

**CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN BRITISH AND INDEPENDENT INDIA, 1918-1962,  
AND COUP PREDICTION THEORY**

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Civil-Military Relations in British and Independent India, 1918-1962,  
and Coup Prediction Theory

ABSTRACT

This thesis explains why India did not experience a military coup d'état from 1918 to 1962. This involves a detailed consideration of the competing, though often complementary, theories which attempt to analyse the specific conditions and motives that cause officers to intervene against their government. As no one "coup theory" is found definitive, each is deployed when relevant to crucial episodes in British and independent India's civil-military relations from 1918 to 1962, including the history and development of a professional officer corps, Indian nationalism, the Indian National Armies of World War II, the Transfer of Power, Ayub Khan's "Revolution", the rise of the Menon-Kaul nexus, and the 1962 Sino-Indian War.

Throughout, the emphasis is on the views and actions of senior retired Indian military officers. The opinions of almost 20 such officers are taken from their respective published (auto-)biographies. The views of another 108 officers (as well as a number of Indian civilians with experience in, or expertise at the highest level of civil-military relations) come from one of two versions of a detailed questionnaire and/or comprehensive personal interviews.

This thesis reveals that there was never any serious threat of a military coup in India. Some factors contributing to this phenomenon are inherent: the country is large, diverse, predominantly Hindu, and enjoyed a continuity of political leadership. Other factors are the result of deliberate choices by the civil-military leadership and include the country's stability, quality and tradition of democracy, relative administrative efficiency, institutionalization of diverse centres of power and, most importantly, the professionalism of the officer corps.

While this examination suggests measures available to other countries seeking to ensure civil supremacy-of-rule, the particular mix of factors which contributed to India never having experienced military coup is unique.

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INTRODUCTION

The crucial issue in any country's civil-military relations is not whether the armed forces will influence political decision-making—the state is ultimately a body of armed men—but to what degree and in what ways. A "normal" civil-military relationship has formal and informal boundaries between political and military roles accepted by both civilians and armed forces' officers.<sup>1</sup> Officers are free to lobby their political masters over such items as the military's budget allocation, recruitment, pay rates, perquisites, weapons procurement and the like, so long as this pressure is carried out within regular channels, using mutually accepted codes-of-conduct. Where such boundaries are disdained or ignored, the civil-military relationship is ruptured, and with it the acceptance of civilian control over the military. In the worst-case scenario familiar in developing countries, officers' dissatisfaction moves them forcibly to overthrow the government.

Despite recent hopes that the fall of the Berlin Wall signalled the global ascendancy of democracy,<sup>2</sup> the military coup d'état—the sudden and illegal replacement of a country's legitimate government through the use or threat of violence by a small group of conspirators drawn from within the armed forces—continues to be endemic in the third world.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> C.E. Welch, Jr. "Civilian Control of the Military: Myth and Reality" in Civilian Control of the Military: Theory and Cases from Developing Countries, ed. C.E. Welch, Jr. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1976), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> R. Dowden, "Coups blight Africa reform", Independent on Sunday, 24 October 1993.

<sup>3</sup> Coups do not necessarily include military elements. Paramilitary

Estimates vary, but since India's independence in 1947, there have been well over 100 successful military coups throughout the world (with perhaps an equal number of failures).<sup>4</sup> Armed forces have removed regimes in geographically large and populous nations and in geographically small and underpopulated ones; in multi-ethnic, seemingly sophisticated and modernized countries as well as their opposite; in ex-British, French, Belgian, Dutch and Spanish colonies, and in nations with no colonial past; soon after independence yet also after years of civilian self-rule. In justification, coup executors have promised all types of action, from sweeping socioeconomic reforms to radical retrenchment of

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groups, armed irregulars and even civilians may overthrow the government. However, due to the military's primacy in weaponry, such a configuration of coup-plotters must have the means to immobilise or at least successfully confront the armed forces and any other of the regime's security forces. Furthermore, the military's other capabilities such as those of secrecy and speed of internal communications mean that their personnel almost invariably make up at least a portion of the coup conspiracy. Because coups which do not include any armed forces' elements make up such a tiny number of examples, all references to coups below will assume military participation unless otherwise noted. See R.H.T. O'Kane, The Likelihood of Coups (Aldershot: Avebury, 1987), p. 22; and R. First, The Barrel of a Gun: Political Power in Africa and the Coup D'État (London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1970), p. 19.

<sup>4</sup> A definitive number of coups worldwide is difficult, especially in the case of unsuccessful attempts. O'Kane counts 134 successful coups in 67 countries from 1950 to 1985. S.R. David writes that "it is generally agreed that since World War II there have been more than one hundred successful coups and about as many unsuccessful attempts". W.R. Thompson notes 274 attempted coups in 59 states between 1946 and 1970. Of these, 122 are classified as "successful", 19 as "compromise", and 132 as "unsuccessful". (NOTE: the total of successful, compromise and unsuccessful coups is one short of the 274 mentioned earlier due to Thompson's discrepancy in numbering coup attempts in Haiti at seven on p. 7 and six on p. 68.) In 1991, the World Bank reported that "Since 1948, there has been at least one coup attempt per developing country every five years". See S.R. David, Defending Third World Regimes from Coups D'État (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1985), p. 4; International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/THE WORLD BANK, World Development Report 1991 The Challenge of Development (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 128; O'Kane, op.cit., pp. 3, 141-144; and W.R. Thompson, The Grievances of Military Coup-Makers (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1973), pp. 7, 53, 68-70.

conservative rule, but almost always promising to end the corruption of the previous regime. Upon removing a government, officers have installed regimes which include only themselves as the new rulers, a mix of themselves, other military personnel and/or civilians drawn from outside and/or inside the previous regime, or have refused to assume office.<sup>5</sup>

The proliferation and diversity of military coups, and the unpredictability of their subsequent regimes' programmes has led some scholars to call for an end to attempts to systemize—and thus predict—instances of armed forces' intervention. For R.D. McKinlay and A.S. Cohan, "the performance of a regime rather than its origins...is of greater significance".<sup>6</sup> M.D. Feld questions whether plural societies can ever achieve a stable civil-military relationship:

Since the military policy of a secular society has as its objective the creation of an apolitical armed force and the social policy of the professional soldier has as its objective the creation of an apolitical society, sustained and equal partnership between the two is impossible.<sup>7</sup>

Faced with the apparent inevitability of armed forces' coups occurring and recurring without predictable causes, many commentators choose to study the more concrete manifestations of a military regime's performance rather than the factors which led officers to assume power.

This thesis, however, concerns India, a country which has experienced neither a military regime nor an unsuccessful coup. Given the global proliferation of forcible armed forces' interventions against governments, what factors have contributed to this remarkable state of

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<sup>5</sup> O'Kane, op.cit., pp. 141-144.

<sup>6</sup> R.D. McKinlay and A.S. Cohan, "A Comparative Analysis of the Political and Economic Performance of Military and Civilian Regimes: A Cross-National Aggregate Study", Comparative Politics 8:1 October 1975, p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> M.D. Feld, "Professionalism, Nationalism and the Alienation of the Military", in Armed Forces and Society Sociological Essays, ed. J. Van Doorn (The Hague: Mouton & Co. N.V., 1968), p. 68.

affairs? Moreover, how does one structure an examination of what is, in effect, a non-event?

In almost any analysis of national civil-military relations and the factors influencing the (im)probability of a coup, much depends on understanding the country's military officers. It is their perception of their role in society and their view of national events which ultimately decide whether or not the armed forces will remain in their barracks or overthrow the government. Chapter One of this thesis therefore begins with an examination of the nature of military professionalism, concentrating on Samuel Huntington's seminal 1957 study of objective versus subjective professionalism as the distinctive quality of commissioned armed forces' officers and their relations with their civilian rulers.<sup>8</sup> This is followed by an analysis of competing coup prediction, or military intervention theories. Using as a partial guide David Horowitz's division, these are organized into four, almost exclusive groups which may be summarized according to their respective views that a government is forcibly overthrown because officers are (1) ideally qualified citizens altruistically motivated to help their country's floundering attempts at modernization, (2) political actors seeking to maximize their power in fluid polities, (3) reacting to threats to their perceived corporate self-interest, and (4) fulfilling their personal and/or clientelist ambitions with little regard for the consequences.<sup>9</sup> Finding insufficient quantitative or qualitative reasons

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<sup>8</sup> S. Huntington, The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957).

