

Over the past five years the rebel groups have made considerable gains, and the prospect for a peace accord is now as poor as it ever has been. The rebels, who now hold a military advantage in some regions, especially in the south of Colombia, are making very hefty demands at the bargaining table. FARC has recently stepped up pressure on the government with a rash of terror activities, ranging from the sabotage bombings of electrical and water plants throughout the country to air-hijack. They have been able to increase their terror activities for two reasons. First, there has been a relatively recent marriage between narco-trafficking and the rebel groups that has greatly expanded their coffers and capabilities. Second, the former Clinton Administration had slashed Colombia's military aid over concerns with human rights abuses. However, the new Bush Administration has vowed to continue to vigorously target the supply of illegal drugs in source countries. The Administration recently requested US $731 million in dedicated funds in 2003 for the Andean Counterdrug Initiative to be applied in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Peru, and Venezuela.[5] But it may already be too little too late; for some countries at least.

Despite the aggressive drug interdiction efforts by the Colombian and American governments over the years, there are clear signs that the conflict in Colombia has spread beyond its borders. Intelligence suggests that Peru's infamous *Shining Path* guerrillas are getting a fresh start through alliances with Colombia's FARC rebels and drug-traffickers. With Peru's opium production about to explode, US anti-drug efforts in the Andes are about to get more complicated.[6] As the region grapples with unstable governments and stagnating economies, the added weight of the refugee flows, smuggling and cross-border raids may prove too much for many of the floundering democracies. Even Brazil is now showing signs of concern. Brazil's government had added troops near its border with Colombia to head off potential problems. There is widespread instability within Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador, and their governments cannot help but be exasperated by the continued fighting and flow of arms and drugs across their borders.

In a testimony given before the US Congress in March of 1998, General Charles Wilhelm, Chief of the US Southern Command, warned that the conflict was spilling over into Panama, Ecuador, and especially Venezuela.[7] The problems in this region are manifold. While corruption and the smuggling of arms and drugs are rampant, perhaps the largest problem faced by Colombia's neighbors, especially Venezuela, is the large number of refugees the conflict could create. Currently, the FARC controls the border with Venezuela and attempts to prevent Colombians from fleeing across. However, thousands have already fled and continue to flee. The paramilitaries have exacerbated the situation by indiscriminately killing civilians living in rebel controlled areas to force them to flee in order to rob support from the rebels.[8] Venezuela's biggest fear is an uncontrollable influx of refugees, which is why it has done little to counteract FARC activities on its border. Some have predicted that the number of refugees that could flow across the border in the event of a FARC collapse could be as high as 60,000.[9]

Myanmar and The Golden Triangle

Closer to Southeast Asia, Myanmar, formerly Burma, faces an endemic drug problem. Making up one leg of the "Golden Triangle" which includes Northern Thailand and Laos, Myanmar was the world's second largest producer of heroin with 163,000 hectares under poppy cultivation in 1996.[10] The origins of the heroin trade in Burma go back to the opium trade of the British Empire. The opium poppy provides the base product for refined heroin. However, the modern trade in heroin is to some degree a by-product of American intervention and world demand for the drug. The early leader in the drug trade was the Nationalist Chinese Army (KMT), which fled into Indochina after their defeat at the hands of the Chinese Communists. They solidified their control of the opium trade after the very brief 1967 opium war with the Shan United Army. The CIA was heavily involved in training and equipping the KMT. The US government believed that the KMT would be useful as an anti-Communist force in the counter-insurgency battles of Indochina, but the KMT concentrated more on heroin production, trafficking and taxation. At one stage, the CIA estimated the group's dominance of the trade to be at 90% of Burma-Thailand drug trafficking.[11]

In 1975 the Burmese Army was finally able to expel the KMT, but there were plenty of ethnic, rebel and warlord groups willing to step in to fill the vacuum. The American University country study for Burma in 1983 listed 28 insurgent groups. This number includes such groups as the Karen, Shan and Wa. Although the Karen deny they are involved in the drug trade, most of the various groups derive a majority of their revenue from opium production and smuggling.[12] This drug trade continues to fuel the inter-ethnic struggle within Myanmar while it breeds new groups who want a slice of the drug money pie.

Despite the claims and best efforts of the Myanmar authorities in working to eradicate the opium that is being produced in the country, there is some question as to whether they could do it even if they wanted to. First, the government forces are clearly not in control of a large quantity of the drug producing areas. Second, the local commanders operate many of the Burmese army outposts like fiefdoms with little authority from Yangoon actually penetrating the dense jungle enclaves. Even where the government is in full control, there is reportedly evidence that some elements are complicit in opium production.[13]

The roots of the conflict in Myanmar today go back to ancient battles between the Burmese and ethnic tribes. These roots were fertilized by Britain's colonization strategy of divide and rule and their abrupt pull out, which left a weak government and a complex patchwork of local territorial alliances that created an ineradicable tendency to warlordism.[14] However, the main sustaining force in the conflict has been the huge sums of money flowing to those groups that are strong enough to stake out territory and smuggling routes for the opium they produce.

In an indication that this is no longer Myanmar's problem alone, Thailand is awash with drugs coming across the border. Over the past two years, the Thai government has faced a drug epidemic and a refugee problem on an unprecedented scale. There are currently around 100,000 Burmese refugees in Thailand, and many are in the business of smuggling amphetamines out of Myanmar. There are also reportedly 600,000 Thai youths hooked on the pills that flood across the border at the rate of 600 million per year.[15] The Thai government continues to be very concerned that the white powder trail beyond its borders threatens its already economically beleaguered state. Not surprisingly, the cross-border drug trade has been a source of constant friction with interminable border clashes between Thailand and Myanmar. As Thai LT GEN Wathanachai Chaimuangwong had put it pointedly, "What is the value of Thailand becoming more democratic if the vast majority of its young people are addicted to drugs?"[16] In fact, Thailand's drug enforcement authorities have said that up to 100 billion baht (S$4.14 billion) in drug money is being laundered annually through financial institutions in Thailand. Thailand has had to turn to bilateral and multilateral mechanisms to deal with the drug scourge. The US Army has been called in to train Thailand's newly formed Special Task Force to stem the flood of methamphetamines from Myanmar. China and the heroin-producing 'Golden Triangle' Myanmar, Laos and Thailand have also announced an anti-drugs pact late last year to step up cross-border police cooperation.[17] Such multilateral initiatives come hot on the heels of an earlier joint declaration by Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam on cooperation in drug control mid last year.[18] The battle against opium production in the Golden Triangle is set to intensify further.

Afghanistan & Central Asia

Afghanistan, much like Myanmar, had been producing huge quantities of heroin and was, until recently, led by a government that was itself involved actively in the heroin trade. Before Sep 11, the Afghan civil conflict had seemed to be slowly grinding down to a total Taliban victory over disparate rebel forces loosely cobbled together in the Northern Alliance. The 1979 Soviet invasion and its pull-out more than a decade later, had resulted in around 400,000 dead. There are numerous estimates as to the total casualties suffered by the Afghans during the ensuing civil war. One can only speculate, but there has probably been over 200,000 deaths from the fighting since the Soviet pull-out. Today, there are more than two million people living in Afghanistan who have been permanently disabled as a result of all of the fighting, land mines and disease.[19] Another direct result of the Soviet-Afghan war had been the arming of the populace. The Soviets armed and trained the communist sympathizers and the US, China and Pakistan armed any group that was willing to fight the Soviets. This had left Afghanistan bristling with weapons. At times, it appeared that the only vestiges of the modern world during the medieval days of the Taliban regime were the weaponry and heroin refineries.

