

# COLD START – HOT STOP? A STRATEGIC CONCERN FOR PAKISTAN

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## Abstract

*The hostile environment in South Asia is a serious concern for the international players. This volatile situation is further fuelled by escalating arms race and aggressive force postures. The Indian Cold Start Doctrine (CSD) has supplemented negatively to the South Asian strategic stability by trying to find a way in fighting a conventional limited war just below the nuclear umbrella. It was reactionary in nature to overcome the shortcomings exhibited during Operation Parakram of 2001-02, executed under the premise of Sundarji Doctrine. The Cold Start is an adapted version of German Blitzkrieg which makes it a dangerous instrument. Apart from many limitations, the doctrine remains relevant to the region, primarily due to the attestation of its presence by the then Indian Army Chief General Bipin Rawat in January 2017. This paper is an effort to probe the different aspects of Cold Start, its prerequisites in provisions of three sets; being a bluff based on deception, myth rooted in misperception, and a reality flanked by escalation; and how and why CSD is a strategic concern for Pakistan.*

**Keywords:** Cold Start Doctrine, Strategic Stability, Conventional Warfare, Pakistan, India.

## Introduction

There is a general consensus on the single permanent aspect of international system that has dominated the international relations ever since and its history and relevance are as old as the existence of man and the civilization itself; the entity is called war.<sup>1</sup> This relevance was perhaps best described by Leon Trotsky who averred that “you may not be interested in war, but war may be interested in you.”<sup>2</sup> To fight, avert and to pose credible deterrence, armed forces strive for better yet flexible doctrines to support their respective strategies in conducting defensive as well as offensive operations and to dominate in adversarial environments. In this way, the doctrine transforms the potential into capabilities, by the effective operationalization of the strategy, while refining the tactics to get the maximum possible output.<sup>3</sup> Reminiscing the strategic history of the world, war has dominated the inter-state relationship between Pakistan and India. The

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mutual bitter history caused much hostility and resulted in three limited conventional wars (1948, 1965 and 1971) with numerous border skirmishes and engagements. India though, historically been invaded from its North-West, has left an indelible mark on its strategic history and thinking – consequently still believes that an invasion is likely to come from the West i.e. Pakistan.

Dasgupta and Cohen averred that “One of the most remarkable attributes of India as an independent state has been its reticence to use force as an instrument of policy.”<sup>4</sup> However, one contends this assertion, as, the last major war between India and Pakistan in 1971 saw some remarkable show of force and expertise at the part of the Indian Army. In the 1980s, to overcome the perceived threat and to deter the potential attack, then Indian Army Chief General Krishnaswamy Sundararjan also known as Sundarji theorized his learning at the United States Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), and proposed a defensive-offensive military instrument named as Sundarji Doctrine to further its armoured thrusts, mechanized infantry, and striking ability, whilst, emphasized the deployment of seven holding corps comprised of infantry divisions for positional defence, motorized divisions for mobility and armoured forces to respond for the perceived incursions into the Indian territory.<sup>5</sup> These holding corps possessed limited striking ability and their main objective was to halt a potential attack by Pakistan. Sundarji also theorized the inclusion of nuclear weapons into his doctrinal illusions using his ‘all or nothing’ approach.<sup>6</sup> Hypothetically, after the attack were halted, the offensive power vested in the three-strike corps positioned in central India – I Corps in Mathura, II Corps in Ambala and XXI Corps in Bhopal – were to carry out deep penetrations into Pakistan, while, focusing to destroy the two-strike corps of Pakistan Army – Army Reserve North and Army Reserve South. In other words, the main objective of deep incursions, was to sever the lines of communications and divide Pakistan into two halves. In other words, Sundarji effectively tried in transforming the Gandhian doctrine of non-violence to Maoist doctrine of “power flowing from the barrel of the gun.”<sup>7</sup>

During Operation *Brasstacks* in late 1980s and Operation *Parakram* in 2001-02, the Indian Army was mobilized under the premises of Sundarji Doctrine. In both cases, the expensive, sluggish and inefficient military mobilization with the earnest desire to fight a conventional limited war under the nuclear umbrella could not be met primarily due to the possession of nuclear devices by Pakistan. However, Joeck argued that it was American pressure on India that prevented Operation *Parakram* from going hot, as the U.S. needed Pakistan’s help to fight its War on Terror in Afghanistan.<sup>8</sup> One partly contends this notion, since the time taken by Indian Army to mobilize, made the entire operation ineffective. On the other hand, Pakistan was quick to anticipate Indian deployment and counter-deployed its forces in relatively much shorter span of time.

