
Has Pakistan's Military Doctrine Transformed?

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Introduction

The importance of military power will remain as long as the nation state exists. Some prominent military strategist and thinkers like Chanakya, Clausewitz and Sun Tzu believed that no nation could be secure unless it had a powerful military, which could deter a potential adversary. Military power is the power that not only determines a country's power ranking but, for many states, the development and growth of their military power becomes a catalyst for their rise to great power status.

For any military of the world, it is a perhaps necessary to have a basic rule/principle or a set of beliefs to serve as its foundation. This is best encapsulated in the form of a doctrine. But the question arises: should the doctrine also reflect the modernisation and transformation which is required to keep the military upgraded and up to date? This would involve a change in the mindset/thought process, review of doctrine, strategy, war-fighting, concept, organisational structures, human resource optimisation, training methodology and logistics concepts in order to meet the operational challenges of the future. In other words, transformation would require a profound change in the overall military affairs.

In view of this, the article will examine if any changes have taken place in Pakistan's military doctrine. In doing so, the article is divided

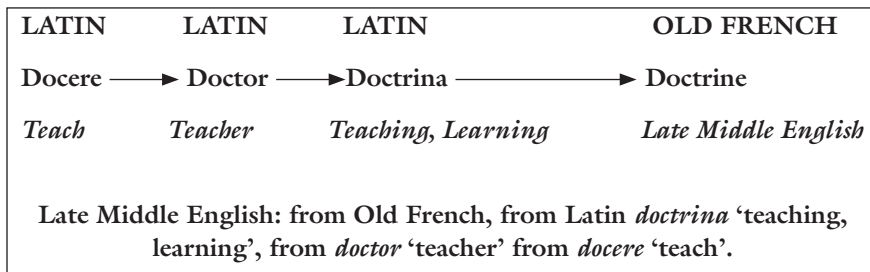
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into three parts: part one traces the etymology of the word doctrine and defines military doctrine; part two, covers the typology of doctrine; and part three, studies the fundamentals of Pakistan's military doctrine in a two-fold perspective: (a) functions of a fundamental military doctrine; (b) roots of a fundamental military doctrine, and analyses the changes in the doctrine.

Part One: Etymology of Doctrine

The word doctrine has its origin in the Latin word *docere*, which means teach. Doctrine is a teaching of a school, religion or political group. The etymology of the word can be traced in the diagram below:

Fig 1: Etymology of DOCTRINE/DoKTRIN



Source: Google search

Military Doctrine

A military doctrine is the fundamental set of principles that guide military forces in pursuit of national security objectives and is an important part of the building material for military strategy. It represents central beliefs or principles of how to wage war in order to achieve the desired military ends. Thus, it provides ways to use military means against a given type of threat or scenario and also has implications for force structure, training and equipment.¹

The ideal military doctrine should be truly joint, integrating land, air, maritime, and special operations in an effective way to achieve the

military objectives. It should be flexible enough to deal with any kind of foreseen and unforeseen threats. Clausewitz believed that a doctrine must also reflect the political interests and objectives, as well as the capabilities which are made available for warfare.²

Military doctrines often differ by country or military Service of origin. According to Dennis Drew and Don Snow, a military doctrine is “what one believes is the best way to conduct military affairs”. The use of the word believe suggests that a doctrine is the result of an examination and interpretation of the available evidence and this is subject to change and new interpretation, depending upon the new technology and the new circumstances. The term best connotes a standard—a guide for those who conduct military affairs.³ In the modern form, a military doctrine consists of a series of written manuals that together are representative of the military’s institutional belief system, according to Aaron P. Jackson.⁴ Doctrines, therefore, provide the military with an authoritative body of statements on how military forces conduct operations and provide a common lexicon for use by military planners and leaders.⁵

Part Two: Typology of Doctrine

There are three types of distinct doctrines, according to Dennis Drew and Don Snow:⁶

- Fundamental
- Environmental
- Organisational

Fundamental Doctrine

This is the foundation for all other types of doctrine. The nature of war, the purpose of military forces, the relationship of the military forces to other instruments of power and similar subject matters on which less abstract beliefs are founded, all come under the rubric of a fundamental doctrine. Two significant characteristics of a fundamental doctrine are:

- The timeless nature of a fundamental doctrine which seldom changes since it deals with basic concepts and not contemporary techniques.
- A fundamental doctrine is relatively insensitive to changes in political philosophy or technology.⁷

Environmental Doctrine

The expanse of sea power, air power, land power and space power is dealt with in this doctrine. It is a compilation of beliefs about the employment of military forces within a particular operating medium only; hence, it is narrower in scope than the fundamental doctrine. It is significantly influenced by factors like geography and technology as in the case of the sea power doctrine.