During the short-lived years of Taliban rule, opium production continued to climb. A US government report had stated that the erstwhile ruling Taliban mullahs sustained their regime by taking in a tax of 10% on all opium income made by the farmers from the 39,150 hectares under poppy cultivation in 1997.[20] With the sizable prize, the Taliban had considerable resources to build up its regime.

Although the current US war against terrorism in Afghanistan has removed the Taliban regime, the heroin trade is not likely to end any time soon. For years, Afghanistan produced more opium than any other country - accounting for more than three-quarters of the world supply in 1999, according to the United Nations. In 2000, a Taliban-imposed ban on opium poppy growing[21], along with a three-year drought, slashed the country's output - though not its stockpiles - and some analysts had voiced optimism that the problem was beginning to abate. But in the days after the Sep 11 attacks in the US, a flood of opium and heroin moved out of Afghan warehouses into Pakistan, mostly through the porous border region. Small dealers have reportedly dumped their product on the market, both in Quetta and in Karachi. As of late 2001, the wholesale price for a kilogram (2.2 pounds) of heroin in Karachi, one of the world centres of the heroin trade, was one-third of the $4,800 it cost before Sep 11. Pakistani government sources predicted that tons of heroin would begin to flow from Karachi's port to Western Europe and the US once the war ends and security in the region loosens. Following the breakdown of the Taliban's brand of law and order caused by the US attacks, Afghan farmers in several provinces have reportedly been busy preparing their fields for a new poppy crop.[22] To say that the new Afghanistan government has got its work cut out for it would be an understatement. There is now little other economic activity in the country besides the production and smuggling of opium and heroin. Afghanistan will continue to remain a hotbed of conflict. Rebels and warlord groups engaging in the heroin trade continue to be well endowed financially and are able to hold on to small pockets of opium production they still control. According to a previous Radio Free Europe broadcast, there were 90,000 hectares under heroin production supporting 1.4 million Afghans.[23] In fact, the United Nations had earlier tried to persuade Afghan farmers to plant other crops through an alternative crop compensation scheme, but it had no support from the Taliban and was largely ineffective. The UN has had to abandon the project due to a lack of support from donor nations and the former Taliban regime's obstructionist policies.[24]It is yet unclear if the newly-installed Afghanistan government can do any better. Afghanistan's farmers have been growing poppies and cannabis since the time of the British Empire and are unlikely to stop anytime soon, albeit in lieu of a more economically viable and lucrative alternative in a spartan dustbowl.

The illegal economy is damaging not only to Afghanistan. The smuggling is beginning to take its toll on Afghanistan's neighbours, and the Islamic extremism the conflict produces has been taking a toll for quite some time. Pakistan is reportedly sustained by its drug economy, which is 30 percent larger than its legitimate economy. As one Indian analyst baldly put it, Pakistan's illegal heroin economy has not only prevented its legitimate State economy's collapse since 1990, it has also enabled Pakistan "to maintain a high level of arms purchases from abroad and to finance its proxy war against India though the jehadi organisations."[25] On another front, Tajikistan just ended a five-year civil war in 1997, that was largely an export of the Taliban's radicalism. The rebels in the Tajik conflict reportedly received support and training directly from the Taliban. Even without overtly trying to overthrow governments and replace them with fundamentalist regimes, Afghanistan's smugglers had been undermining the legitimate economies of its neighbors in Central Asia with drugs and illegal goods flowing back and forth over the frontier. A recent investigative report painted the level of decline in Afghanistan in stark figures. The country used to have 220 factories, but by 2000, it had only six working factories. Wheat, formerly Afghanistan's staple crop, no longer held any appeal. The only financial institutions were those operated by the drug traffickers. There had been a total destruction of a normal economy, and the criminal economy makes the warlords so much money that they have little incentive to try to restore any kind of legitimate industry or agriculture. The Taliban regime had certainly benefited the most as they have managed to carve out about 96% of the heroin trade. Beyond the 10% tax they put on farmers, they imposed a 20% tax on the dealers.[26] All of the money went straight into their war chest and allowed them to finance weapons for use in their former fight to gain total control of the country. The psychedelic dreams of the Taliban are now all but over; in Afghanistan at least. But the serious geo-economic and political legacy of the regime's invidious reign has disturbing ramifications for Central Asia and the world; not least of which are the twin criminal scourge of drugs and terrorism. Not too long ago, Barnett Rubin, a leading American scholar on Afghanistan from the Council on Foreign Relations in New York, had said that "Afghanistan has become the world's largest opium producer and a centre of arms dealing, and it supports a multibillion dollar trade in smuggled goods. This

criminalized economy funds both the Taliban and their adversaries, and it has transformed social relations and weakened states and legal economies throughout the region."[27] The Taliban had long been suspected of supporting Muslim extremists throughout the region and in as far away places as Chechnya, who act as insurgents and rebels with the aim of setting up Muslim states. Though disrupted for now, insurgents previously supported by the former Taliban regime have not relinquished their dream of carving out a radical Islamic state in the areas where Uzbekistan, Kyrgystan and Tajikistan meet. With their extensive training and weaponry, they have proven to be very hard to dislodge. Unless the vicious cycle of civil war can finally be broken by the new Afghan government with international help, the drug trade will likely continue to sustain armed conflict throughout the region and flood illicit global drug markets. Already there are reports that "the Afghan government's new pledge to wipe out the country's opium trade appears intended to appease foreign donors, but the net result is likely to be more fighting as rivals destroy one another's fields" under cover of the US terrorism campaign.[28]

Somalia

One of the most unusual conflicts of this century would have to be the Somali civil war. Somalia is a country that became synonymous with the 'new' type of conflict that the world would face: a seemingly senseless slaughter of innocents by bands of warlords, replete with an alphabet soup of acronyms trying to save the country from itself. However, this so-called 'new' type of conflict is much like the previously described conflicts. It has myriad causes; amongst which poverty, drought, abundant Cold War weaponry all the recipes for becoming a totally failed state quickly come to mind. But the one sustaining force behind the internecine conflict has been money from drug trafficking. Somalia is a little different in the sense that Somalia's drug problem was imported rather than exported narcotics. In another twist, not only were warlords making money from drugs, but a substantial portion of the population was addicted to the drug they were importing. Somalia's drug of choice was and is khat (also spelled qat). It is a stimulant with amphetamine type properties. It is said that a very large segment of the male population is addicted to the drug and will, if it comes down to a choice, choose the drug over food.[29]

After the central government collapsed, warlords began to vie for their own fiefdoms in which they could control the khat distribution and thus a substantial part of the economy. When food shortages hit in the early nineties, the warlords used the opportunity to hijack food shipments and use them as leverage in their battles to enlarge the territory under their control. Khat turned out to be the perfect drug for the imperfect situation. It was the currency by which the warlord's men were paid, and since it suppresses natural appetite, actual food distributed to the men could be that much less. The real beneficiaries of the trade in khat were the warlords. Khat was bleeding the economy dry as most of Somalia's currency winds up in the hands of the warlords or leaves the country to pay for khat's importation from Kenya and Ethiopia. It also left the Somalis literally bleeding when vicious street fighting erupted between rival warlords over the control of its distribution. The industry leader during the early nineties' crisis was Osman Atto, 2nd in command to Mohammed Farah Aideed.[30] Aideed thus became the strongest warlord, and history (and Hollywood) would record how he subsequently became entangled in fighting competition with the American and UN forces.