Also, then President of Pakistan General Pervez Musharraf made a u-turn speech on January 12 – to ban extremist organizations that gained international appreciation and contributed negatively for the Indian cause.<sup>9</sup>

Subsequently, Operation *Parakram* was a sheer humiliation for Indian civil and military establishments, as, it failed to achieve the pivotal aspect of surprise coupled with a failed attempt at coercive diplomacy. It also resulted in the loss of almost 800 Indian lives in accidents and border skirmishes at the expense of almost 2 billion USD.<sup>10</sup> The severe criticism on the inability of Indian Army to mobilize its troops in a speedy manner led the hawkish military minds to contemplate about a speedy, more flexible, highly maneuverable and foundationally mobile doctrine for its future needs against Pakistan, by finding and exploiting the possibility of a conventional limited war, while not abrogating Islamabad's Red Lines to avoid the perceived use of nuclear weapons. Covertly to overcome criticism and overtly to "keep screwing the minds of Pakistani Generals," these thoughts and aims ultimately resulted in the creation of Indian Army's Cold Start.

However, apart from the criticism made on CSD, the study intends to highlight various aspects of it which makes CSD a dangerous and feasible military instrument to pursue politico-military aims and objectives. To know the value of doctrine, first, the study intends to examine the significance of military doctrine and its unending relevance with that of war in understanding the transformation of subjective thinking into objective reality.

## **Military Doctrine and its Relevance with War**

According to *Merriam-Webster*, one of the meanings of doctrine is "a military principle or set of strategies."<sup>11</sup> The literal meanings of the word 'doctrine' makes it clear that it is not just a word, rather a term, that refers to complex phenomenon involving armed forces and their respective methods in achieving envisaged aims and objectives. Similarly, *Merriam-Webster* cited Truman Doctrine while giving example of the position and policy of governments in international relations.<sup>12</sup> It helped in understanding that a doctrine may not only be military, but it can also be political or the combination of both while employing other sectors as well – fundamentally for the achievement of objectives.

Highlighting the value of doctrine, Sloan cited British maritime strategist Sir Julian Corbett who argued that "doctrine is the soul of warfare."<sup>13</sup> Skinner noted that "doctrine is a level of abstraction and generality higher than strategy. Doctrine is a guide to thought on how to employ strategy and tactics. Commanders formulate their strategy, employ tactics, then appeal to doctrine for combining these elements effectively in battle."<sup>14</sup> Perhaps, Corbett's and Skinner's arguments refer that a doctrine is a framework

that enables commanders to conduct their operations by turning subjective thinking into objective reality.<sup>15</sup>

Creveld cited Clausewitz in explaining strategy – since the latter believed that strategy is the conduct of major operations joining politics and violence.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, Gray argued that strategy acts as a bridge between military power and policy.<sup>17</sup> I assert that on the same pattern the doctrine acts as a bridge between strategy and tactics which enables commanders of ‘basic do’s and don’ts’ with a significant level of adaptability, mobility, and flexibility – hence strengthening the rules of engagement and avoiding inadvertent escalation of war. Resultantly, increasing the efficacy, credibility, and war-fighting capabilities of the military forces. However, there are certain inherent tensions with the doctrine, since, Jackson argued that “it is discernible that military doctrine is a product of its environment.”<sup>18</sup> Nonetheless, a doctrine that is intertwined with the political context and environment could “compensate for shortcomings in both quality and quantity of equipment.”<sup>19</sup> During the Second World War, the German *Wehrmacht* overpowered its superior and well-armed adversaries by the virtue of a superior doctrinal orientation i.e. Blitzkrieg. The value and relevance of doctrine with that of war is enduring and let us consider the significance of Indian CSD and the theoretical foundations of such a military instrument in the context of India and Pakistan.<sup>20</sup>

### **Cold Start Doctrine: Theoretical Genesis**

Cold Start is the product of India’s unsuccessful coercive diplomacy<sup>21</sup> and an instrument in overcoming the inability of its armed forces in mobilizing, overtly in aftermath of the 2001-02 military standoff between India and Pakistan. It was unveiled in April 2004 by the publication of *Indian Army Doctrine*. It was argued that the doctrinal thinking took place in the “wake of the Kargil War” and is pivoted upon the premise of “Limited War.”<sup>22</sup> However, the limited offensive military doctrine was specifically designed to be used against Pakistan as a punitive response, using conventional means. It is a technology-oriented version of the German Blitzkrieg to be executed at the strategic or theatre-strategic level, as the *Wehrmacht* employed such tactics on the operational level during the Second World War.<sup>23</sup> The doctrine envisaged such a military response using conventional forces in eight division-sized Integrated Battle Groups (IBGs) towards Islamabad to move with unprecedented speed and strategic surprise, to penetrate, seize and hold small territory, while inflicting heavy damage on adversary’s fighting forces and infrastructure and trying to minimize collateral damage, ultimately denying Pakistan the justification for the use of nuclear weapons. The speed would ensure that the international community especially Beijing, Washington, and Brussels would not be in a position to intervene on Islamabad’s behalf to deny New Delhi’s military advance.