<sup>9</sup> D. Horowitz Coup Theories and Officers' Motives: Sri Lanka in a Comparative Perspective (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 3-15.

for favouring one theory over any of its rivals, Chapter One concludes with the decision to deploy all four where relevant in the examination of the factors behind India never having experienced a military coup.

To help determine the relevance of particular personal, corporate, societal and/or international factors for India never having experienced a military coup, this thesis deploys the recorded opinions of the potential executors of any such action; senior Indian armed forces' officers themselves. One group, numbering almost 20, consists of those having published an (auto-)biographical work and includes General K.S. Thimayya, Admiral K.D. Katari and Air Chief Marshal P.C. Lal.<sup>10</sup> The other comprises 108 senior retired officers from all three defence services, including 24 Lieut.-Generals, 2 Admirals and 3 Air Chief Marshals (whose identities are known only to myself and to the thesis examiners provided with a Key.) These officers' respective views on a wide variety of issues concerning Indian civil-military relations are

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<sup>10</sup> These works include M.R.A. Baig, In Different Saddles (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1967); General J.N. Chaudhuri, General J.N. Chaudhuri: An Autobiography. As narrated to B.K. Narayan (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1978); H. Evans, Thimayya of India (Dehra Dun: Natraj Publishers, 1988. First published at New York: Harcourt, Bruce & Co, 1960); Admiral K.D. Katari, A Sailor Remembers (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd, 1982); Lt General B.M. Kaul, The Untold Story (Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1967); M.A. Khan, Friends Not Masters: A Political Autobiography (London: Oxford University Press, 1967); Air Chief Marshal P.C. Lal, My Years with the IAF Ed. Ela Lal (New Delhi: Lancer International, 1986); I.M. Muthanna, General Cariappa: The First Indian Commander-in-Chief (Mysore City: Usha Press, 1964); Air Vice Marshal Harjinder Singh, Birth of An Air Force: The Memoirs of Air Vice Marshal Harjinder Singh. Ed. Air Commodore A.L. Saigal (New Delhi: Palit & Palit, 1977); General Mohan Singh, Leaves From My Diary (Lahore: Free-World Publications, 1946); Brigadier Sukhwant Singh, Three Decades of Indian Army Life (Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1967); Lieut.-General D.R. Thapar, The Morale Builders: Forty Years with the Military Medical Services of India (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1965); Lieut.-General S.P.P. Thorat, From Reveille To Retreat (New Delhi: Allied Publishers Private Limited, 1986); and Lieut.-General S.D. Verma, To Serve with Honour: My Memoirs (Dehradun: Natraj Publishers, 1988).

taken from one of two very similar versions of a detailed questionnaire distributed in 1988 and 1989 (see Appendixes A and B), and/or comprehensive personal interviews conducted by myself in 1986-7 and 1989 (see Appendixes C and D). Opinions expressed in complementary interviews of a number of Indian civilians with experience in, or expertise at the highest level of the country's civil-military relations as expressed in personal interviews are also employed (see Appendix E). Throughout the thesis, the names are used only of those officers and civilians who have published their record of events; otherwise only the rank/title and key number of individuals appear.

This reliance on written records and oral interviews has both drawbacks and advantages. Major-General D.K. Palit, author of the recent War in High Himalaya: The Indian Army in Crisis, 1962, perhaps the definitive memoirs/book on the Indian civil-military decision-making hierarchy during the Sino-Indian War,<sup>11</sup> acknowledges that

Time has drawbacks...A memoir [sic] is a subjective record, a mix of fact and opinion, and time can play tricks with opinions. It is one thing to form an objective judgement with the advantage of hindsight; it is quite another to allow the years to blur the difference between opinion and held then and opinions held now.<sup>12</sup>

In his Introduction to India's Political Administrators 1919-1983, David Potter recognizes further disadvantages of works written after the fact:

Powers of memory decline as one gets older...There is a tendency to exaggerate the importance of one's own career, to emphasize successes and play down or bury failures. In addition, certain

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<sup>11</sup> See my review of D.K. Palit, War in High Himalaya: The Indian Army in Crisis, 1962 (London: C. Hurst, 1991) in Journal of Asian Studies (Ann Arbor) February 1994, pp. 261-263.

<sup>12</sup> Moreover, Palit has "on occasion caught myself subconsciously assuming that an opinion I now is one that I held thirty years ago. To allow that impression to remain would be patently dishonest and I have meticulously endeavoured to avoid that pitfall". See Palit, op.cit., p. ix.

types of people are far less likely to write reminiscences, the disreputable, for example.<sup>13</sup>

While the above criticisms of relying on records written after the fact also may be applied to oral interviews undertaken subsequent to events, there are undoubted advantages to using such materials. For Palit,

Distance in time has the virtue that viewpoint distortions of contemporary events can be straightened out as they acquire perspective, and as emotion and prejudice recede. The passage of years also makes available others' views and opinions which help to modulate subjective judgements formed under the stress of immediate reactions.<sup>14</sup>

Potter, too, argues that "autobiographical materials, if used with care, do provide a most useful supplement to other forms of evidence".<sup>15</sup>

Bearing in mind the advantages and disadvantages stated above, this thesis justifies its heavy reliance on (auto-)biographical works, questionnaire responses and oral interviews written and/or undertaken after the events in question in a number of ways. Firstly, as Potter explains, "obvious whitewashes are not difficult to spot";<sup>16</sup> especially when, as in this case, there are a large number of contemporary accounts--(auto-)biographies, questionnaires and oral interviews--available for cross-checking. (Of course, the thesis also makes full use of second-hand works by political scientists and historians to give perspective to the above accounts.) Secondly, these records are very detailed: the officers' (auto-)biographical books are works of some substance; the two versions of the questionnaire are very detailed (having 57 and 55 questions, respectively); the oral interviews lasted over two hours on average. Thirdly, officers answering the questionnaire

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<sup>13</sup> D.C. Potter, India's Political Administrators 1919-1983 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), p. 16.

<sup>14</sup> Palit, op.cit., p. ix.

<sup>15</sup> Potter, op.cit., p. 16.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, p. 16.

and/or interviewed were chosen randomly from various official and unofficial sources.<sup>17</sup> (The Government of India does not release a systematic list of the names and addresses of armed forces officers, serving or retired.) Fourthly, the high response rate of 96 completed questionnaires out of 412 mailed out indicates the inclusion of a wide mix of officers. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the over 20 (auto-)biographical books, 96 questionnaire responses, and 44 interviewees (officers and civilians) form a unique insight into Indian civil-military relations. These men were either the ultimate guarantors or executioners of civil supremacy-of-rule in India. See Table 0.1. Until now, no work has been able to tap the opinions of such usually extremely reticent sources on such sensitive topics.

While commissioned officers of independent India's armed forces have had to overcome challenges uniquely their own, their professional standards and understanding of their role vis-a-vis the civilian government has most directly been shaped by British military traditions. Chapter Two examines the history and development of commissioned Indian officers during the interwar years, emphasising the nature of their professional role and responsibilities from the 1918 admission of Indian Gentleman Cadets to the Royal Military College (RMC), Sandhurst, through

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<sup>17</sup> See S.P. Baranwal, ed. and comp., Military Yearbook (New Delhi: Guide Publications, 1965-); India and Pakistan Year Book Including Who's Who, 1948-1953 (Bombay: Times of India, 1948-1953); India Who's Who (New Delhi: Infa Publications, 1969-); Indian Year Book And Who's Who, 1931-1947 (Bombay: Times of India, 1931-1947); S. Sarkar, ed., Hindustan Year Book and Who's Who, 1992 (Calcutta: M.C. Sarkar & Sons Private Ltd, 1992); Jaswant Singh, ed. and comp., Indian Armed Forces Yearbook (Bombay: n.p., 1964-); Times of India Directory and Year Book Including Who's Who, 1954- (Bombay: Times of India, 1954-); The Military Year Book, 1974- (Government of India Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1974-). I am indebted to Lieut.-General Dr. M.L. Chibber for access to his unpublished list of officers' names and addresses.