In northern Somalia, the situation was much the same as it was for Aideed in the South. The Somali National Movement (SNM) had launched several surprise attacks to dislodge the Isaq clan that had controlled many northern areas. They did it for the express purpose of taking control of the general trade and the lucrative khat business from eastern Ethiopia.[31] The fighting in the northern half of the country mimicked the senseless carnage in the South. The northern half of the country has since broken off to form an even less viable state which has been named Somaliland.

Somalia today is still awash with khat, with many of the men still addicted and begging or stealing to get their daily fix. Till this day, most of Somalia's foreign currency goes to pay for the import of the drug. However, there is an uneasy peace that has kept major conflicts between the competing clans and warlords to a minimum. All told, there were between 50,000 and 100,000 people killed in the civil war since 1989 and around 500,000 people who died from the famine in 1992.[32] There is no doubt Somalia today remains the perfect breeding ground for the same self-wounding style of conflict it saw in the early nineties. There is still no effective central government control, the people live in despair and the drug peddling clans and warlords

still broker the real power. To make matters worse, seething remnants of the disrupted Al Qaeda's international terrorist network have reportedly sought sanctuary in Somalia, and are the likely next targets in the US war on terrorism. Today, the 'pastiche' nation is merely stitched together with a shaky agreement on the part of the major warlords and clan leaders. Tomorrow, a more enterprising and aggressive clan leader may come along and rekindle a merciless conflict to carve out more territory from which to sell his khat.

Lebanon

Unlike Somalia, Lebanon has seen some return to normalcy since its long running civil war. Israel has abandoned its long held position and proxy army in the South. Although there are still a few hundred thousand Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon, the PLO is no longer a force of disruption within the country. The Shiite group, Hizbullah is still armed but it looks to be moderating its activities in the South since the Israeli withdrawal earlier in 2000. Lebanon now seems to be gaining some control over its borders; however Syria is still the main power broker in the country. The Syrians are maintaining their presence in Lebanon with approximately 35,000 troops on the ground. Beirut has been largely rebuilt, and it is once again looking forward to being the capital city of the eastern Mediterranean.

Lebanon's civil war was so complex and insidious it is hard to say what caused or triggered the violence. Ostensibly, a large poor Shiite population resented living under the smaller but more affluent Christian population. When the PLO entered Beirut and militia groups from the various Sunni and Druze factions were thrown into the mix, a powder keg was created. Violence begot violence and a downward spiral ensued. While there were clearly deep-seated religious and ethnic reasons for the fighting, most of the fighting groups were sustained by the drug trade. In 1990, the street value of Lebanese drugs was estimated to be US$150 billion, which would have brought in US$6 billion of revenue into Lebanon.[33] Dennis Eisenberg, a Mideast intelligence expert, contributed this analysis of the conflict in Lebanon: "The entire country is really 24 fiefdoms, each one ruled by its own mafia chief whose wealth and power sprang from the drug trade. The Lebanese civil war is really about who controls the best cannabis and poppy fields and the ports from where to export the drug harvest."[34] Even the Syrian government was heavily involved in the trade, with the Chief of Military Intelligence, General Ghazy Kenaan and Assad's younger brother Rifaat controlling much of the drug harvest which came out of the Bekaa Valley. In 1991, Syria's President Assad became fearful that his brother was plotting against him and drove him into exile. Since that time, Syria and Lebanon have engaged in a highly successful drug eradication programme. "There now appears to be no cultivation of opium poppy and cannabis (for hashish production) also has all but disappeared."[35] While most of the farmers still trek up into the foothills away from the police surveillance to farm a tiny plot of hashish to get some extra cash, few risk cultivating a significant plot. In the Lebanese town of Boudai alone, four farmers have been given life sentences for growing hashish.[36] Much of the pacification of Lebanon has come as the result of the drug economy being eliminated from the country. Since Syria made the eradication of the drug crops a priority, Lebanon has won the fight against illicit crop cultivation. This victory has eliminated the financial support underpinning the groups that were responsible for bringing the country to the brink of destruction.

Conclusion

While Lebanon still has many problems, its success may lend some pointers to policy makers around the world. The experiences of all of the countries covered above should serve as a warning to the governments of emerging nations to make drug eradication one of their top priorities. Some governments around the world think that illicit drugs are actually necessary as they bring in the majority of the capital flowing into countries that desperately need cash. Drug producing nations also feel that they will suffer relatively little from a benign outward flow of narcotics. Ethiopia and Kenya no doubt enjoy significant economic stimulus by growing and exporting khat. However, should khat plantations begin to significantly replace normal staple food production off the limited arable land thereby producing famine conditions during times of drought, the Ethiopian and Kenyan governments may find that a deal entered into with the devil would be very hard to break indeed. Drug production and trafficking is without doubt a serious threat to any Third World government.

Like vermin spreading disease across borders, drug smugglers and traffickers invariably bring a plague of corruption, instability and violence with them. In essence, the trafficking of drugs is an interdependence problem. Some Complex Interdependence theorists may argue that the use of military force is completely inappropriate for resolving interdependence problems.[37] However, the experience of Lebanon clearly shows that when Syria successfully mobilized its sizable military presence in the country to eradicate the drug problem, cutting off the supply side can be a viable option. The success has clearly translated into a cession of fighting throughout the country. It also vindicates, to some extent, those who argue that when backed by sufficiently steadfast political will, a vigorous military-led campaign against drug production and the warlords it funds can achieve positive results. Governments around the world that are plagued with drug production at their doorsteps and with drug consumption problems at home cannot go it alone in their fight. They will have to work closely at the bilateral or multilateral level, and seriously consider a broad spectrum of drug eradication actions, including the (para)military option where appropriate. To be sure, they can ill-afford to turn a blind eye to what may seem like a rather innocuous threat posed by drug smugglers and traffickers hawking to and fro their borders.

Developed nations will also need to realize the complicity between the demand and supply for drugs and global conflicts in the drug producing regions as well. As Paul Collier, author of the study on 'Economic Causes of Civil Conflict and their Implications for Policy', had put it rather succinctly in another similar context: "Rebel groups need to meet a payroll without producing anything, so they prey on an economic activity that won't collapse under the weight of their predatory activities."[38] In other words, the West's constant demand for drugs has a way of fueling conflicts by providing the clashing groups in the underdeveloped areas around the world that are capable of drug production with a constant source of funds. The Third World currently suffers the brunt of the fighting and violence spurred by the drug trade, and as the global demand wheel turns, instability and violence have a deadly way of spreading.

While economic interdependence involving legal trade has no doubt established the links which could prove to make the world a safer place, a booming illegal world wide trade in drugs, like global terrorism, is also actively creating links that make the world more dangerous. As drugs, and the money drugs produce inflame so many of the conflicts throughout the world, producing and consuming nations alike need to take a firm stand. The security threats and conflicts aroused by drugs may appear to have a frontline in some far away jungle or savanna, but as the world becomes more interdependent, frontlines and borders will cease to be the barriers they once were. The interdependency of the global drug trade remains one of the leading security threats of our time that can no longer be understated or ignored. As a hard habit to break, it is the smoking gun of yet another deadly brand of social misery and global terror.