Its entire idea revolved around operational readiness and mobility by placing the forces near to the international border and the Line of Control (LoC).<sup>24</sup> The proximity of the division-sized IBGs to the possible war theatre would help in launching the attacks against Pakistan within three to four days of the order.<sup>25</sup> Apart from the Indian Army, Indian Navy and Indian Air Force would also provide fire power and close air support to the invading forces. The air platforms would help commanders to get complete information and to conduct electronic warfare thus depriving Pakistan of information and vital radars and sensors. The overall attack will be overshadowed by synergy among the IBGs and the supporting branches.

### Foundational Elements of CSD

The division-sized IBGs were interpreted by Ladwig to be pivoted upon Soviet maneuver groups; however, one argues that Marshal Tukhachevsky's deep operations concept<sup>26</sup> was different from Guderian's concept, since, the latter first created division-sized mobile fighting force in 1934.<sup>27</sup> Consequently, CSD is resurrection of German Blitzkrieg, since, both employ maneuver and psychological warfare to break the cohesion of the enemy, since, Clausewitz advocated that "given the same amount of intelligence, timidity will do a thousand times more damage in war than audacity."<sup>28</sup> It was argued that the constituent elements of Cold Start are stolen from Germans and are not actual brainchild of Indian Military thought.<sup>29</sup> Operational readiness and concentration of numbers i.e. Clausewitzian *schwerpunkt* serve as the instruments in achieving breakthrough in the enemy's lines of defence. The terrain and short distance operations are exploited by means of firepower, speed, surprise and deception. Likewise, unconventional warfare is also a part and parcel of CSD by paradropping Special Forces behind enemy lines to conduct various operations. A successful CSD requires cyber, electronic and network centric warfare (NCW) to sabotage enemy's communications and early warning radars and sensors.

### CSD and Generations of Warfare

War and warfare has progressed and advanced with the passage of time. Similarly, the changing nature of war has had a profound effect on warfare and the war fighting forces. As it is argued by Echevarria that "warfare has evolved through four generations: 1) the use of massed manpower, 2) firepower, 3) maneuver, and now 4) an evolved form of insurgency that employs all available networks—political, economic, social, military—to convince an opponent's decision-makers that their strategic goals are either unachievable or too costly."<sup>30</sup> Ladwig cited a retired Indian Army General who argued that Indian Military Forces intend to bring "mass firepower rather than forces."<sup>31</sup> It is evident that Indian intentions are to use 2<sup>nd</sup> Generation Warfare (2GW) to inflict

maximum damage on the defenders of Pakistan – since Echevarria and Lind argued 2GW to be massed firepower.<sup>32</sup> Now the article will present a different aspect of Cold Start, its prerequisites in provisions of three sets; being a bluff based on deception, myth rooted in misperception, and a reality flanked by escalation.

### **Bluff and Deception**

Cold Start is deep rooted in psychological warfare to break the cohesion of Pakistan Armed Forces; however, it can be considered as a bluff that has significantly altered Pakistan's way of war fighting and strategic thinking. India considers that Pakistan is likely to respond conventionally against CSD. Historically, according to India,<sup>33</sup> Pakistan started Operation *Gibraltar* on August 5, 1965 and expected that the hostilities would remain only in the Kashmir Sector.<sup>34</sup> However, later, India responded almost a month after, by crossing the international border on September 6. It would not be a surprise that Pakistan may respond in a nuclear strike against India as a reprisal for CSD, or it may open a front or set of fronts of its own choice, the existence of fifth column can also be a possibility.