Organisational Doctrine

This doctrine discusses the role and missions of a particular military organisation, current objectives, administrative organisation and force employment principles as they are influenced by the current situation and in some cases, tactics. In addition, the organisational doctrine is current and must change to stay current.⁸

In order to understand these doctrines better, it is necessary to understand their interrelationships. Dennis and Don have studied this by visualising all three as the trunk of the tree. The trunk of the tree is the fundamental doctrine and has its roots in history—the primary of the doctrine. The tree branches represent the environmental doctrine—each springing from the same tree yet all related. The leaves represent the organisational doctrine—dependent on both the trunk and the branches and changing from season to season. This is diagrammatically depicted below:

Fig 2: Doctrine Tree



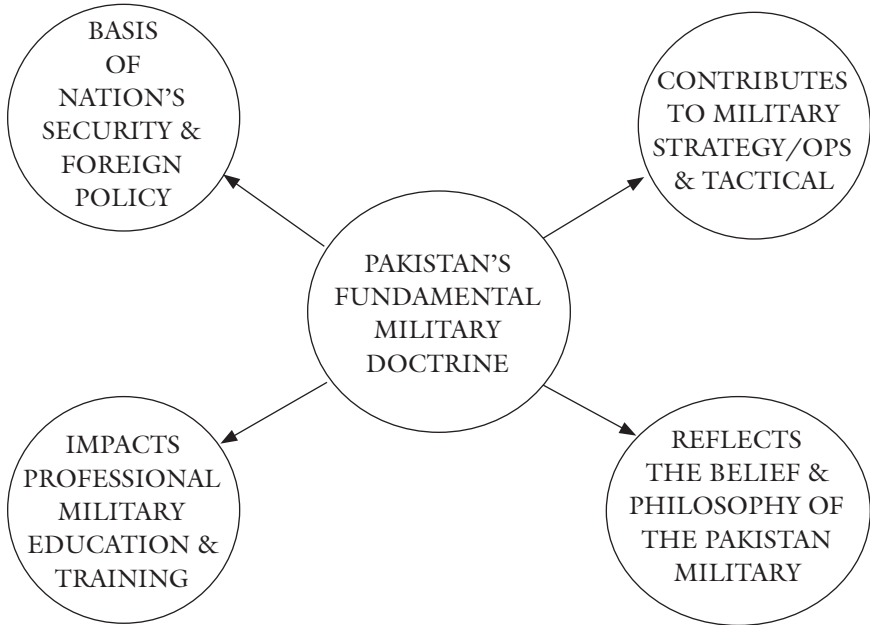
Source: Dennis Drew & Don Snow.⁹

Part Three: Pakistan’s Military Doctrine

Fundamentals of Pakistan’s Military Doctrine

The fundamentals of Pakistan military doctrine are based on the historical past; institutional belief systems and experience; ethos and principles of the military. Each successive generation of the military is not only taught these fundamental beliefs but is required to abide by them. The doctrine provides a philosophical foundation from which the thinking begins. This function is best represented in the diagram below:

Fig 3: Functions of the Pakistan Military Doctrine



Source: Prepared by the author.

Roots of Pakistan's Fundamental Military Doctrine

- Islam
- *Jihad* and Terrorism
- Kashmir
- India Factor
- Nuclear Factor

Islam

Starting from General Tikka Khan to the present Chief of the Pakistan Army, General Qamar Javed Bajwa, all regarded the military as the guardian of the state and protector of Islamic democracy. The military is Islamic in its ideology even today. The nexus of the retired Army officers and the religious Islamist groups is only growing stronger and bigger.

To quote Lieutenant General Ghulam Muhammad Malik, “Islam is a complete code of life and all aspects of it have been explained in the Quran. The life of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) provides us a complete example of how the Islamic code of life should be implemented. This includes the exercise of leadership in all spheres of life, especially the military spheres.”¹⁰

Islamic Concept of Military Leadership

- Firm belief in the basic tenets of Islam i.e. “*Tauheed*”(belief in the oneness of Allah), “*Risalat*” (the belief that Allah has been sending his messages of divine guidance through various prophets, “*Akhirat*”, (the belief that all human beings and *jinn*s will have to render an account of their deeds on the Day of Judgement).
- Firm adherence to the mission assigned by Allah, through the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him).
- The aim of the whole struggle must be to seek the will and pleasure of Allah.
- A strong character based on the teachings of the Quran and moulded after the life of the Holy Prophet.
- To create an environment where it is easier to be pious and difficult to do evil.
- A state of preparedness for war that strikes terror into the hearts of the enemies.
- During war:
 - Remembering Allah at all times and living according to his dictates despite odds.
 - Complete trust in Allah’s help and a firm belief that he will fulfil his covenant.
 - Exemplary display of bravery, sacrifice, steadfastness and professional competence.