TABLE 0.1

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Which of the following factors have contributed to India never having experienced a military coup?

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Ranked by the questionnaire respondents in order of importance.

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- 1st: Professionalism of armed forces (M).
- 2nd: Diversity of peoples, cultures, languages (B).
- 3rd: Initial political stability, quality, and/or democratic rule (G).
- 4th: Nationally representative military personnel (J).
- 5th: Sheer size of India (N).
- 6th: Dominant Hindu culture inherently against military rule (C).
- 7th: Widely-held belief in democracy (O).
- Joint 8th: Wisdom and stature of national leaders (P).  
Administrative efficiency (A).  
Political awareness of masses (K).
- Joint 11th: 40-year old habit of democracy (E).  
Institutionalization of diverse centres of power (H).  
Logistics unfavourable: five regional army commands, troops dispersed nationally, etc. (I).
- Joint 14th: Independence struggle's non-violent nature (F).  
Example of ineffectiveness of military rule in Pakistan and Bangladesh (D).
- 16th: Other (Q).
- 17th: Political unawareness of masses (L).

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Rankings are from votes cast by the 69 respondents of Questionnaire II. Letters in parentheses refer to the original alphabetical order of the list as appearing on Questionnaire II. See Appendix F for details.

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the 1932 opening of the Indian Military Academy (IMA), Dehra Dun, to the eve of World War II. It reveals that, despite a multitude of formal and informal challenges—the trials of Sandhurst, the racist "Indianization" experiment, the prejudice of British officers and polite society, discrimination visited by Indian RMC graduates upon their IMA comrades—commissioned Indian officers mastered professionalism's demands of expertise in "the management of violence"<sup>18</sup> and sense of organisational

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<sup>18</sup> H. Lasswell, "The Garrison-State Hypothesis Today", as used in S. Huntington, Changing Patterns of Military Politics (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, Inc., 1962), p. 51. See also Lasswell, "The Garrison State", American Journal of Sociology 46:4 January 1941, pp. 455-458.

corporateness. What remained to be seen was whether these officers, chosen for their loyalty to the Raj and trained to be full members of the ruling elite, would be able to transfer their professional sense of responsibility to the rulers of independent India.

A strong indication of commissioned Indian officers' future sense of professional responsibility may be seen from their pre-independence views of, and relationship with the Indian nationalist movement and its leaders. Would military *izzat* continue to shield Indian officers from the greater political landscape of the subcontinent—perhaps poisoning civil-military relations in independent India—or would the struggle for independence cause their professional responsibility to shift from the King Emperor to nationalist politicians—with potentially disastrous results for military discipline and effectiveness? **Chapter Three** shows the nationalist movement had little effect on the loyalty and discipline of commissioned Indian officers, despite some having had first-hand experience in nationalist activities before joining the armed forces. This non-involvement was due to a number of factors including: Indian officers' desire to prove their professional competence once commissioned, the military's strict internal discipline of apoliticality, most nationalist leaders' (and the public's) indifference to military matters, and the unique non-violent nature of the independence movement. The almost total exclusion of the military in the nationalist struggle meant there was no mystification of the soldier as hero. When independence came, no military man would be in a position to challenge the right-to-rule of those nationalist leaders who became India's democratically elected representatives.

**Chapter Four** explores the notable exception to commissioned Indian officers' non-involvement in the independence movement; the formation of various Indian "national" armies to combat the Raj. Although these forces proved no match for the Allies in combat, their mere existence and *raison d'être* gave rise to fears for the loyalty of the British-led Indian armed forces' overwhelmingly Indian personnel. Such concerns were misplaced. Although some tens of thousands of Indian POWs, including the great majority of Japanese-held commissioned Indian officers, did switch their allegiance, almost as many chose to endure the harsh regime of Axis prison camps. More importantly, those Indian soldiers and commissioned officers on active duty remained loyal to the Raj, believing their wartime allegiance and efforts would be rewarded by independence. This belief also quieted post-war qualms about what to do with those who had joined the various Indian national armies. So long as this "clique" of ostensibly politicized men were not allowed back into the armed forces--and they were not--even commissioned Indian officers could agree with the public and nationalist politicians that such men had been true, if misguided, Indian patriots.

After the test of the Indian national armies came the challenge of independence. **Chapter Five** shows how commissioned Indian officers' constant belief in the quality of their professional expertise and corporateness enabled them successfully to conquer immediate post-war strikes and mutinies, the division of the armed forces between India and Pakistan, the departure of British military personnel, and immediate actions in Punjab, Junagadh, Hyderabad, and Jammu & Kashmir. Although many officers felt their efforts went unappreciated by the Indian political and administrative elite, they remained confident in the

latters' ability to manage the difficult transition of independence. This faith in the ability of the country's new political and bureaucratic elite to govern effectively after independence allowed officers to transfer their professional responsibility smoothly from the British Raj to independent India's new civilian rulers.

What if the political leadership failed to live up to officers' high expectations? Chapter Six shows Indian officers to have perceived the first decade of independence as one of governmental neglect of the military. Might they copy the example of their former comrade, General Ayub Khan, who justified his 1958 takeover of Pakistan's government by saying the civilian leadership had mismanaged the country? No; for any number of reasons. Firstly, despite his disinterest in the armed forces, Nehru continued to respect their corporate sphere of decision-making and adequately reward their personnel. Officers also understood that wider societal demands on the government budget were superior to their own corporate needs. Moreover, unlike in Pakistan (and most other countries experiencing military coups), a long-standing mutual antipathy inhibited Indian officers and administrators from forming the "military-bureaucratic coalitions" essential to governing in place of civilian politicians.<sup>19</sup> Other factors—India's initial political quality and stability, its (arguable) national *culture* of Hinduism, and Indian and Pakistani officers' contrasting reference-group identification experiences—further distanced Indian officers from following the example of their former comrades.

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<sup>19</sup> R.E.Dowse, "The Military and Political Development" in ed. C.Leys Politics and Change in Developing Countries Studies in the Theory and Practice of Development (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp. 228-232.

The time of greatest civil-military conflict in India began in the late 1950s with the rise of Krishna Menon and Lieut.-General B.M. Kaul to the top rank of the defence establishment. **Chapter Seven** examines how these supremely arrogant/ambitious individuals, alone and in tandem, used their administrative skills and close personal relationship with Nehru to bypass the established civil-military decision-making hierarchy, play favourites and upset colleagues to the point of being openly charged with politicising the armed forces. Did a Menon-Kaul nexus split the officer corps into pro- and anti-Menon-Kaul factions? Was there a danger that either bloc might intervene against the civilian government to ensure the furtherance of its respective interests? No; despite undoubted rancour in the armed forces and their sterling performances abroad and at home, officers' non-participation in the independence struggle continued to limit public respect for them as agents for positive change—especially when compared to the towering authority and popularity of Nehru. Moreover, the nature, if not extent, of the Menon-Kaul nexus' disregard for India's formal civil-military decision-making process was not without precedent. Also, however disgruntled, RMC and IMA graduates continued to adhere to the notion of a professionalism based on perfecting "management of violence" skills at the expense of political awareness and/or activity. Most importantly, Congress, though now tarnished with the failures inevitable to governing, continued to demonstrate its popularity at the polls.

If civil supremacy-of-rule in India was ever under threat, it was when defeat in the 1962 Sino-Indian War for the first time called into question the competence of the civilian government. **Chapter Eight** exposes the shambolic nature of Indian civil-military decision-making

before and during the war. It reveals how the army's field officers, that strata of any officer corps most likely to instigate a coup, held highly negative postwar attitudes towards both the political and military leadership, and perceived the public to be sympathetic towards the military and resentful of the political leadership. Despite this confluence of attitudes, remarkably few officers recall talk of moving against the government. This reticence was mainly because the government addressed field officers' grievances: respected commanders replaced disgraced senior officers; politicians embraced the armed forces as an integral part of national defence [sic]; the civil-military hierarchy was modified to include the opinions of senior officers and their staff; and the nation focused on external vigilance, not internal revolution. In time, the army also admitted to some responsibility for meeting the enemy with insufficient conviction. Most crucial to continued civil supremacy-of-rule in India was the removal from the administration of Defence Minister Menon, perceived by both field officers—and the public—as the chief culprit of the defeat. With him, Nehru had been seen as part of the problem; without him, the PM could remain as the legitimate and uncontested leader of a civilian administration.