### **Too Vague Objectives**

Bluff prevails on both sides of the border – at least rhetorically. CSD is a bluff, since it aims to build pressure on Pakistan in such a manner that it decisively abandons its support for Kashmiris. As, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto pledged to wage a “thousand-year war” in support of Kashmiri people.<sup>35</sup> History reveals that atrocious rule aimed at indigenous people, triggers resistance and garners foreign sympathy, fundamentally driven by the considerations of morality. This phenomenon has time and again attested its relevance.<sup>36</sup> Also, the Indian policy makers too often neglect the element of nationalism that enduringly binds Pakistan and the Muslims of Kashmir. Gen. Rawat called for putting Pakistani nuclear bluff to test; nonetheless, the German Operation Barbarossa in June 1941, was aimed to test Soviet bluff that resulted in the disappearance of the Third Reich in May 1945. It is one's assertion that though culminating point of attack (CPA), culminating point of victory (CPV) and centre of gravity (CoG) are not overtly disclosed in CSD; nonetheless, there are a few indicators by which CPA, CPV and CoG of CSD can be assessed and measured. If the Indians succeed in achieving chunks of Pakistani territory with considerable population, then they may claim CPA and CPV. However, for India, CoG remains the destruction of Pakistani defenders, an objective which is seemingly becoming difficult.

Theoretically speaking, the plan can be characterized as a perfect idea, but the question of operationalizing this battle plan is still uncertain. The Indian High Command aims to unleash CSD on a strategic or a theatre-strategic level, whereas

Germans used Blitzkrieg tactics on an operational-level that yielded success. However, as the supply lines increased during Operation Barbarossa, the Blitzkrieg bogged down. The CSD can never be said as a revolutionary military thought, since it takes its philosophical foundations from German Blitzkrieg.

Long before such debates, in early Nineteenth Century, Clausewitz drew his analysis on defence and offensive action and argued that defence is strong but negative, and offence is positive but weak in its nature.<sup>37</sup> CSD is structurally weak and quite vulnerable. Indians may think and enjoy their conventional superiority, but it would not be wrong to say that the development and deployment of Tactical Nuclear Weapons (TNWs) like *Nasr* and cruise missiles such as *Babur* and *Raad* by Pakistan, significantly reduced the importance of CSD.<sup>38</sup> The battle plan demands complete control of the air; nevertheless, the induction of SD-10A and AIM-120C Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missiles (BVRAAM) by Pakistan Air Force denies India the air superiority and supremacy. The Indo-Pak air battle in February 2019 can be taken as an example, where Pakistan destroyed two Indian combat aircraft with no loss. Apart from its other deadly arsenal, Pakistan possesses 300mm calibre Multiple Launch Rocket (MRL) to use against Indian armour which can be compared with Russian *Katyusha* MRL which actually stopped German Panzers in Soviet Union during the Second World War.<sup>39</sup>

### **Myth or Misperception**

Organization, structure, men, material, equipment, ideology and the decisive element of inadvertent escalation of war, makes a myth. The dominating role of the Indian Army over other branches of the Indian Armed Forces is largely debatable. Loyalty to one's service branch is quite logical when it comes to a soldier. Similarly, CSD being a doctrine presented by Indian Army retains a larger and dominating role for it in relation to other uniformed branches of Indian Armed Forces. Ladwig pointed out this prevalent dilemma where the army intends to deny the air force of a strategic role while minimizing it to a supporting and dependent role.

### **The Complex Relationship between Indian Military and Civilian Leadership**

Rhodes asserted that Indian Civil authorities do not take the Military Establishment onboard while decision-making. The author used the term "historical mistrust"<sup>40</sup> between the two. One observation shared by Rhodes is that since the partition, Indian Civil Establishment seems a little dominating over the military. It seems that a little misbalance is still prevailing in the echelons of the two. Moreover, Rhodes also argued that the civilian leadership of India has a culture of side-lining the Indian

Military in the decision-making process.<sup>41</sup> It cements one's belief that there exists a complex relationship between the Indian military and the civilian leadership.

Bacevich argued that overtly there has been no military coup in American history; however, the author highlighted that there exists a dominating military role after the Second World War.<sup>42</sup> Perhaps, U.S. President Eisenhower in his farewell address on January 17, 1961, pointed towards and warned of the power and influence of the military industrial complex grown in America just after the war.<sup>43</sup> It can be argued that overtly there are no complexities between civil and military establishments in America; however, while keeping in view the arguments of Rhodes and Bacevich while taking into account the speech of Eisenhower – it can be argued that the military role in decision-making can dramatically alter the course of operations, once CSD is executed.