The Islamic concept of leadership is required to be adopted by the military, at both the individual and collective levels.

- **At the Individual Level:** Each officer is expected to undertake the following:
 - Study the Quran and understand the Islamic concept of leadership.
 - Study the Islamic history of great leaders like the Khulfa-e-Rashideen.
 - Study the great Commanders like Tariq, Khalid bin Waleed, and Abu Obaida, who strongly implemented the Islamic concept of leadership.
 - Strive for professional competence and excellence.
- **At the Collective Level:** The officers should make all possible efforts to:
 - Create a clean and healthy environment.
 - Strive to remove the dichotomy between thought and action.
 - Help subordinates to become true Muslims.
 - Prepare for war in accordance with the Quranic injunctions and the life of the Holy Prophet.
 - The Military Academy curriculum should emphasise the “Islamic dimension of strategy”, namely, fighting for the honour and memory of the previous generation, as well as the larger Muslim community.¹¹

Analysis

Pakistan's fundamental military doctrine has an Islamic approach. Part of the Army's legacy is the idea that any insult or slight must be avenged, not only to punish the aggression of the enemy but also to honour the sacrifices of the earlier generation. This serves as a motivational strategy against its superior enemy, India. Using Islam for a variety of institutional and national goals will continue in the near future as well. Hence, nothing much has changed with respect to the usage of Islam as an important ingredient of the fundamental military doctrine.

According to Brigadier Askari Raza Malik of the Pakistan Army, in a society that owes its existence to Islam, its adoption is inescapable; any other system based on borrowed concepts will never appeal to the heart and soul of a Muslim soldier. With regard to modernisation and transformation, he observes that all modern techniques which are not foreign to this concept can be accommodated while working out the details.¹²

Jihad and Terrorism

Use of *jihad* and terrorism by Pakistan continues unabated. Its inability and its unwillingness to give up Islamist militancy remains the unofficial policy of the Pakistan Army. And it has used it or rather abused it profusely against India, especially in the Kashmir region. In the words of Ayres, “The multiple players who make up the Deep State in Pakistan have constructed an ideological environment in which *jihadis* flourish. The Pakistan Army can manipulate some of these players or deploy them for its own purposes. But I am not convinced if it knows how to drain the ideological swamp since that would require a complete rethink of how it defines Pakistan as a state. In other words, even if the willingness to disarm all militants were there, the Pakistan Army doesn’t have the imaginative capacity to know how to get underneath the problem”.¹³ The Pakistani Deep State has, as universally accepted, conceived the contours of, and formalised, the employment of terror as an extension of state policy.¹⁴

Analysis

The use of terror as a means of warfare has helped justify covert Pakistani support for militant groups operating in India administered Kashmir and India itself. If terror is sanctioned by the Quran, then it is a legitimate instrument of power. This position is widely held in the Pakistan military. Therefore, the justification for the continuation of *jihad* and terrorism.

In the words of Hussain Haqqani, “Pakistan sees *jihad* as a low cost option to bleed India. The security apparatus views terrorism as irregular warfare. Islamabad feels this is the only way to ensure some form of military parity”.¹⁵

State sponsored terrorism has time and again surfaced as the DNA of the Pakistan Army¹⁶—be it the Pulwama terror attack, Pathankot attack, Uri attack, Indian Parliament attack—the list is never ending. The hands of the Pakistan Army are not clean: its continued support for India focussed militant groups like the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) is well known and well documented in various studies. Hence, the Army cultivates a deep respect for the values of *jihad* which is evident in much of its professional literature as well. The Pakistan Army is not about to give up its use of *jihad* and terrorism as a strategic weapon against India in the times to come.