Never having had a military coup does not make India unique among developing countries. If, as is obvious, negative instances shed light on positive ones, then this examination of the non-event of a coup may serve as a guide, not only to the working relationships between officer, politician and administrator in India, but also to a general theory of the conditions which preclude military intervention in politics.

Non-event  
will be a break  
off of general  
theory. Have  
you found it?



Civil-Military Relations in British and Independent India, 1918-1962,  
and Coup Prediction Theory

CHAPTER 1

Theories of Military Intervention Leading to A Coup D'État

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## CHAPTER 1

### Theories of Military Intervention Leading to A Coup D'État

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#### Introduction

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How best to understanding the factors encouraging or inhibiting an armed forces' coup? This chapter begins with Huntington's understanding of civilian control of the military as exercised through the professionalization of commissioned officers. The four main strands of competing coup prediction theory are then examined in turn, before considering how and why each in turn displaced the previous one. Which theory should guide this thesis' investigation into the factors behind India never having experienced a military coup?

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#### I. Huntington's Concept of Military Officers' Professionalism

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Complaining that the study of civil-military relations "suffered from too little theorizing",<sup>1</sup> Samuel Huntington set out the first specific theory of how a society can best ensure ultimate civilian control of its military officers and thus armed forces. He proposed two basic methods of civilian control; subjective and objective.<sup>2</sup>

Subjective civilian control means minimizing internal military power by maximizing the power of governmental institutions, social classes, and/or definite constitutional forms. When armed forces' officers display loyalty and respect for the legitimate direction of a particular civilian governmental institution--the President, Congress, or

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<sup>1</sup> Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, p. vii.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 80-5.



Parliament—civilian control should be assured. Similarly, when officers identify with the particular social class which makes up or holds sway over the ruling civilian regime, their subservience should follow.

Finally, when officers accept the constitutional form—democratic or totalitarian—of the civilian government a shared ideology and mutually accepted methods of civil-military interaction should combine to ensure ultimate civilian supremacy.

Yet, as Huntington points out, all three methods of subjective civilian control are imperfect. Since ruling governmental institutions are more concerned with the distribution of executive *versus* legislative power than divisions of civil and military authority, the armed forces may attain too much influence. Unresolved or highly contentious conflict between social classes and/or groups as to who can be said to be more closely identified with officers and therefore more completely in control of them also may allow the military to escape secure government control. Nor can specific constitutional forms guarantee civil supremacy: the mutual interests and goals of a democracy and its armed forces may allow the latter to become all too closely intertwined with the direction and implementation of policy, especially during wartime, while a totalitarian regime's method of controlling the military through "terror, conspiracy, surveillance, and force"<sup>3</sup> is highly precarious.

In attempting to have officers identify with its own character and/or objectives, the state seeks to create a military in its own image; a "mirror",<sup>4</sup> as it were. The fragility of subjective civilian

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<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, p. 83.

control is that the military may tire of the ruling regime's "face" and seek to exchange it for one more to its own liking.

For Huntington, a more reliable means of ensuring civilian control over the armed forces is to maximize officers' military professionalism and its three significant characteristics of expertise, responsibility and corporateness common to all professional occupations. Like modern-day medical doctors or lawyers, the armed forces' officer is "an expert with specialized knowledge and skill in a significant field of endeavour".<sup>5</sup> That this expertise in what Harold Lasswell calls the "management of violence"<sup>6</sup> is both measurable by "objective standards of professional competence"<sup>7</sup> and unique enables society to judge an officer's competence while allowing him to be the sole provider of a service essential to its continued success. As the professional military officer's one and only client, society also imposes a two-fold responsibility upon his expertise: it may be used only at the discretion of the society's legitimate rulers; while any unauthorized or freelance deployment of his service will banish the officer from the ranks of his profession. Professional corporateness, that quality which allows members of a profession to "share a sense of organic unity and consciousness of themselves as a group apart"<sup>8</sup> from the rest of society imposes further restrictions as to preserve his separateness an officer will refrain from attempts to exercise his expertise in areas unsuited to its application for fear that professionals claiming expertise in other fields might try to influence his own.

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<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> Lasswell, "The Garrison-State Hypothesis Today", p. 51. See also Lasswell, "The Garrison State", pp. 455-458.

<sup>7</sup> Huntington, The Soldier and the State, p. 8.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, p. 10.

For Huntington, maximizing objective civilian control ensures ultimate civilian authority by separating the military officer from society. Free to exercise his expertise in his own sphere of influence, yet always "ready to carry out the wishes of any civilian group which secures legitimate authority within the state",<sup>9</sup> the professional armed forces' officer is a "tool" of government.<sup>10</sup>

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## II. Competing Military Intervention Theories

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### II.A. The "Pull" of Modernization Failures

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Although Huntington bases his conception of professional military officers on his analysis of the history of Western militarism, the "first" group of coup theorists are quick to base their predictive pattern of third world civil-military relations on an idealized conception of these states' armed forces and their officers.<sup>11</sup> They believe third world militaries, as usually the oldest and most Westernized institution in their respective countries, will seek to continue to evolve along modern, developed-country lines of professional efficiency and quality: recruiting the best and brightest regardless of

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<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>11</sup> See Horowitz Coup Theories and Officers' Motives, pp. 3-15. For the first set of coup prediction theorists see H. Daadler, The Role of the Military in Emerging Countries (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1962); W. Gutteridge, Military Institutions and Power in the New States (London: Pall Mall Press, 1964); M. Halpern, The Politics of Change in the Middle East and North Africa (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963); M. Lissak, "Modernization and Role-Expansion of the Military in Developing Countries: A Comparative Analysis", Comparative Studies in Society and History 9:3 April 1967; L. Pye, "Armies in the Process of Political Modernisation", and E. Shils, "The Military in the Political Development of the New States", in The Role of the Military in Underdeveloped Countries, ed. J.J. Johnson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962).

race, religion, regional and/or socioeconomic background; basing promotions and assignments on merit; and teaching their personnel loyalty to the nation's legitimate political rulers rather than to traditional sources of authority. Since the nature of their profession necessitates planning for all contingencies, officers themselves will be forward-looking, eager to learn the latest technical and managerial skills. For the first group of coup prediction theorists the third world professional military officer is a model citizen: intelligent, qualified, dedicated, skilled, not beholden to traditional prejudices, and concerned with the welfare of his society.

Such citizens are greatly needed in third world states characterized by this first set of military intervention theorists as suffering from disjointed attempts to rapidly achieve Western "modernity".<sup>12</sup> Imitating Western development patterns entails abandoning traditional sources of identity, influence and power, inevitably causing massive social displacement. Newly formed, inexperienced, inefficient, and/or numerically insufficient political and administrative civilian elites and their institutions, as well as economic infrastructures, cannot cope with unrealistic expectations raised by the euphoria of independence. Self-government also rapidly expands available political and bureaucratic offices which, combined with the society's impoverishment, create considerable scope for corruption and abuse. Disillusionment with the civilian leadership may be exacerbated further by foreign policy complications as new states make their debut on a

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<sup>12</sup> Shils defines this as "dynamic, concerned with the public, democratic and egalitarian, scientific, economically advanced, sovereign, and influential". See *ibid.*, p. 9.

world stage replete with regional and global comparison pressures, and exposure to superpower rivalries and intrigues.

The first set argue that, against the backdrop of a developing society's disjointed attempts to modernize, military officers do not so much choose to enter the political arena as they are "pulled"<sup>13</sup> into it by the void created by political and administrative leadership failures. Seeking to emulate Western armed forces makes officers well aware of the achievements of developed societies. They see the slow, disorderly and often corrupt modernization efforts of their own country's civilian elites as a "major weakness in national defence and a serious blot on its international prestige".<sup>14</sup> As "guardians of the nation"<sup>15</sup> military officers cannot stand idly by while their country flounders on the path to modernization for lack of civilian leadership and/or corruption. They perceive themselves and their institution as the only body possessing the necessary capabilities to better the situation.