### **Cold Start: A Deterrent or Detergent**

What made Indian ambitious military establishment to craft an offensive instrument known as CSD? If the doctrine was designed to punish Pakistan in an event of the latter's use of proxy warfare to inflict symbolic damage to India – then, why it was not executed after the Mumbai Attacks in November 2008?<sup>44</sup> Was that merely an act by Indian Army to put its overblown capabilities to foreground and its unparalleled vulnerabilities exhibited in Operation *Parakram* to background? Is CSD a real deterrent or Indian Army used it as a 'detergent' to wash away its inabilities? Ever since its inception in April 2004, CSD has remained in a lot of national, regional and international debate and it still remains alive in many circles – at least theoretically. It is a question mark on the collective wisdom and conscience of Indian policy makers, law makers, and judiciary, which failed to identify and punish the men responsible for the sluggish and inert military mobilization during 2001-02. Operation *Parakram* did cost Indian taxpayers a sum of almost 2 billion US Dollars and its military lost almost 800 men<sup>45</sup> – intended for coercive diplomacy that garnered nothing but shame and embarrassment for Indian Military Forces – especially Indian Army.

Perhaps, it is a fallacy that Indian Civil establishment has a certain level of control over its armed forces. Even if it is true up to some extent then it clearly means that the civil apparatus is relatively saner than the military one. Since, in the backdrop of failed Operation *Parakram*, Indian Army designed German Blitzkrieg-type CSD for mainly seven reasons; i) To overcome the perceived sluggishness prevailing in the decision-making of the civil echelons to launch a quick attack against Pakistan, ii) Indian Army is sure enough that it retains the capability to out-manoeuvre and destroy a large chunk of Pakistan Army in an intense hammering operation, iii) It must have a leading role over other branches of Indian Military i.e. Navy, Air Force and Coast Guards, iv) It

must exert its pressure on the Indian Civilian leadership for coercing Pakistan to give up its legitimate moral support for freedom fighters, v) To grab and hold Pakistani territory – to be used as a trump-card in post-war negotiations, vi) To use Pakistani population as a hostage and human shield – denying Pakistan the counter-attack, and, vii) To create space for a limited conventional war under the nuclear umbrella while frustrating Islamabad from any international support.

The matter in question is straightforward yet worth probing. Whether Indian Army is in a position to launch, sustain, contain, keep it limited and absorb the retaliation of any German Second World War type Blitzkrieg – lightning speed attacks against Pakistan, whilst dominating its civilian masters, whereas at the same time, leading other branches of Indian Armed Forces, in an attempt at crossing international border against a nuclear-armed enemy with considerable conventional military forces i.e. Pakistan? The answer is – no.

Indian Army retains the war-waging capability and might cross the international border; however, it won't be in a position to sustain, contain, keep it limited and absorb Pakistani retaliation. Indian Military planners and strategists are fully aware of this fact. The CPV of Indian CSD is in achieving strategic surprise and deception; nevertheless, Pakistan Army's New Concept of Warfighting (NCWF) effectively faded it away.<sup>46</sup> It is evident that the growing militarism and warmongering desire in the echelons of Indian Army are on the rise. It stresses Pakistan to maintain optimum operational readiness and vigilance with a firm resolve to respond to any Indian Military adventurism.

How long Indian Military – especially Army – would continue to deceive its civilian leadership and people at large about the likelihood of any possible successful execution of CSD against Pakistan? Without a doubt, Indian Army outstandingly used CSD as a smoke screen to ward-off the genuine criticism on its mobilization and operational capabilities. There is no doubt that CSD is a well-crafted and well-articulated military instrument, primarily due to its philosophical foundations in German Blitzkrieg and I do not negate its potential; nevertheless, Indian Army used CSD as a 'detergent' to wash away its inability, incapacity, and professional negligence exhibited by it during Operation *Parakram* 2001-02.

Ladwig noted that "having eight (rather than three) units capable of offensive action significantly increases the challenge for Pakistani intelligence's limited reconnaissance assets to monitor the status of all the IBGs, improving the chance of achieving surprise."<sup>47</sup> It can be argued that by doing this, India would keep Pakistan in a complete state of confusion leading to misperception and miscalculation.

People may call it a “failed concept”<sup>48</sup> but even the worst or perhaps ostensibly unfeasible concepts may prove unpredictable in war. This dilemma was best argued by Moltke the Elder who asserted that “No plan survives contact with the enemy’s main body.”<sup>49</sup> The most important point to ponder for the civil and military establishments of Pakistan is to look for ways to discourage India in employing CSD. The psychological warfare, network centric warfare and the use of special forces to be parachuted deep inside Pakistan’s territory are focused to break the cohesion of the Pak Armed Forces. It is obvious that opening up of many battles for the conclusion of one major war is the cornerstone behind the concept; again, a burrowed constituent element of Blitzkrieg.