Endnotes

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Exploring Regional MCM Co-Operation

by LTC Philip Alvar

The 2nd International MCM Seminar was hosted by the Republic of Singapore Navy. Held from 27 to 29 Nov 2000 in Singapore, the event was a success with participants from 18 navies of the Western Pacific Naval Symposium member and observer nations coming together in the spirit of "Exploring Regional MCM Co-operation in the New Millennium", the theme of the seminar. It came at a time when naval forces world-wide share a desire for multilateral co-operation. This is a positive trend that is emerging in the region. Mine countermeasures (MCM) is one area that has tremendous potential for naval co-operation and interoperability.

This article starts off by providing an overview on the importance and role of MCM, looking back in time on the mine threat and its impact to the sea lines of communications, and its relevance even today. Subsequently it discusses the complexity of MCM in terms of MCM operations being resource-intensive and time-based, the differences in its levels of effectiveness and the application of new technology to mines. With these in mind, key enabling initiatives for regional MCM co-operation is the way through the millennium addressing multilateral MCM initiatives, multilateral MCM operations and other ideas or areas of interest that elevate MCM as an important element in regional security.

Importance and Role of MCM

The importance and role of MCM cannot be understated as history has clearly demonstrated that the peril of mines is a deadly threat hidden under the sea.[1] Such a threat once laid does not discriminate against different nationalities. It will inconvenience its target as much as innocent third parties not involved in any form of conflict. The importance of MCM is seen from two perspectives:

The Mine Threat

Firstly, history has shown that in all naval battles, the mine is a cheap weapon causing the highest attrition of warships, compared with all other surface weapons put together. In WWI, a total of approximately 240,000 mines were laid. The Allies lost 586 merchant ships and 87 warships not including 152 small patrol boats and minesweepers. The Central Powers' losses to mines included 129 warships, excluding an unknown number of merchant ships and submarines. Once again, the total ship damage in WWI from mines was far greater than that by gunfire and torpedoes.[2]

The MCM community should recognise this fact and up to this very day, MCM forces all over the world are still mopping up the remains of mines left over from World War I and World War II, deemed as:

A Threat from the Past, (which remains as)

A Threat of the Present and (will haunt us as)

A Threat in the Future!

Sea Lines of Communications

MCM also relates to the safety and security of sea lines of communications (SLOCs). To quote from Chief of Navy's speech given at the Western Pacific Naval Symposium (WPNS) 2000 in Auckland:

"The sea lines of communications can best be described as the arteries of the region. The Malacca and Singapore Straits, the Lombok and Sunda Straits are major waterways connecting the Pacific and Indian Oceans. The importance of unimpeded access through these waters cannot be understated."[3]

RADM Lui Tuck Yew

Chief of Navy, RSN

7th WPNS in Auckland New Zealand, Nov 2000

The threat of mines to SLOCs cannot be understated. This is especially significant to narrow and shallow connecting waterways such as the Malacca and Singapore Straits, which can easily be mined and the disruption caused, catastrophic. History has shown the impact and disruption to major waterways such as the mining incidnets in the Suez Canal in 1984 as well as in the recent Gulf War in 1991. The Gulf War Experience re-affirmed and re-iterated the importance of MCM to respond to the mine threat posed on SLOCs, where co-ordinated MCM forces were significant operational necessities in dealing with the threat.

Of significance to SLOCs is also the connectivity to littoral waters. Both have narrow and shallower waterways; their natural constriction providing the ease with which they can be mined, causing "havoc" or paralysis to shipping.

Role of MCM

Given the ever present threat of WWII mines lurking in our waters and a possible mine threat to SLOCs and littoral waters, the role of MCM is important. The role for MCM forces around the world is to work together to ensure and maintain a safe and uninterrupted passage for all seafarers. It is timely that the MCM navies of the regino play a significant role as MCM is the ideal building block to help build interoperability and achieve regional co-operation. However, MCM is a very autonomous, slow but steady operation. One must be cognisant about this fact and take into account the complexities of MCM operations in achieving regional MCM co-operation.

Complexity of MCM Operations

The complexity of MCM operations can be seen from three perspectives namely :

- Its resource and time-intensiveness

- The differences in the level of effectiveness and

- The application of new technology to mines.

Resource-Intensive and Time-Based

Firstly MCM operations are very resource and time-intensive. It requires a balancing between achieving a higher percentage of clearance desired by MCM operations, and a lower level of risk to transitors. A simple rule of thumb is that the more the MCM effort, the higher will be the percentage of clearance and the lesser the risk to the transitor. However, it is not always as simple as it seems. A one square nm area takes about six to eight hours to clear at 60% to 80% clearance per MCMV with average variables such as clutter density, mine density etc. (10 sq nm = 80 hrs @ MCMV or 8 hrs @ 10 MCMVs). Larger areas, higher variables and the challenge of environmental factors, contributing to undetectable and buried mines, have a multiplier effect on MCM operations. A good example is the laying of 4,000 pressure "oyster" mines in Jun 1944 around Normandy, Le Harve and Cherbourg to block Allied invasions.[4] A rough gauge on the MCM force used on the assault of Normandy was 306 allied minesweeping vessels[5] deployed for 85 days.

Wonsoan was another classic example. The 3,000 mines[6] that were laid took 10 days of clearance operations by the Allied Forces and only 225 mines were detected and destroyed.[7] The bottom-line is that no one country or its MCM force will be able to single-handedly conduct an expedient MCM operation and lower the risks unless it possesses an overwhelming orbat of MCM vessels. On this note we should recognise the need to help each other given the nature of highly resource-intensive and time-based MCM operations.

- ## Differences in Levels of Effectiveness

When forces of different countries come to operate together, differences abound and the level of effectiveness can be reduced. The losses of minesweepers and MCM vessels to mines in Wonsan and WWII bear testimony to the reduced effectiveness of combined MCM operations, if different MCM navies were to operate with differing methodologies, tactics, doctrines and systems.

Such differences could best be overcome through initiatives that promote overall regional co-operation and interoperability. For example, in the conduct of any bilateral or multilateral exercises or operations, sharing of knowledge and experiences could arise both in the software as well as hardware aspects. With respect to the software benefits, these may well range from doctrines, tactics to procedures while the hardware aspects provide insights to numerous technological advances of MCM systems to meet the ever-changing evolution of the modern mine. Therefore understanding and learning from each other will constantly keep us constructively engaged. These will allow us to remain high on the learning curve in the many aspects of MCM operations and technology.

Application of New Technology to Mines

The central problem of MCM throughout history has been the difficulty and complexity of sustaining maximum capability. MCM evolves as a result of new mine developments and changing threats, and MCM have often been quick-fix solutions. The biggest setback is the lack of real competing needs and the lack of mine warfare knowledge within our navies as the application of new technology to mines has made it difficult to sustain the experience and expertise in mine warfare development. The main lessons learned by MCM force throughout its history are that minesweeping is tedious; minehunting is even more so and countering mines cannot be made easy, cheap or convenient. Effective MCM efforts require considerable R & D funding and the full commitment of all available MCM forces to deal with the ever-changing mine threats. We have to continually track the trend and developments in mine warfare. Not being able to do so will render our MCM methods, concepts and procedures irrelevant.

