

With India not having very friendly relations with two of its major neighbours i.e. Pakistan and China, and India constantly being in proxy war with both of them as Pakistan supports militancy in Kashmir and China in north east, constant modernisation of Indian armed forces is an unavoidable prospect.

Apart from being in proxy war with Pakistan we recently were involved in a dogfight with the Pakistani F-16 and though our tremendously skilled pilot shot down the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation aircraft with his Mig-21 a 2<sup>nd</sup> generation fighter jet but eventually he was also shot down by the Pakistani air defence and captured too, which for a few days brought us down from an offensive position to a compromising position (as India tried to leave no stone unturned to create all kinds of political and economical pressure against Pakistan on an international level after Pulwama attack). And now the issues that arise are; Why is India still using the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Mig-21 despite being a much bigger economy than Pakistan, having a defence budget almost five times as that of Pakistan? With this personnel and aircraft strength and the budget, Pakistan should have suffered a damage of 6-7 aircrafts, but that didn't happen.

This is a clear indication that how badly we are lagging in modernization of our armed forces. Though our procurements have speeded up recently, but the point here is that what about the asymmetries that have been built over the years when compared with China and Pakistan? Why have we allowed this to happen? It can be attributed to the following reasons:

- We have not utilized our money sensibly. Blame politicians, bureaucrats, commanders but the fact remains the same.
- We are obsessed with numbers: With the technological advancements and India, China and Pakistan being equipped with nuclear weapons a modern-day war won't be like what India has seen in previous century. Modern day wars are most likely to be what we saw in February, or in case a full-fledged war happens it will last a few hours or maximum a day and in such short period what will matter is the range, superiority, technology, preparedness rather than numbers (mattered for previous long duration wars). But what we have been doing is trying to get more and more of a particular variety and maintain them as long as possible instead of diversifying or moving along with our potential enemies on technology.
- Incrementalism mindset: We have been investing too much money, time and resources on upgradations of the out of generation machineries and equipment to prolong their services which are not up to the mark when compared them to their counterparts with other countries. All the three forces have got caught in this incrementalism mindset

and they need to come out of it soon.

- Figuring out the needs: Why are we still using WW-2 era sniper rifles (Pakistani sniper rifles outrange our rifles), 1950's L/70 anti-aircraft guns? These should have been sorted out first as compared to tanks which are not as likely to be used nowadays as the sniper rifles (skirmishes at the LOC) or the anti-aircraft guns. We should be aware of the changing dynamics and strategize our procurements, placements according to where we are most likely to use force. Apart from the rifles and AAGs we essentially require AEW&C aircrafts, radars, drones, night vision goggles, bomb disposal robots, BVR missiles.
- Poor performances of defence PSUs, making India the largest importer of defence products. Which mostly results in India buying the old technology or second hand machineries, other countries are reluctant in transferring the latest technologies or providing us with their latest developments, loss of money, time lag etc. The new developments by them are mostly deficient compared to their latest counterparts.

### **Conclusion :-**

In the light of above-mentioned points, we can infer that the modernisation process of the Indian armed forces has to be faster and aligned with the present requirements. Though indigenous development is on the right track but it has to speed up and catch up with the newest technologies.

The government has made several significant deals recently like that of S-400 surface to air missile system, Apache and Chinook helicopters for the IAF and M 60R Seahawk for the Indian navy, AK-203 rifles for the Indian army and many more, but it takes years for these deals to complete and till then our highly skilled, one of the best forces in the world in terms of skills, tactics, willpower will have to use whatever they have with them and it is commendable that they are doing their job outstandingly well irrespective of the conditions and the weapons they have.

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