### Reality and Escalation

CSD is inherently dangerous due to its foundations in German Blitzkrieg of the Second World War.<sup>50</sup> CSD and escalation could result in limited to unlimited objectives contrary to CSD’s original design. For instance, the capture of Dhaka, East Pakistan, in December 1971, was the result of escalation in conflict and the resultant change in objectives. Likewise, during the Second World War, the Germans were overwhelmed by their initial successes in Soviet Union and altered their objectives from racing towards the capital to oil-rich Caucasus region. Military miscalculations remain inevitably a part and parcel of decision making. Arguably, IBGs and their positioning near the Pakistan border is the real essence of the doctrine that would not only reduce the mobilization time of the Indian Military but may also succeed in capturing more Pakistani territory. Likewise, the terrain, relative superiority of Indian conventional strength and the synergy among Indian Forces with impressive firepower e.g. *Dhanush* Multiple Rounds Simultaneous Impact (MRSI) and Smerch 300 mm MRL artillery; are such capabilities which retain the potential of turning CSD into reality with contribution towards escalation.

Historically, the Fulda gap<sup>51</sup> kept Western Forces in a complete state of fear during the Cold War of a possible Soviet Blitzkrieg. However, in contemporary times, the 97 km long Suwalki gap is a source of constant fear of Russian aggression.<sup>52</sup> One argues that there exists a 3,190 km long Suwalki gap between India and Pakistan which features favourable terrain and geography along with weather conditions to conduct military operations. The city of Lahore is naturally protected by Ravi River and Bambanwala-Ravi-Bedian Canal; however, Ravi flows in a normal manner in the Monsoon season only. The South-East Punjab and Sindh do not have a single natural barrier to hinder armoured thrust in case of CSD. India primarily has to cross three Pakistani rivers i.e. Sutlej, Ravi and Jhelum; nevertheless, Sutlej and Jhelum can be argued to be located deep inside Pakistani territory.

German Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke the Elder argued that “No plan survives contact with the enemy’s main body.”<sup>53</sup> (Clausewitzian ideas have had great influence on Moltke).<sup>54</sup> Pakistan Army’s NCWF focuses on rapid mobilization and deployment of troops with massive firepower while employing Pakistan Air Force and Naval platforms in a combined arms manner – to counter Indian IBGs in a more or less reciprocate manner – division-sized body of force. Historically, Pakistan Army denied Indian Army of its primary objective of achieving strategic surprise during Operation *Parakram*. Now, with a new doctrine – NCWF – Pakistan Armed Forces are likely to respond in an unparalleled yet forceful manner – frustrating Indian CSD of achieving CPA, CPV and CoG. Nevertheless, the enhanced conventional war fighting capabilities on both sides might escalate the limited war. Apart from all the discussion, the idea of CSD can be pretty much devastating if employed in the correct manner with utmost operational readiness and significant network-centric mechanism. The series of military exercises conducted by the Indian Military since the inception of CSD makes one thing clear that not only it is a viable battle plan but is very much alive.

### **How Cold Start is benefitting Pakistan?**

Ladwig predicted back in 2008 that Pakistan might develop tactical nuclear weapons (TNWs) – provided CSD becomes operational.<sup>55</sup> It can be argued that CSD justified Pakistan’s development of TNWs. Subsequently, Pakistan’s Chief of Army Staff General Bajwa declared that “Nasr has put cold water on cold start.”<sup>56</sup> CSD has benefitted Pakistan, since, it invoked doctrinal awakening, strengthening of conventional forces, pursuit to acquire Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities, acquisition of Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS), development of multi-platform cruise missiles, armed unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and the development of anti-ship missiles.

### **The Nuclear Dimension**

Ladwig argued that “if Pakistan were to use nuclear weapons against Indian forces, divisions would present a significantly smaller target than would corps.”<sup>57</sup> One’s understanding is shared by Ladwig that Pakistan developed TNWs specifically for this purpose – ostensibly, if the conventional forces somehow could not hold the ground and retaliate to an Indian advance. However, it would be very difficult to determine forward edge of the battle area (FEBA) in employing TNWs. Historically, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) armed its operational level commanders with TNWs to respond to a Soviet Blitzkrieg-type invasion to save Europe – especially in the Fulda Gap.