In a nutshell, we must also be cognisant of the complexities of the conduct of MCM operations in view of its highly resource-intensive and time-based characteristics, its differences in levels affecting effectiveness and the application of new technology to the mine threat that can make MCM irrelevant.

The realisation of such complexities is significant and given the importance and role of MCM, it is imperative that MCM forces of different countries work together to ensure and maintain a safe and uninterrupted passage for all seafarers. The need for a MCM co-operation is essential and the advantage that MCM professionals have is that MCM is benign, defensive and an ideal building block to help achieve this regional MCM co-operation. On this note, some key enabling initiatives are outlined here expressing the "what" element i.e. what the MCM community can do and the "how" element i.e. the likely processes to adopt to strive for regional MCM co-operation.

Key Enabling Initiatives

The final scope of this article will cover some key initiatives for achieving MCM co-operation. They serve as enablers for the enhancement of interoperability which are significant in the strive towards MCM regional co-operation. These could be progressive tools adopting a graduated approach to trust and confidence

building for MCM navies, in the strive towards regional MCM co-operation in the new millennium. The initiatives are as follows:

- Multilateral MCM initiatives

- Multilateral MCM operations and

- Other ideas or areas of interest.

Multilateral MCM Initiatives

Such initiatives are the conduct of seminars and workshops, training and exchange programmes and most importantly multilateral exercises. The 2nd international seminar and the regional MCM exercise 2001 demonstrated the resolve and commitment of participating nations and their navies to respond to the call for multilateral MCM initiatives to achieve the desired end of MCM co-operation and interoperability. However a graduated approach to achieving the desired end rests upon the elements of building trust and confidence that the WPNS intends to promote. The suggested initiatives are:

• Regional MCM Seminars and Workshops

The 1st Seminar held in Sydney was a ground-breaking event where new initiatives were made to lay the foundation and the concept for the regional MCMEx 2001. As we grow in experience from one seminar to another, we should strive to add more substance to the regional agenda. For instance as a follow-up from the 1st seminar, the second seminar intended to operationalise the conduct of a regional MCM exercise, building on the essential issues and ingredients essential for the conduct of a multilateral exercise. This was in the form of MCM workshop topic discussions entailing:

- o Model for MCM co-operation
- o Proposing an effective and efficient command and control structure for a multi-lateral MCM task force
- o Achieving a uniform desired clearance level and the collation of data when using different MCM systems and techniques
- o Developing an efficient logistics and medical support system for the multi-lateral MCM fask force
- o MCM diving

This provided an excellent opportunity for professional information sharing. Other professional information sharing approaches could also be in the form of interesting case studies or scenario-based problems for focus group discussions to share experiences, lessons learnt and solutions respectively.

• Regional MCM Exercise

The inaugural regional MCM exercise held in Singapore in Jun 2001 was a step forward. Originating from a conceptual idea at the 1st International Seminar, it was transformed into a reality. The conduct of such an exercise builds upon the employment of MCM common type platforms, operational doctrines and methodologies, publications (EXTAC 1007), information systems and associated software planning tools. These would significantly enhance the co-ordination of MCM activities and when put into practice at sea, they would not only enhance interoperability but would make the exercise more productive in terms of the MCM co-operation generated. Such an exercise should continue on a regular basis to build up the regional operating procedures, training and logistics support to better respond to certain mine threat crises.

- ## Training and Exchange Programmes

  Such programmes provide a useful means of imparting much appreciated staff planners' skills and the sharing of operational concepts and doctrines. Training programmes may well be incorporated as a supplement to the seminar or even exercises, although the RSN adopted the seminar cum workshop approach for the seminar that it organised. As for the exchange programme interactions, under the ambit of WPNS, member countries should feel free to invite another member nation's officers to be attached on a short-term basis to observe a fellow member's MCM operations and exercises. This is not a new idea in most bilateral engagements especially in the area of training e.g. there exists the exchange instructor programme. However in a multilateral framework, it would certainly give MCM professionals much leverage in terms of the number of countries we can constructively engage in to learn and benefit from each other.

- ## Contacts and Visits by Senior Officers

  The organisation of seminars and exercises facilitates the possibilities of reciprocal visits, not only for the ground MCM commanders at the working level (i.e. Squadron or Flotilla) but also by MCM senior commanders (at the Formation or Fleet levels). This provides a mechanism for increasing 'openness', closer personal relationships and enhancing mutual understanding and trust. The working level is concerned with the MCM activities and above the working level, MCM senior commanders can be involved in discussions and exchanges about security perceptions, strategic assessments, roles and mission of the future of MCM co-operation. For instance in Jun 2001, those at the working operational level met again and as part of the exercise, a MCM senior commanders visit programme was an essential feature in enhancing the graduated approach of MCM initiatives as advocated. This is a significant influential factor for multilateral co-operation at a higher level and a worthy official and social opportunity for building personal relationships and contacts.

  Through the above initiatives and processes, elements of enhancing transparency, creating networks of personal contacts and friendship at both the working and higher levels will aid in building trust and confidence, thus elevating the profile of MCM co-operation.

Multilateral MCM Operations

The conduct of regional MCM exercises on a regular basis will hone the ability to conduct successful real-time multilateral MCM operations when there is a mine threat crisis. This should be our long-term vision dependant on the success and establishment of how best we achieve synergy in regional operating procedures and logistics support.

At this juncture it is essential to highlight the possibility of extremist groups laying cheap and easily deployable sea mines to disrupt regional and world trade for their own political agenda. The response to such threats will have to be quick and effective. There are no quick-fix solutions and the way forward to achieve this end is the ability to form a regional MCM co-operative along the lines of a reactionary MCM force. Such reactionary responses can be in the following forms to support:

- ## Humanitarian Operations

  MCM can be explored as an aid to humanitarian operations under a multilateral framework to assist countries with no or little MCM capability in mine clearance operations. This is common in the Baltic states under the well-established MCM Co-operation (MCOP) where real-time mine clearance operations of the First and Second World Wars are conducted in the coastal waters along Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. What started off as a humanitarian mission in 1995 has now turned into a combined MCM operation involving Sweden, Belgium, Netherlands, Norway, United Kingdom and the Latvians themselves in the annual conduct of mine operations under the MCM Co-operation in Latvia (MCOPLAT). Up to 1999, after four years and seven operations in the three Baltic states, it has been

reported that several thousand objects have been identified and approximately 150 mines and other types of ordnance have been disarmed.[8]

- ## Co-ordinated Joint MCM Clearance of WWII Mines

  Along the same lines, the removal or clearance of WWII mines or other ordnance is a form of MCM regional co-operation. For example, one of our notable achievements in the area of MCM was with the Indonesian Navy, where RSN worked with our TNI-AL MCM counterparts in a successful conduct of MCM operations against WWII mines in 1997 and 1998. This, under the auspices of our bilateral exercise series named *JOINT MINEX* bears testimony to the co-ordinated effort in clearing WWII mines. Such co-ordinated MCM clearance may well exist in other bilateral arrangements between countries. This creates a natural opportunity and potential for future multilateral MCM operations to be an amalgamation of several bilateral relationships coming together to deal with the mine threat as a quick reactionary MCM force.