The first set also perceives officers as enjoying superiority in the means to forcibly assume power. Most obvious is the armed forces' near monopoly of weapons in society. Though conspiracies may be formed without a single regular military officer, such occasions are rare since to ensure success such a group would first have had to neutralize the various branches of the armed forces as well as other governmental security services. Highly structured and strictly hierarchical, officers—and soldiers—are used to unquestioningly following orders and enjoy proven, secure lines of communications which ensure the secrecy essential for the successful execution of a coup. Finally, armed forces'

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<sup>13</sup> Thompson, The Grievances of Military Coup-Makers, p. 5.

<sup>14</sup> Daadler, *op.cit.*, p. 16.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*, p. 16.



To professionalize a "rhe free  
concept?"

personnel are imbued with an internal *esprit de corps* and instantly recognisable public *persona* hard to match by other governmental institutions or political parties.

Huntington's characterization of officers' professional expertise, responsibility and corporateness is seen by the first set of coup theorists as ideally suited to gearing them and their organization to lead third world societies through the difficulties of development. "No new state", writes Edward Shils, "can modernize itself, and remain or become liberal and democratic, without an elite possessing force of character, intelligence, and a very complex set of high moral qualities".<sup>16</sup> For Shils and the first set, professional officers in developing countries are just such an elite. As Egypt's Nasser once said, "If the army does not do it, who will?"<sup>17</sup>

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## II.B. The "Push" of a Political Military

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Although the second set of military intervention theorists also perceive third world states as ineffectually managed, transitional societies beset with socioeconomic and political conflict, they think Huntington's characterization of maximizing professional expertise, responsibility and corporateness may promote rather than inhibit military intervention in government.<sup>18</sup> For, while expertise may separate

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<sup>16</sup> Shils, op.cit., p. 60.

<sup>17</sup> As used in E. Fossum, "Factors Influencing the Occurrence of Military Coups D'État in Latin America", Journal of Peace Research Vol. 3 1967, p. 233.

<sup>18</sup> For the second set of coup prediction theorists see Feld, "Professionalism, Nationalism and the Alienation of the Military"; S.E. Finer, The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics (London: Pall Mall Press, 1962); E. Liewen, "The Military: A Force for Continuity or Change", in eds. J.J.TePaske and S.N.Fisher. Explosive Forces in Latin America (n.p.: Ohio State University Press, 1964); A. Perlmutter, "The Israeli Army in Politics: The Persistence of the

the armed forces as an institution, it cannot protect officers from becoming enmeshed in the larger conflicts common to newly independent societies where strict occupational separation is relatively new and traditional class, ethnic, regional and religious ties between officers and civilian elites are exploited to combat changing advancement criteria against a background of scarcity.<sup>19</sup> Nor does professional responsibility follow from expertise. Huntington's theory of objective civil control is for S.E. Finer compromised by its "essentialist" reasoning: highly professional officers always obey civil supremacy-of-rule; if they do not, they are not completely professional. It is no good to *implicitly* instil in officers' minds the idea of civilian supremacy, it must be internalized as an *explicit* principle. Failure to do so, continues Finer, may allow officers' professional responsibility to serve their client, society, to mutate into a perception of themselves "as the servants of the state rather than of the government in power".<sup>20</sup> Corporateness, too, may be dangerous if officers, comparing the military's strength, coherence and success in emulating Western patterns of development with the haphazard behaviour and organisation of civilian elite institutions, develop an overblown sense of their organizational identity and potency.

Equipped with these new interpretations of officers' expertise, responsibility and corporateness, the second set of coup prediction

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Civilian Over the Military", World Politics 20:4 July 1968, and "The Praetorian State and the Praetorian Army Toward a Taxonomy of Civil-Military Relations in Developing Politics", Comparative Politics 1:3 April 1969.

<sup>19</sup> See M.P. Lofchie, "The Uganda Coup—Class Action by the Military", Journal of Modern African Studies 10:1 May 1972; and J. Nun, "The Middle Class Military Coup", in ed. C.Veliz The Politics of Conformity in Latin America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967).

<sup>20</sup> Finer, *op.cit.*, pp. 24-25.

theorists argue that the armed forces' propensity to intervene in politics is not dependent on any professional limits of civil-military behaviour but rather a variable of society's political maturity. Like any other interest group in society, the military will use its professional strengths to take advantage of political fluidity and socioeconomic disjointedness and, if possible, "push"<sup>21</sup> their way into politics. Though still clinging to his notion of the truly professional officer as apolitical, even Huntington comes to acknowledge this new dynamic of political maturity in coup prediction theory: "In the world of oligarchy, the soldier is a radical; in the middle-class world he is a participant and arbiter; as the mass society looms on the horizon he becomes the conservative guardian of the existing order".<sup>22</sup> Moreover, where officers conspire against the ruling regime, "society as a whole is out of joint, not just the military",<sup>23</sup> and they are merely fulfilling their great potential power as political actors.

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## II.C. Corporate Motives

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The "third" set of coup prediction theorists sees military intervention as a result of an overblown sense of self-important corporate identity among officers.<sup>24</sup> This arrogance can result from

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<sup>21</sup> Thompson, op.cit., p. 5.

<sup>22</sup> Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies, p. 221.

<sup>23</sup> ibid., p. 194.

<sup>24</sup> For the third set of coup prediction theorists see B. Abrahamsson, Military Professionalization and Political Power (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1972); R.E. Dowse, "The Military and Political Development" in ed. C. Leys, Politics and Change in Developing Countries Studies in the Theory and Practice of Development (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), p. 235; First, The Barrel of a Gun; K. Lang, "Civil-Military Relations", in N.a., Military Institutions and the Sociology of War A Review of the Literature with Annotated Bibliography (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1972); E. Nordlinger Soldiers in Politics: Military Coups and Governments (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-



exercising basic duties, working in civil-military defence ministries, or when military strategy and civilian policy tend to merge or unduly impact upon each other. For instance, as the technical and managerial expertise necessary to decide matters of weapons' task suitability, source procurement and deployment rises, so does the feeling among officers that only they themselves are competent enough to make these choices. Working in defence ministries containing a military-civilian mix may lend a sense of "psychological parity"<sup>25</sup> to officers previously accustomed to viewing such elites deferentially. Where national security considerations place heavy demands on a society's scientific competence and/or economic output, or if mass psychological or physical mobilisation is needed to guarantee the country's continued independence, military strategy can affect the very nature of civilian political and socioeconomic policies.<sup>26</sup> In newly independent countries where political and administrative elites are unlikely to have the time, understanding, or interest in military technology and/or strategic considerations, and/or experience of setting down formal civil-military boundaries, officers may find the need—and opportunity—to redress any number of corporate grievances. For the third set of coup prediction theorists, officers are not pushed or pulled into government to serve

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Hall, 1977); A. Perlmutter, The Military and Politics in Modern Times (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); R. Price, "A Theoretical Approach to Military Rule in the New States Reference Group Theory and the Ghanaian Case", World Politics 23:3 April 1971; Thompson, The Grievances of Military Coup-Makers; C.E. Welch, Jr. and A.K. Smith, Military Role and Rule: Perspectives on Civil-Military Relations (North Scituate, Mass: Duxbury Press, 1974); and A. Zolberg, "Military Intervention in the New States of Tropical Africa: Elements of Comparative Analysis", in ed. H. Bienen The Military Intervenes: Case Studies in Political Development (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1968).

<sup>25</sup> Lang, op.cit., p. 113.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, p. 115.

the best interests of the state but to protect or enlarge any number of what they perceive as their own organizational interests.

Of course, no one specific corporate grievance is necessarily sufficient to spur military officers to the extreme measure of a coup.<sup>27</sup> Given a regime which enjoys widely accepted legitimacy, officers' complaints will be dealt with through regular civil-military channels. If, however, government interference in the military's corporate sphere of decision-making becomes rampant or the armed forces are

called upon repeatedly to put down strikes or to deal with disorder in a dissident region...[or] asked to suppress one faction of the government against another in a showdown...[or participate] in similar operations in a country other than their own, or merely...[to acquire] information about the involvement of other military units in events of this sort<sup>28</sup>

officers will be quickly and closely acquainted with the "seamy side"<sup>29</sup> of political life, losing respect for the governing ability and authority of their erstwhile political masters. In such situations, the military will use their corporate identity and power to act almost as a glorified "trade union";<sup>30</sup> seeking to redress perceived grievances and extend the limits of its influence at every given opportunity.