## **Cold Start: Too Cold-Blooded – Pakistani Population as a Human Shield**

The battle plan aims to capture the Pakistani territory for mainly two purposes pivoted upon Clausewitzian concepts, i) In order to use it as a post-conflict bluff and ii) By capturing territories with significant amount of population, the defenders of Pakistan would not be in a position to launch a counter attack with intense firepower and destructive weapons – understandably to minimize collateral damage.<sup>58</sup> The doctrine is basically aimed to gain a shallow territory as a bargaining chip for post war negotiations. However, I argue that India in fact wants to have large chunks of Pakistani population as hostages. These hostages primarily in the Indian-proximity regions of Pakistani Punjab and Sindh are the real aims and objectives of CSD. Ladwig commented on the hotness of wars in relation to coldness, but perhaps he overlooked cold bloodedness of the Indian Military planners while designing the CSD.

By keeping the concept in view, it is not difficult to assume that CSD is way too cold-blooded designed for hot war. CSD is not likely to aim in cutting Pakistan's line of communications neither it intends to hold large territory. It only focuses to grab Pakistan's centre of gravity – its huge population centres. It is noticeable that some of Pakistan's thickly populated areas lie close to the Indo-Pak international border and the Line of Control. Scholars though overtly say that CSD is a limited war doctrine and it intends to gain shallow territory, but this narrow territory comes with huge number of innocent and unarmed population to be used as a human shield, hostages and prisoners or perhaps prisoners of war. However, Ladwig argued that CSD intends to harm Pakistan Army – the epicenter of Pakistan's aggressive foreign policy “while not harming civilian centres.”<sup>59</sup> It remains uncertain that, what India actually intends to do while capturing chunks of Pakistani territory? Does India wish to use captured Pakistani territory under Clausewitzian notion as it was cited by Echevarria that “capturing territories for use in negotiations?”<sup>60</sup>

## **How and Why Cold Start is a Strategic Concern for Pakistan?**

Capturing Pakistani territory in an attempt to deny Armed Forces of Pakistan of its people and consequently its ability to unleash Clausewitzian ‘Primordial Violence’ – since Bacevich and Cohen while commenting on Clausewitzian Trinity noted that “Force derives its efficacy from the passions of the people”<sup>61</sup> Similarly, Howard and Paret noted that primordial violence had a direct link with that of people and their passions.<sup>62</sup> It is one's assertion that India plans to capture Pakistani territory with considerable population having strategic value – as it is argued before – to be used as a trump card in post war negotiations possibly intended to coerce and compel Pakistan to withdraw its rightful and legitimate claim over the disputed Kashmir Issue. Otherwise, Pakistan might

have to face loss of territory. According to United Nations Charter, in the eyes of International Law and theoretically, a state is a sovereign and juristically equal actor in international relations. Consequently, in case India succeeds in capturing Pakistani territory – the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), the great powers, and the international community would play their respective and collective roles in restoring the *status-quo ante bellum*. However, while the Realist tradition accepts the role of international institutions in maintaining and sustaining world share.<sup>63</sup> Hitherto, it dictates states to opt for internal balancing i.e. by mobilizing the latent power to rely on their own muscles to ensure the security and survival of the state or to go for external balancing by forming alliances. Moreover, while keeping in view the credibility, efficacy, and the past role of UN, UNSC, the great powers, and the international community in coercing India<sup>64</sup> – Pakistan just cannot afford to lose territory – not even temporarily. States pay heed to historical precedents, as they are likely to help in predicting the future course of actions. These assertions point towards the use of TNWs and cruise missiles tipped with conventional or low yield nuclear warheads to stop any Indian incursions.



Figure: The strategic depth of Pakistan amounting to almost 500 km from East towards West.<sup>65</sup>

Dyer noted that “The official doctrines concentrate on manipulating what can be calculated and rationally planned in war, but the large incalculable elements are at best partly constrained by them – the rest is just hidden by the planning process.”<sup>66</sup> It is conceivable that just like any military doctrine – many aspects of CSD are kept secret and are evolving with trial and error method while the efficacy is also increasing by

continuous and sustained military exercises. Also, the acquisition of sophisticated weapon systems and equipment are incessantly maximizing the operational capabilities of Indian Armed Forces. These relentless increments in Indian military muscles are invoking 'security dilemma' on its Pakistani counterparts. The 'security dilemma' prevailing in Pakistan is giving birth to misperceptions about the uncertainty of Indian aims and objectives under the guise of CSD. It is comprehensible that the basic contours of any military strategy as it was argued by Clausewitz remains destruction of the enemy's fighting force<sup>67</sup> or subjugation or the annexation of territory. However, as it was predicted by Ladwig that India intends to achieve "shallow territorial gains, 50-80 kilometers deep."<sup>68</sup> Nevertheless, these 'shallow territorial gains' might be shallow for Ladwig, but not for Pakistan. As, many of Pakistan's populous cities are located near or in the vicinity of Indo-Pak international border and the line of control (LoC).