Kashmir

Since the partition of the Indian subcontinent, Kashmir has been a constant factor in the Pakistan's military mindset. The military as well as the political brass have always believed that Kashmir remains the unfinished agenda of the partition and the core of all the problems. Pakistan has always followed a covert action capability for keeping India bleeding and ultimately annexing Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). It has initiated four full scale wars, countless border skirmishes and a number of small scale proxy wars with India to wrest Kashmir, in 1947-48, 1965, 1971 and 1999. Kashmir remains an intractable conflict. Time and again, the Kashmir issue is raked up not only in the political discourse but also by the Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa, who has repeatedly reaffirmed Islamabad's support for “self-determination” in J&K. Addressing the Defence and Martyrs Day ceremony organised at the Pakistan Army Headquarters in Rawalpindi on September 06, 2018, which was attended by Prime Minister Imran Khan, Bajwa said Pakistan supported the people in J&K in their

“struggle for the right to self-determination”. He also said, “The Pakistan Army learnt a lot from the 1965 and 1971 Wars with India and has made the country’s defence impregnable by developing nuclear weapons”.¹⁷ The Pakistan military acquired the covert capability from the Central Investigation Agency (CIA) in the 1980s for use against the Soviet troops in Afghanistan. It is now being used against India and the Hamid Karzai government of Afghanistan.¹⁸

Analysis

The Pakistan military will never change its policy on Kashmir. Its nurturing of the militants, and using them as tools to expedite its own aims will continue in the near future as well. The active support of the Army in instigating the Kashmir insurgency will continue unabated. The Pakistan military thrives on the active support it renders to the Kashmiri insurgency. The support is religious, moral, political as well as economic; and the instruments it profusely uses are *jihad* and terrorism. There will be no change in this fundamental military doctrine in the times to come.

India Factor

Since independence, Pakistan has suffered from a small state syndrome vis-à-vis India. The Pakistan military has always considered India as its main enemy. “The seeds of hostility and discord were sown right from the birth of Pakistan, and its visceral hatred for everything India has been the cornerstone of its short-sighted policies since 1947”.¹⁹ “Bleed India with a thousand cuts”, is a military doctrine followed by Pakistan against India. It consists of waging a covert war against India, using insurgents at multiple locations. This dictum is taught in various studies conducted by the Pakistan military, particularly in the Staff College, Quetta.²⁰

Analysis

Pakistan fundamentally believes in having an aggressive posture towards India. The war of 1965 was initiated by Pakistan. The flawed concept of “the defence of East Pakistan lies in the west” remained the basis of its military strategy till the surrender at Dhaka in 1971.²¹ Its aggressive posturing was also evident in its strategy to destabilise India through covert support for Sikh separatists throughout the 1980s, and its sponsoring of terrorist activities in the J&K region since the late 1980s is well known. In the 1990s, the Kargil misadventure was again led by Pakistan with the aim of acquiring the territory of Kargil. Pakistan has always followed a doctrine of “offensive defence”, given Pakistan’s size, location, and terrain along its eastern border with India. In times of crisis, Pakistan has not hesitated to be the first to resort to force to gain the initial advantage. The Quranic concept of *jihad* continues to be the basis of the Islamic strategic doctrine.

Nuclear Factor

The logic behind having a nuclear capability is again Indo-centric. It was only after the defeat in the 1971 War that Pakistan decided to develop its nuclear capability. It finally acquired the nuclear capability in 1987 as admitted by General Mirza Aslam Beg.²² Thereafter, the concept of nuclear deterrence became a vital element of Pakistan’s fundamental military doctrine. The nuclear factor constitutes the most modern and advanced tenet in its fundamental military doctrine. Time and again, it has used this factor to blatantly attack India.

Analysis

There has been no change in the Pakistan Army’s attitudes and values in the past 37-year period and there is no reason to expect that it will change appreciably in the future, and certainly not in the next decade, as said by David O. Smith in his study of the Pakistan military. He states

that the Pakistani military (read officers cadre of the Quetta Staff College course) believes that India is less of a threat to Pakistan than the terrorist groups targeting the state institutions.²³ But, the narrative in the Army establishment and the training institutions has been that India is an existential enemy. This narrative will remain embedded in the mindset of the military and be a vital factor in Pakistan's fundamental doctrine.

Conclusion

Though a review of the military doctrine has been done a number of times, the fundamentals have remained the same. The environmental factors have helped in the review of the doctrine in relation to internal security, for instance, now priority is given to the creation of a sub-conventional warfare capability to fight domestically against non-state actors who are posing a threat to Pakistan's internal security. Pakistan's fundamental military doctrine will maintain its continuum for decades, since the very foundation of this state was based on the anti-India syndrome. Until and unless this changes, the roots of its fundamental military doctrine will only go deeper and deeper. Robert G. Wirsing believes that Pakistan's radical strategic transformation is most unlikely to happen because it would sacrifice Pakistan's vital national interests.²⁴ No nation will ever let its national interest be at stake. Hence, the roots of Pakistan's fundamental military doctrine remain strong, intact and firm.

Notes

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