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#### II.D. Personal/Clique Motives

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The "fourth" coup prediction theory, in the shape of Samuel Decalo, takes the most cynical view of officers' professionalism, insofar as it

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<sup>27</sup> Attempts to factorize specific armed forces' corporate grievances and related causes of military intervention include Thompson's 10 corporate, eight "not-so-corporate", and two "societal residual" sources of potential military dissatisfaction, and Welch and Smith's 20 points of probable civil-military contention. See Thompson, op.cit., pp. 12-45; and Welch and Smith, op.cit., pp. 8-30.

<sup>28</sup> Zolberg, op.cit., p. 81.

<sup>29</sup> ibid., p. 81.

<sup>30</sup> ibid., p. 81.

play any part in civil-military relations.<sup>31</sup> For Decalo, officers do not overthrow governments out of default, nor as any other political actor, nor to protect or enlarge their corporate interests—such motives would be presupposing a unified institutional consciousness or regard when many developing nations' armed forces exhibit "little resemblance to a modern [Western] complex organization".<sup>32</sup> Instead, third world militaries suffer any number of professionally and organizationally destructive features, including discriminatory recruitment and promotion patterns based on traditional differences, insubstantial officer-training programmes hurriedly undertaken by departing colonial masters, the rapid promotion of insufficiently qualified native officers to fill gaps at independence and, when they fail to emulate their seniors' meteoric rise, the resentment of junior officers. Decalo sees such factors, when combined with the personal animosities and ambitions found in any organization, as resulting in developing country militaries which are "*a coterie of distinct armed camps owing primary clientelist allegiance to a handful of mutually competitive officers of different ranks seething with a variety of corporate, ethnic and personal grievances*". [Author's italics.]<sup>33</sup> Huntington's conception of maximizing military professionalism to ensure the armed forces' subservience to the legitimate rulers of society is seen as of little consequence in fragmented and unstructured polities where the means for assuming

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<sup>31</sup> See S. Decalo, "Military Coups and Military Regimes in Africa", The Journal of Modern African Studies 2:1 1973, and Coups and Army Rule in Africa Studies in Military Style (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976).

<sup>32</sup> Decalo, "Military Coups", p. 14.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, p. 14-15.

ultimate authority are fluid and military officers' personal and factional ambitions for power are often temptingly easy to fulfil.

Is Decalo's theory too simplistic in blaming individual officer self-interest as the prime motivational factor behind the military coup? Or is it too complex in committing one to the herculean task of investigating the personal backgrounds of each and every military officer? Even if all the relevant data were somehow available, surely it would be impossible accurately to predict the particular play of life experiences which would cause an individual officer to engineer a coup. Decalo's personal/clientelist theory of military intervention seems to preclude the formulation of any predictive theory of conditions and motives leading to an armed forces' coup.

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#### II.E. Which Military Intervention Theory?

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Which of the four coup prediction theories described above should be used as a guide to examining independent India's civil-military relations history? Does one accept the first set of military intervention theorists' view of professional armed forces' officers as potential model rulers only reluctantly pulled into forming a government? Or are the second group more accurate in describing military coup executors as no better and no worse than any other self-interested actor competing for maximum political authority? Perhaps the third set are correct in down-playing the wide societal pressures of developing countries in favour of concentrating on officers' perceptions of their corporate self-image and integrity? Or is Decalo right in seeing the military as merely an aggregate of clientelist factions seeking to increase their power in society?

As described above, some scholars dismiss all attempts at discovering a pattern of the motives and causes of coups. McKinlay and Cohan argue that any regime, be it entirely civilian, military or a mixture of both, is best understood in terms of its political and economic performance once in power, rather than its origin in election or coup.<sup>34</sup> Even then, after using a sophisticated cluster analysis method of comparison on "all independent countries of the world"<sup>35</sup> on two separate occasions with varying data bases and variables,<sup>36</sup> they find a "sizable proportion"<sup>37</sup> of civilian and military regimes virtually indistinguishable in their respective political and economic performances. While McKinlay and Cohan concede that the two types of government diverge in their "political dimension"<sup>38</sup> and, to a lesser degree, in their international trading circumstances, they conclude that civilian and military regimes "cannot be differentiated from one another by military, background economic, or economic performance criteria".<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> See R.D. McKinlay and A.S. Cohan, "A Comparative Analysis of the Political and Economic Performance of Military and Civilian Regimes", p. 1; and "Performance and Instability in Military and Nonmilitary Regime Systems", American Political Science Review 70:3 September 1976, p. 850.

<sup>35</sup> McKinlay and Cohan, "Performance and Instability", p. 850.

<sup>36</sup> McKinlay and Cohan examine 115 countries divided into four sub-populations--(1) "military regimes", (2) "periods of civilian rule in countries that have experienced a military regime" (3) "all other low-income countries which have experienced only civilian rule", and (4) "high-income systems"--with 21 political and economic performance variables for the period 1951-1970. One year later, they analyse 101 nations divided into two sub-populations--based on "whether they have experienced a military regime"--over 25 economic and political variables for from 1961-1970. Despite the two studies' differences in division of regime types, political and economic performance variables, and even time periods, their respective conclusions are virtually identical. See McKinlay and Cohan, "A Comparative Analysis", pp. 1-5, and "Performance and Instability", pp. 850-852.

<sup>37</sup> McKinlay and Cohan, "A Comparative Analysis", p. 23.

<sup>38</sup> McKinlay and Cohan, "Performance and Instability", p. 863.

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*, p. 863.

Does one accept Decalo's impossibility of systemizing coup prediction motives or McKinlay and Cohan's argument of the irrelevancy of military intervention theory altogether? Or can one cull some more general predictive theory of armed forces' intervention applicable to all countries, particularly India, from a mixture of all the theories described so far? The answer may come from an investigation into what has caused the changes in coup prediction theory over time.

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### III. Causes of Changes in Military Intervention Theory

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#### III.A. Larger Theoretical Concerns

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David Horowitz wonders if rapid changes in coup prediction theory—less than 20 years separate Huntington's characterization of military officers as dedicated professionals from McKinlay and Cohan's concern only with regime performance—derive from larger theoretical concerns.<sup>40</sup> Thus, the first theory of the armed forces as able modernizers of transitional societies comes from contemporary concerns with traditional-modern dichotomies. The second theory, which portrays the military as one of many politicized actors competing for power in highly fragmented societies, reflects a concern with special interests and their manifestations in fluid polities. Here, factional concerns are paramount and the prevalent coup prediction theory appears to lend itself to class analysis. The third, corporate self-interest theory may be traced to the growing regard for understanding bureaucracy's internal machinations and their influence on political policy. Finally, the

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<sup>40</sup> Horowitz, *op.cit.*, pp. 6-7.

fourth theory which sees personal/clientelist ambition as the cause of coups appears based on patron-client theories of politics.

Horowitz, however, goes on to ridicule the connection between military intervention theories and their respective contemporary concerns with larger patterns of political behaviour as one of theory following fashion. I see no reason to disagree. As Horowitz states, while such changes in coup prediction theories may be "ground for confidence or disquiet",<sup>41</sup> depending on one's assessment of the development of the larger body of theory, "it may also speak volumes for the role of theoretical preconceptions in coup studies".<sup>42</sup>

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### III.B. Quantitative Analysis

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What if theoretical preconceptions are ignored in favour of using quantitative analysis to explain changes in competing theories of armed forces' intervention?<sup>43</sup> E.A.Nordlinger, for instance, uses the "exceptionally reliable"<sup>44</sup> data compiled in I.Adelman and C.T.Morris' study of the economic development of 74 states<sup>45</sup> for a cross-national

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<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>42</sup> *ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>43</sup> See Fossum, *op.cit.*; K.Q. Hill, "Research Note Military Role vs. Military Rule Allocations to Military Activities", Comparative Politics 11:3 April 1979; M.C. Needler, "Political Development and Military Intervention in Latin America", American Political Science Review 60:3 Sept. 1966; R.N. Tannahil, "The Performance of Military and Civilian Governments in South America, 1948-1967", Journal of Political and Military Sociology IV Fall 1976; and P.C. Schmitter, "Military Intervention, Political Competitiveness and Public Policy in Latin America: 1950-1967", in eds. M. Janowitz and J. van Doorn. On Military Intervention (Rotterdam: Rotterdam University Press, 1971).