Other Ideas or Areas of Interest

The following were some of the ideas that were raised by other member navies during the 1[st]International Seminar and thoughts that came to mind, in organising the 2nd Seminar. They are by no means exhaustive but are nevertheless areas of interest worth considering:

- ## Expansion of Defence Technology Information and Connections

  Defence technologies and industries are important and influential constituents from which to share information on operations, maintenance and logistics support matters in common MCM Systems used world-wide. For example, new MCM vessels, latest mine disposal vehicles such as PLUTO II and Double Eagle, information systems, etc. are worthwhile topics of interests. MCM operators will be able to pool their wealth of knowledge and experience. This will ensure currency of our concept and procedures, to upgrade or build our MCM capability. Such links would enhance dialogue and transparency to defence industrial matters, and help establish and build strong commercial connections through our MCM network.

- ## Joint Medical and Logistics Set-up

  Finally, the areas of logistics and medical requirements are critical in any operation and in MCM, it is no exception. As operations need to be sustained over a prolonged period, it is important to cater to the needs of the MCM personnel and platforms. Common procedures and understanding are required in these areas as well.

Conclusion

History has showed that mines are potent threats to shipping, both commercial and military. They are relatively cheap, easy to acquire and can be used to great effect, both physically and psychologically. The key enabling initiatives are a good step forward in gradually building up regional security and co-operation, in preparation for a multilateral endeavour when faced with the mine threat. Starting the process early through a graduated approach would mean that we are able to embrace the challenges of interoperability and co-operation with the advantage of time rather than to resolve them under the pressures of real mine clearance operations when called upon. This approach makes economic sense, and allows tactical advantages to the regional forces by way of synergies between the different navies through the key enabling initiatives as mentioned. Together we shall elevate MCM as an important element to regional security emphasising its importance and role and through those key initiatives, overcome the complexity of MCM as a regional MCM co-operative. In conclusion, as MCM professionals, it is essential that we leave a lasting thought in your minds to ponder upon i.e.

"History has shown that no one country could have accomplished the clearance of mines alone but together they were successful."

Therefore regional MCM co-operation would be the right way ahead in this new millennium.

Endnotes

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Synopses of Commendation Award Essays

- ## Consequences of Naval Arms Modernisation on the Legal Regime at Sea: Southeast Asia Regional Security in Perspective

  by LTC John Chan, RSN

  This essay discusses the relationship between international law and state security interests. The impact of the 1982 United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea on naval power, maritime territoriality and regional order is shown to be of considerable significance. It concludes that a permanent forum and regional court is needed to discuss and resolve maritime disputes.

- ## Cyber-Terrorism: An Emerging Security Threat of the New Millennium

  by CPT Ow Kim Meng, HQ RSAF

  The essay examines the vulnerabilities of key infrastructure to cyber-terrorism and the necessary security measures to combat this threat. However, cyber-terrorism can also be a force multiplier when deployed in conjunction with other means of warfare and the essay examines the weapons and tactics involved in waging this type of war.

- ## "Internationalising" the South China Sea Maritime Dispute: The Regional Code of Conduct

  by CPT Sung Pong, Singapore Armour Regiment (SAR)

  The South China Sea maritime dispute, particularly around the Spratlys, has been a bone of contention amongst ASEAN states and China. This essay examines the efforts of ASEAN to manage the dispute through negotiation, norm-setting and "internationalisation".

- ## Learning @ Work

  by CPT Choy Dawen, ASB, RSAF

  In modern warfare, militaries need to adapt quickly to changes. The author illustrates this point with reference to innovativeness shown by the IDF in the 1973 Yum Kippur War. The essay examines tacit and explicit knowledge, the impact of IT on learning and training and the guiding principles in making the SAF a learning organisation.

- ## PD and the ARF: The Problem or the Solution?

  by MAJ Lim Choon Huat, FTC, RSAF

  This essay reviews the concept of Preventive Diplomacy (PD) and how the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) could use it to facilitate security and stability processes in the Asia Pacific region. Key issues tackled include coming to a common agreed definition of PD and whether this is compatible with ASEAN's diplomatic style.

- ## Revolution in Military Affairs: Observations and Imperatives for the SAF

  by CPT Ho Yung Peng, Fighter Squadron, RSAF

  The Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) is discussed in terms of technology, doctrine and socio-politics. This essay argues that the SAF must look beyond mere technological superiority. To keep ahead as others catch up in terms of platforms, revolutionary change must be extended to doctrine and organisation as well as to Singapore's society.

- ## Role of Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicles (UCAVs) in Singapore

  by CPT Yew Heng Siong, PCII, RSAF

  This essay highlights historical examples of how Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) have been used in war. It goes on to explore the merits and drawbacks of employing UCAVs, particularly in Singapore's context, as well as suggesting parameters for their employment.

- ## Social Capital: The Bridge in Knowledge Management

  MAJ Joseph Neo Hock Chye, TRACOM, RSN

  While information technology is an enabler for knowledge management, the essay argues that investment in IT must be balanced with the building of social capital, focussing on developing a sharing culture, investment in education, and building social networks.

- ## The Professional Soldier

  CPT Lim Ann Nee, HQ RSAF

  The author opines that the professional soldier is one who is intrinsically motivated to serve, putting the nation before oneself, rather than one who is motivated by extrinsic rewards such as pay and promotions. The essay emphasises the need to inculcate the traditional core values in our personnel.

- ## The Threat of Asymmetric Warfare to Singapore

  MAJ (NS) (DR) Chia Eng Seng Aaron

  This essay explores the range of asymmetric strategies that may be employed to threaten Singapore. It explores the strategic considerations that need to be addressed as well as the possibilities of using Total Defence and technology to counter this threat.

Book Review:

What If? The World's Foremost Military Historians Imagine What Might Have Been, What If? Strategic Alternatives of WWII by Harold Deutsch and Dennis Showalter

Reviewed by Mr Ronald Hee

Two books at the SAFTI MI Library ask the question "What if?" What if a major battle in history had been fought differently? By keeping speculation strictly to what is plausible, given the forces available, the commanders, and various other factors, the reader is able to gain a very rich insight into just how close many battles were, or as the Duke of Wellington so famously described the Battle of Waterloo, "It was a near run thing". The reader gains a deep appreciation of how much chance, the weather, and the biases of commanders, play in determining victory.

The first book by Robert Cowley gives the reader the wide sweep of history, beginning with the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem in 701 BC, and ends with a near nuclear war in 1983. The second book by Harold Deutsch and Dennis Showalter examines in very great depth, the various potential turning points in the Second World War.

For the historians in Crowley's book, the hinge of fate upon which the fate of nations turned, was often a very small one indeed. Examine the American Revolution. In 1776, it was General Washington's first major battle, with raw troops against seasoned veterans twice his number, and with the Royal Navy in support. Unsurprisingly, he was soon outfought and trapped along the Brooklyn Heights with his back to the sea. The American Revolution could have ended then and there. America might well today be a member of the Commonwealth, alongside Australia and Canada.

Instead, the weather turned bad, preventing British warships from blocking his escape route. Washington quietly pulled off a mini-Dunkirk. By morning, substantial forces were still trapped. Fate stepped in. A dense fog rolled in, lasting long enough for the last American soldier to escape.