### **Practical Manifestations and Present Dimensions of Cold Start**

The basic problem with the acquisition of power and offensive military instruments is that they tend to shape state policies and relentlessly look for opportunities to exercise such entities. The latter's importance increases momentously, especially, where the state actors share historical animosity and the prevalence of Clausewitzian 'Primordial Violence'. The relationship between India and Pakistan presents the classic example of such an instance. For example, historically speaking, the German *Wehrmacht* acquired offensive capabilities during the inter-war period and put them to test during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939).<sup>69</sup> The experiences learned were operationalized and led to the creation of Blitzkrieg, which helped in overpowering entire Europe.

Theoretically, Cold Start is strong; yet, practically, apart from number of limitations, it still poses grave threat towards Pakistan. The short distance and terrain are dangerous and constant variables, which continue to augment the threat.<sup>70</sup> That said, India is considerably investing in its airborne forces, which can be inserted using low altitude flying helicopters inside Pakistani territory to conduct operations in support of Cold Start.<sup>71</sup> Historically, German General Kurt Student led its *Fallschirmjäger* (paratroopers) in overwhelming the Belgian fortress of Eben Emael at the Albert Canal in May 1940.<sup>72</sup> However, Pakistan and India possess considerable military capabilities and being rational actors are likely to adopt a rational course of action. Nonetheless, intentions are prone towards uncertainty.

History reveals that India's intentions are predominantly based upon expansionism and attaining regional hegemony. Its policy makers annexed territories by force including Kashmir, Hyderabad, Goa, etc. Thus, in relation to its Western counterpart, New Delhi has more 1) aggregate power, 2) proximity, 3) offensive

capability, and 4) offensive intentions, which make India a viable threat for Pakistan.<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, Cold Start aims to efficiently utilize its aggregate power, intends to benefit from geographical proximity, hones its offensive capabilities, whilst considerably adds to its already offensive intentions.

## Conclusion

The Cold Start Doctrine was intended for cold start and stop; however, it can start as cold, though, it may not stop as cold and is likely to turn hot. India termed Cold Start as a limited war doctrine; however, perhaps its definition of a limited war is not well defined. As for Clausewitz, the limited war is defined as “merely to occupy some of his (enemy’s) frontier-districts so that we can annex them or use them for bargaining at the peace negotiations.”<sup>74</sup> However, on the other hand, India’s Western neighbour kept its redlines thoroughly vague and its readiness at the optimum level, which amplifies the potential of deception, misperception, and subsequent escalation.

The Indian imitation of the German *Wehrmacht’s* Army Group A – (against France in May 1940) is not likely to turn into a reality against Pakistan. Apart from a few flaws in the thinking pattern of Indian policy makers, it is very much pertinent for Pakistan to refine its traditional strength to meet conventional and unconventional threats. For leaders like Stalin, “Quantity has a quality all of its own,”<sup>75</sup> and yes, numbers do count; however, quality often surpasses the quantity. Historically, since *Zarb-e-Momin* military exercises in 1989,<sup>76</sup> Pakistan has greatly transformed its way of war fighting, and with *Azm-e-Nau* exercises and the subsequent NCWF have qualitatively put a significant check-mate situation for India.

Besides the available information, it can be judged that almost 30 to 50 percent of CSD details are available while the rest are either classified, or too vaguely complex to understand. The unclassified or perhaps incomprehensible contours of CSD make it a living reality, although, many believe it as a myth or merely a politico-military strategic bluff. Nonetheless, Sir Liddell Hart underscored this quagmire by arguing that “In war the chief incalculable is the human will.”<sup>77</sup> Responding to any form of Indian Cold Start depends on the will of Pakistani policy makers, which the latter audaciously exhibited during the air battle of February 2019.<sup>78</sup> It can be argued with firm confidence that CSD is not an outdated or a buried military instrument rather a “clear and present danger”<sup>79</sup> for Pakistan. How dangerous CSD may sound, it can be argued that “India retains the capability to start a war, but it is highly doubtful that it may translate it as a strategic victory.”<sup>80</sup>

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- <sup>29</sup> Baig and Iqbal, "A Comparative Study of Blitzkrieg and Cold Start Doctrine: Lessons and Countermeasures for Pakistan," 7.
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