<sup>44</sup> E.A. Nordlinger, "Soldiers in Mufti: The Impact of Military Rule Upon Economic and Social Change in the Non-Western States", American Political Science Review 64:4 December 1970, p. 1135.

<sup>45</sup> I. Adelman and C.T. Morris. Society, Politics and Economic Development: A Quantitative Approach (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1967.)

Why do Jackman and Nordlinger  
have different results?

aggregate data study of the first set of coup theorists' belief in a positive correlation between military regimes and modernization. While his findings echo Huntington's understanding of officers' behaviour as dependent on the level of a society's political maturity, he emphasizes that armed forces' regimes are more strongly conservative than previously imagined. Only at the very lowest levels of political participation and within the context of a "minuscule middle class"<sup>46</sup> do military regimes sponsor some modernizing policies. Nordlinger's findings bury the notion of armed forces' officers as modernizers and lend credence to the second and third theories of coup prediction and their respective perceptions of the military acting as a self-interested actor or arrogant corporate body.

Nonetheless, numerical data studies are always open to reinterpretation and only six years after Nordlinger's conclusions on military regime performance Robert Jackman employs the very same Adelman and Morris data base but ends up with entirely different conclusions.<sup>47</sup> Using his own co-variance analysis model, Jackman rejects both the differentiation of armed forces' regimes as "either reactionary or progressive",<sup>48</sup> and the notion that the effects of military rule are contingent on the size of the middle class. Nor is Jackman impressed when he examines 77 independent third world countries to test Huntington's hypothesis of officers' actions as dependent on society's level of political maturity: "Military governments have no unique effects on social change, regardless of level of economic

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<sup>46</sup> Nordlinger, "Soldiers in Mufti", p. 1143.

<sup>47</sup> R.W. Jackman, "Politicians in Uniform: Military Governments and Social Change in The Third World", American Political Science Review 70:4 December 1976.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*, p. 1086.

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development".<sup>49</sup> Instead, in an echo of McKinlay and Cohan's findings, he concludes that the "simple civil-military government distinction appears to be of little use in the explanation of social change".<sup>50</sup>

Yet, since no quantitative analysis, however thorough its methodology and conclusive its findings, can repudiate contradictory conclusions drawn by later quantitative analyses, theories of coup prediction must not be discarded because of any one particular cross-national aggregate data analysis. So it is with Jackman's rubbishing of Nordlinger's conclusions which support Huntington's hypothesis. Four years after Jackman's findings, C.I. Eugene Kim's quantitative cross-national aggregate data analysis of four Asian countries' respective socioeconomic performances finds that civilianized military regimes outperform purely civilian or wholly military governments.<sup>51</sup> Eugene Kim argues that military officers sharing power with civilians in a ruling regime themselves become civilianized, development-orientated technocrats and executives. Furthermore, using the natural, physical authority of the armed forces enables such mixed governments to implement policy in an effectively stable political environment. Eugene Kim's conclusions lend new credence to the first coup prediction theory's notion of the military as efficient modernizers.

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### III.B.1. Quantitative Analysis Shortcomings

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Given the often fundamental differences between the conclusions drawn by various quantitative analyses—even when they employ an

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<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*, p. 1096.

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*, p. 1097.

<sup>51</sup> C.I. Eugene Kim, "Asian Military Regimes: Political Systems and Styles", in ed. M. Janowitz. Civil-Military Relations Regional Perspectives (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1981).

identical data base--it becomes difficult to believe any findings reached through quantitative means. Problems arise at the most basic level of defining even the most fundamental terminology: what criteria can be accepted as defining "modernization" or "socioeconomic development" by which the performances of civilian governments versus military regimes may be compared? Although qualitative studies suffer a similar problem, quantitative analyses are more acutely compromised since they depend on breaking down definitions into readily measurable variables. For instance, which indicators most accurately measure the degree of influence which a particular country's military has over a civilian regime in the time period under investigation? Even if and when some agreement can be found as to the necessary variables to be employed, quantitative analyses are compromised by the inaccuracy inherent in most of these measurements, especially for figures compiled in developing countries where such information is difficult to retrieve and often inaccurate. How, too, does one incorporate particular concerns of qualitative theories such as regime corruption which are all but impossible to measure? As R.E.Dowse points out, we

need to be very careful that the entities we factorize exist in the real world in any quantifiable sense...There is a danger that the statisticians may contribute an aura of specious accuracy to hypotheses that are themselves intrinsically vague.<sup>5 2</sup>

Quantitative analyses are not entirely irrelevant. Despite their limitations, data comparisons can be useful insofar as they throw up much needed information on previously unexamined areas. The vast majority of such studies, however, are either too general in their formulation reliably to predict a particular country's armed forces

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<sup>5 2</sup> Dowse, op.cit., p. 221.

intervening in politics, or too specialized in their origins accurately to anticipate probable patterns of officers' behaviour beyond the original example. If even their authors cannot vouch for the strict relevancy of their respective quantitative studies' data inputs,<sup>53</sup> how can others be confident of their conclusions?

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### III.C. Changes in Coup Executors' Motives

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Perhaps military intervention theory has changed so often because coup executors' motives have changed. In immediate post-colonial Africa, writes Ruth First, "Independence was still young and crisis was not yet mature".<sup>54</sup> Thus, initial military coups were "pay strikes"<sup>55</sup> taken to fulfil narrow corporate demands. Once such grievances were addressed, officers returned to their barracks. But, continues First, military men are fond of the saying, "The virginity of the army is like that of a woman...once assailed, it is never again intact".<sup>56</sup> As officers began to comprehend their overwhelming corporate power relative to other societal elites and institutions, they shed any professional inhibitions against assuming political control and were less hesitant about overthrowing a government if dissatisfied. Only now coups are taken with the intention of ruling until larger, national objectives (typically limited to re-imposing colonial style bureaucratic control over the government, promoting the power of administrative elites, and rearranging key political personnel) are achieved. Finally, concludes First, the longer officers remain in power, the greater their appetite for rule.

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<sup>53</sup> See Jackman, op.cit., p. 1092; and Nordlinger, "Soldiers in Mufti", p. 1138.

<sup>54</sup> First, op.cit., p. 21.

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>56</sup> *ibid.*, p. 20.

First's conception of the advance of the motives behind military intervention directly contrasts with the progression of coup prediction theories described above. Both the first and second theories assume that officers, whether their motives are altruistic or political, will install regimes intended to discipline and revive society as a whole. Only later do the respective third and fourth coup prediction theories of narrow corporate self-interest and personal/clientelist ambition fulfilment emerge. How does one account for this differing conception as to the progression of coup executors' motives?

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#### III.D. Case Availability

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The most plausible explanation for the relentless advancement of diverse military intervention theories is that of case availability. Coup prediction theories have evolved, competed with, and sought to displace their predecessors on the basis of past and contemporary occurrences of officers' intervention and their subsequent political and socioeconomic performance in government. Later theorists have had the advantage of hindsight when formulating their arguments.

The first set of coup theorists who welcome armed forces' intervention on the grounds that only professional officers possess the individual skills, will, and organisational resources to efficiently and ably administer traditional societies struggling to modernize are writing in the early 1960s. For Finer, this was

almost the worst imaginable time to write on these matters because all but two of the Latin American military regimes had just been swept away, and the African military regimes had, with one or two exceptions, not come into existence. Of the new states of the post-World War period, it was the Arab ones—Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Sudan—which made nearly all the running.