In 1783, the position of the combatants was exactly reversed. The British under Cornwallis were trapped in Yorktown, with the French Navy at their backs. Cornwallis tried to do exactly what Washington did. After a few units had been evacuated, operations were halted when gale force winds suddenly struck. By the time the winds died down, there was no longer enough time to complete the evacuation. The British surrendered and the war came to an end.

In 1242, the fate of Europe hung in the balance. On the outskirts of Vienna, rode the Mongol hordes, poised to conquer the continent, already having defeated the best the West had to throw at them, in Poland and in Hungary. There was nothing left to oppose them. It was entirely possible that they would lay all to waste before them, just as in Central Asia, Russia and China. Suddenly the Mongols went home. Their great Khan Ogadi, grandson of Genghis, was dead. The Mongols were required back to decide on their new Khan, and they never returned.

In 1942, it was the Pacific's turn. The Japanese had swept the region in triumph, and now sought to finish off the American fleet at Midway. Victory here would have been followed up by the conquest of Hawaii, and the South Pacific as far as Fiji. The Americans may well had been forced into an armistice, as the Japanese wanted, and the people of the Pacific would have had their suffering prolonged. Crowley's book suggests that this may had been the result, on a very small and reasonable change. What if the Japanese had suspicions that their code had been broken?

With no disrespect to the men who fought and died, the Battle of Midway was determined largely by luck. A Japanese scout plane that would have spotted the American carriers had mechanical failure. Japanese submarines meant to block and to ambush the American fleet missed the fleet by days. Flying beyond the limits of their fuel, American dive bombers found the Japanese carriers at the precise moment that their decks were ladened with aircraft, fuel and bombs.

The commanders of course created their own luck. The carrier *Yorktown* should have been down for repairs for months. Nimitz demanded it back in 72 hours. The ship set sail for battle with repair crews still on board. The Japanese on the other hand, were over-confident and sure they were luring the Americans into a trap, and failed to take the necessary precautions. The rest, as is said, is history.

Deutsch and Showalter's book holds that World War II war could have turned very differently at so many points. One major surprise, however, is that the war in Russia would have turned out about the same, no matter what the Germans did. "In the last analysis a single faulty decision paled against the vast scale and intensity of combat . While there is still art in battle, in the end strength, will, instinct, and sheer power prevailed, rendering virtually all 'what ifs' largely superfluous."

The Germans could have driven for Moscow in August 1941, instead of diverting to Kiev. Capturing Moscow before the onset of winter would certainly have been possible. But based on the forces available, it is also likely that the Germans would have been bogged down in street fighting much as they would be at Stalingrad, and run the risk of encirclement. The ebb and flow of offensive and counter-offensive in the years that followed would have largely still have taken place.

One other major 'what if' with regards to the war in Russia, is what if the Japanese had entered the war, rather than made their move southwards? Again, not all that much would have changed. The Russians maintained strong forces to guard against Japan throughout the war. The fresh Russian units that were thrown against the Germans were drawn not only from the East, but from everywhere in Russia. Some of the Far East units had begun moving against the Germans even before the Pearl Harbor attack.

Lastly, could Hitler have won the Second World War? Both books agree that a German victory was entirely possible. Deutsch and Showalter point to four possibles in June-July 1940 when peace with Britain might have been possible; in mid-1940 when Operation Sealion had the best chance of success; in the first year of the war with Russia, if the Germans had portrayed themselves as liberators; and lastly in 1942 or 1943, an armistice with all combatants, if Hitler had not declared war on America.

Both books however seem to agree on one little known possibility as the greatest missed opportunity a stunning German victory in the Mediterranean and the Middle East in 1941, knocking Britain out of the war, putting Russia in a weaker position, and before American involvement.

After the defeat of France in May 1940, Hitler had three choices. Pound Britain into submission either by diplomacy or force of arms. He was also continually eyeing Russia, and even ordered his generals to start moving troops east, with a view to beginning hostilities as early as the autumn of 1940. The third possibility that intrigued Hitler at this time, was to head south.

The plan was, in cooperation with Spain, the Germans would seize Gibraltar, with a target date set for 30th January 1941. Simultaneously, the Germans would advance across neutral Turkey, across French-controlled Syria, and down to the Suez Canal as the Italians moved in from Libya. At a stroke, both ends of the Mediterranean would be closed off. Island strongholds such as Malta and Crete, starved of supplies, would be easier prey. Even the French, by this time pro-German neutrals, might have been bribed into the fight by a promise of British possessions in this now Axis-controlled lake. Considering that significant portions of the Mediterranean were already in Spanish, French and Italian hands, complete exclusion of the British was entirely possible.

With control of Syria, it would have been easy to advance into the whole of the Middle East. In the process, Germany would have had all the oil she could possibly use, the British Empire would have been split in half

and may well have sued for peace, and Russia would have to contend with possible German attacks from Central Asia as well as from Eastern Europe. Even if Britain was still in the fight, Germany would not have been distracted by campaigns in the Balkans and North Africa, as they were in reality, and they might have more than the token Spanish and French support against Russia that they actually received.

This might have been Germany's position by the end of 1941. Instead, the die was cast on 12[th]November 1940. On that day, Russian Foreign Minister Molotov came to see Hitler and demanded various territorial concessions in Eastern Europe for continued supply of vital raw materials, especially oil. Hitler was furious. A month later, he made the order to invade Russia the following year. On such tiny hinges chance, the weather, the bias of commanders have battles been fought and wars won.

*The abovementioned titles are available for borrowing at the **SAFTI MI Library**. The catalog references are:*

What If? The World's Foremost Military Historians Imagine What Might Have Been

Robert Cowley, ed

D25.5 WHA

What If? Strategic Alternatives of WWII

Harold Deutsch and Dennis Showalter

D743 WHA

Personality Profile:

Lord Louis Mountbatten

On 12th September 1945, in the Council Chamber of Singapore Town Hall (now City Hall), Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander, South East Asia, aged forty-five, received the surrender of 680,879 officers and men of the Imperial Japanese forces. This was just one of the highlights of his long and colourful career.

Born on 25 June 1900, as Louis Francis Albert Victor Nicholas Battenberg, the future Lord Mountbatten was always called 'Dickie' by his close relations and friends. The blood of several royal houses ran through his veins. With Prince Louis of Battenberg, a German aristocrat, as his father and Princess Alice, daughter of Grand Duke Louis IV of Hesse and granddaughter of Queen Victoria of Great Britain, as his mother, Mountbatten was related to the British Royals, Tsar Nicholas II of Russia, King Alfonso XIII of Spain, King Ferdinand I of Romania, King Gustav VI of Sweden, King Constantine I of Greece and King Haakon VII of Norway. But it was to Britain that he, like his father, gave his absolute loyalty to.

He followed the footsteps of his father and elder brother into the Royal Navy and was training as a cadet at Osborne when the First World War broke out in 1914. Despite Prince Louis' abilities, service record and professionalism, strong anti-German public sentiment forced his resignation as First Sea Lord, the professional head of the British navy. As the Great War raged on, even the British Royal family changed its name to the more English 'Windsor' and Battenbergs became the Mountbattens in 1917.

Although deeply saddened and shocked by the turn of events, Mountbatten continued to serve in the Royal Navy, determined 'to justify myself to myself by becoming really efficient in every aspect of my work.' After several varied postings, he was appointed to command 5th Destroyer Flotilla, from the HMS *Kelly*, at the beginning of the Second World War. It was with the *Kelly* that Mountbatten earned a reputation for being daring, dashing and lucky; he survived a torpedo attack which badly damaged his ship and a dive-bomber attack in another engagement which finally sank her.

In 1941, he was appointed by Prime Minister Winston Churchill to head the Combined Operations Command. From there, Mountbatten worked to foster inter-service co-operation when it was still an unfamiliar and resented concept. He planned Commando raids on occupied Europe, in order to keep up the offensive spirit among the besieged British, as well as to harass the enemy. One of the most spectacular Combined Operations he oversaw was the raid on St. Nazaire where the destroyer *Campbeltdown*, crammed with high explosives, rammed into the gates of the harbour's huge dry dock. With the Americans joining the war, he and General George C. Marshall created the first integrated Allied Headquarters in 1942. He also supervised the ill-fated raid on Dieppe where almost 70% of the 5,000 strong force deployed was killed, wounded or captured. The lessons of this experience, such as the importance of suppressive bombardment and the need

for mobile harbour facilities, were of considerable important to the planning of the Normandy invasion on D-Day.

In 1943, Mountbatten was sent to take over the South East Asia Command, where many of the British fighting men felt they had been forgotten by the authorities in London and the population back home. Mountbatten undertook a wide tour of the troops and used his energy and charm to raise their morale. He formulated a policy of Morale, Monsoon, Malaria. The problem of Morale was solved by success at Arakan and Imphal which shattered the myth of Japanese invincibility. British forces, resupplied by air, had held firm against the infiltration and encirclement tactics of the Japanese. Mountbatten insisted, against all conventional views, that fighting be continued through the horrendous conditions of the five month long monsoon, in order not to allow the Japanese forces to recover from Imphal. To defeat Malaria and other tropical diseases, he created a Medical Advisory Division where researchers worked closely with medical officers experienced in field conditions and the 1943 ratio of 120 sick to every one battle casualty was brought down to 10:1 in 1945. Aided by these developments, the brilliant General Slim pushed the Japanese out of Burma with victories in Meiktila and Mandalay, eventually landing unopposed in Rangoon in May 1945.

At the Potsdam conference in July 1945, Mountbatten was one of the select few privy to the impending use of the atomic bomb. Following Japan's surrender on 14th August 1945, General Douglas MacArthur did not insist that Japanese officers give up their swords, fearing that this loss of face would cause them to lose control over their men. In contrast, Mountbatten was determined that they *should* lose face. "So I insisted on senior commanders' swords being handed over in Singapore, and in all other appropriate places under my command. I don't think there was any doubt in the minds of those who witnessed the Japanese surrenders whether the Japanese were beaten or not."

After the war, Mountbatten presided over the transition from military to civilian administration in South East Asia. He believed that the Western powers could and should be friends with the Asian nationalists. He felt that the principles of national self-determination in the Atlantic Charter should be respected and sought to do so in Burma and Malaya. As the last Viceroy of India, he did his best to ensure a smooth British hand-over to India and Pakistan.

Mountbatten returned to the navy and served in the Mediterranean from 1948-56. He was appointed Chief of Defence Staff in 1958 and oversaw the integration of the War Ministry, Air Ministry and Admiralty into a unified Ministry of Defence. Mountbatten was deeply involved in nuclear policy, particularly in the construction of Britain's first nuclear submarine, HMS*Dreadnought*, even though he was horrified by the prospect of mankind's annihilation. He also concerned himself with the overall British defence of Malaysia and Singapore during the Confrontation with Indonesia (1962-66) and was satisfied that it was won 'quietly, efficiently, and at a very low cost in life.'

He retired shortly, after more than half a century of active service, but continued to appear in the public eye. Successive governments would trot out the old war horse to see to tasks like a report on prison reform and diplomatic visits. He delighted in Royal ceremonial duties, like his appointments as Colonel of the Life Guards and personal A.D.C. to Queen Elizabeth II. Tragically, he was assassinated, in 1979, by the Irish Republican Army whose agents had planted a bomb on his motor boat.

Critics have decried Mountbatten's considerable vanity and his unbridled ambitiousness. Some described him a schemer who was overly fond of complex intrigues. Admirers emphasise his warm-heartedness, tolerance, energy and charm. His professionalism and dedication to duty has been frequently acclaimed. However, both camps are in agreement that his career was a unique one. On balance, the exhortation of Mountbatten's posthumous biographer : 'Remember, in spite of everything, he was a great man' seems to be a fair summary of Lord Mountbatten.
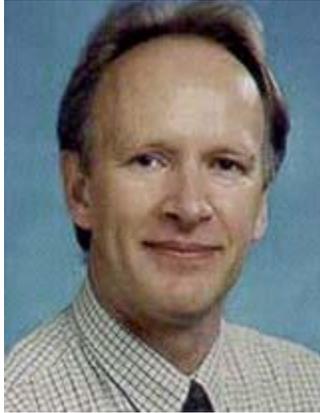
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Selected Books and Reports:

Tim Huxley

Tim Huxley is the Director of the Centre for South-East Asian Studies at the University of Hull, England and an Associate Fellow at the Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies in London. He was a fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore from 1985 to 1987.

An authority in Asian and Southeast Asian affairs, specialising in security and defence matters, he has written extensively on these topics. His book *Defending the Lion City,* published in 2000, is a comprehensive study of the SAF. This is also the first-ever major study of the SAF. In the book, Huxley gives a comprehensive account of the SAF its origins, its defence policy and doctrines, the structure and organisation of each of the services: army, air force and navy, its personnel policies, its regional and international links and the strategic outlook that shaped its policies.

Before *Defending the Lion City*, Huxley had also published a number of research papers on East Asia and Southeast Asia's geopolitical and strategic issues. *Arming East Asia* is a paper jointly written by Tim Huxley and Susan Willett and published as Adelphi Paper 329 in 1999. Even though East Asia has been more peaceful during the 1990s than at any other time in the twentieth century, the region's military spending and arms procurement had grown rapidly. The paper examines the threat perceptions and other factors that might have influenced defence spending. As the paper was written just after the 1997 East Asian economic crisis, the impact of the crisis on the individual countries' military modernisation programmes and defence expenditures is also investigated. The paper is quintessentially Tim Huxley's style of work detailed analysis dotted with plentiful yet digestible facts and figures.

Insecurity in the ASEAN Region, another of Huxley's research paper, was published in 1993 as part of the Whitehall Paper series under the Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies (RUSI), London. This paper investigates the security and defence issues facing the ASEAN states in the 1990s. It looks at ASEAN's security role and its successes in achieving various security-related objectives, the changes in the regional strategic environment and what this portends for ASEAN members, recent trends in military defence spending and force modernisation, military cooperation in ASEAN and the role of ASEAN in the new regional security context.

The Political Role of The Singapore Armed Forces' Officer Corps: Towards A Military-Administrative State? (Working Paper no. 279) published in 1993 provides an interesting (and perhaps controversial) peek into the career advancement system of the SAF scholars, the SAF officers corps' 'brightest and the best' and assesses what political role they will play when they leave the SAF for the Administrative Service after short periods in active service. Besides the above, Huxley has published a series of papers in the 1980s, under the

Strategic and Defence Policy Studies Centre (SDSC) of the Australian National University. They relate mostly to topics on ASEAN states' defence policies and security expenditure.

All the books and research papers featured above are available at the SAFTI MI Library.