This did not deter observers from predicting great things for the then incipient military regimes. God may not be on the

side of poor and developing countries but the academics are; and it really did seem as though whatever newfangled experiment in despotism was adopted in these states, it was the appropriate answer to their backwardness...Since the [military] regimes were for the most part only two or three years old at the most, these apologists could not know how they would perform. They could only infer--infer from the ambitions and pronouncements of the new military ruler, or *a priori*, from supposed characteristics of the military, their social backgrounds, the nature of their occupation, their social function...<sup>57</sup>

and, of course, from Huntington's original portrayal of the professional armed forces' officer as skilled, noble, and organized in performing his service to society.

The first set of coup theorists' naivety is soon displaced by the second group of military intervention theorists who, writing during the early to late 1960s, need no longer rely upon an *a priori* inference of coup plotter's motives and actions once in office. There are now a multiplicity of cases to study, especially in sub-Saharan Africa where there is an explosion of military coups following this region's newly gained independence.<sup>58</sup> Experience now shows the professional officer to be more often than not irrevocably tied to narrow interests pertaining to his own personal background. The armed forces can no more socialize him into a professional political neutrality than they can ignore a growing awareness of their own institutional strength as the most

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<sup>57</sup> S.E. Finer, "The Man on Horseback--1974", Armed Forces and Society 1:1 November 1974, pp. 19-20.

<sup>58</sup> From 1950 to 1962 inclusive, there are 29 successful military coups in the world: 11 in Central and South America, eight in the Near and Middle East, nine in Asia, and one in sub-Saharan Africa. From 1963 to 1969 inclusive, there are 43: 11 in Central and South America, seven in the Near and Middle East, four in Asia, fully 20 in Africa, and one in Europe. See O'Kane, The Likelihood of Coups, pp. 141-150. Of course, sets of coup prediction theorists cannot be definitively broken down into the above year to year gradations. As a rough guide, I am using the earliest and latest dates of publication of the respective works cited in the footnotes above under the first and second sets of military intervention theorists, respectively.

powerful potential political actor in societies where the means of allocating authority are fluid and easily seized. Despite their inherent limitations, the first cross-national aggregate data analyses provide enough empirical comparisons for the second group of coup theorists to discredit their predecessors' assumption of armed forces' regimes as modernizers. Where the military was once thought to be only reluctantly pulled into power, officers are now seen to push as well.

The next decade brings no relief from military coups throughout the developing world<sup>59</sup> and is reflected in the third set of military intervention theorists' more cynical assessment of both their causes and of professionalism's effect on officers' behaviour. Increases in the technical sophistication of weaponry, functional specialization, and the blurring of the boundary between military strategy and government policy gives rise to a heightened sense of corporateness within the armed forces. Officers become over-sensitive to perceived slights against their professional expertise and their professionalism is an ego to be protected even at the cost of overthrowing the ruling regime. No longer do only the most fragmented of polities need to fear the armed forces' coup, more established governments must also tread lightly where the military's corporate interests are concerned.

Significantly, new case studies of armed forces' intervention in sub-Saharan Africa<sup>60</sup> demand that a regional factor be added to time as

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<sup>59</sup> From 1970 to 1977 inclusive, there are a further 29 successful military coups: eight in Central and South America, one in the Near and Middle East, seven in Asia, 11 in sub-Saharan Africa, and two in Europe. See *ibid.*, pp. 141-150. As above, as a rough guide I am using the earliest and latest dates of publication of the respective works cited in the footnotes above under the third set of military intervention theorists.

<sup>60</sup> See *First*, *op.cit.*; J.M. Lee, *African Armies and Civil Order* (New York: Praeger Press, 1969.); E.W. LeFever, *Spear and Sceptre: Army,*

an influence on the progression of coup theory. Zolberg, after closely examining military intervention in the recently independent nations of "tropical" Africa,<sup>61</sup> concurs with First's understanding of coup motive progression: "both within each country and over the continent as a whole...Military interventions have tended to move from either or both 'strikes' and 'referee' actions to 'take-overs'".<sup>62</sup> Zolberg and First's reversal of the above four qualitative coup prediction theories' depiction of the development of coup executors' motives may be explained by their exclusive reliance on African case studies where coup motive progression may indeed differ from those found in other areas of the developing world.

A specific geographic emphasis also provides the impetus for the last of the four qualitative military intervention theories. Examining armed forces' coups in sub-Saharan Africa at a time (mid-1970s) when fully 20 of 41 of the region's countries are ruled by military or civil-military regimes,<sup>63</sup> Decalo finds that, while previous qualitative characterizations of developing societies as rent with political and socioeconomic tensions are still applicable, depictions of "the man on horseback"<sup>64</sup> as society's noble saviour are not. Instead, in a region where political power is often the only means of ensuring economic security, attention must focus on officers' personal/clientelist

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Police, and Politics in Tropical Africa (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1970.); C.E. Welch, Jr. Soldier and State in Africa: A Comparative Analysis of Military Intervention and Political Change (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970.); and Zolberg, "Military Intervention".

<sup>61</sup> Included in Zolberg's survey are "all countries south of the Sudan and north of the Zambezi, except Liberia and Ethiopia". See Zolberg, "Military Intervention", p. 96.

<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>63</sup> Decalo, Coups, p. 6.

<sup>64</sup> *ibid.*, p. 13.

ambitions and allegiances which, though they may be "predominant, secondary, or merely coincidental [as motives behind intervention,] are invariably present in coup situations and cannot be ignored".<sup>65</sup>

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## Conclusion

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That coup prediction theory has constantly developed in response to the latest examples of military intervention is now evident. Working from few actual examples and placing much credence in Huntington's characterization of the apolitical, professional military officer, the first set of military intervention theorists sees coup executors as ideally qualified citizens altruistically motivated to help their country's floundering attempts at modernization. After witnessing an explosion of coups in newly independent countries throughout the third world, the second group of military intervention theorists perceives officers' professional sense of client responsibility shifting from the government to the state itself, with the probability of their overthrowing a regime now dependent on the level of society's political maturity rather than a specific desire to lead development. Armed with quantitative analyses showing no relation between a military regime and modernization, and viewing no end to examples of armed forces' coups, the third set of military intervention theorists factorizes coup executors' motives as reactions to perceived interference in their corporate sphere of influence. Finally, in an attempt to explain the myriad examples of coups throughout sub-Saharan Africa which he claims cannot be understood unless officers' personal and/clientelist ambitions are examined, Decalo develops a fourth theory of military intervention--

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<sup>65</sup> *ibid.*, p. 19.



leaving us with the impossible task of collating huge amounts of highly subjective data and factoring them into a predictive formula.

The surfeit of armed forces' coups and the diversity of the countries in which they occur may appear to make attempts at factorizing the particular conditions and motives leading to their execution futile. Why not examine the more unusual phenomenon of peaceful, legitimate transfers of power, or a government's performance instead of its origin? Yet, one does not, for example, quit the study of the origins and motives behind terrorist actions simply because of a proliferation of examples. If anything, the multiplicity of military coups is cause for closer investigation of the phenomenon.

Which armed forces' intervention theory should we choose for examining civil-military relations in British and Independent India? The quick succession of competing coup prediction theories has made their thorough testing on a worldwide basis impossible, and prevents designating any one as entirely correct or incorrect. Thus, throughout the following examination, emphasis will be placed on the perceptions of armed forces' officers to various crucial events in Indian civil-military relations history with only the selective deployment of the above competing coup prediction theories. The first task is to determine the nature of the commissioned Indian officers' military professionalism; that is, their understanding of expertise, responsibility, and corporateness in a British-ruled subcontinent.

Civil-Military Relations in British and Independent India, 1918-1962,  
and Coup Prediction Theory

CHAPTER 2

The History and Development of the Professional Indian Military Officer  
During the Interwar Years

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## CHAPTER 2

### The History and Development of the Professional Indian Military Officer During the Interwar Years

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#### Introduction

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As the embodiment of that most traditional of all government institutions, the military, commissioned armed forces' officers are often disproportionately affected in their contemporary decision-making processes—including whether or not to instigate a coup—by the weight of personal and institutional experience. The officers of independent India are no exception. While they have had to meet and overcome challenges uniquely their own, their professional standards and understanding of their role vis-a-vis the civilian government has most directly been shaped by British military traditions first imported to the subcontinent over 300 years ago.

Unfortunately, this chapter cannot provide a complete record of the events which shaped independent India's military officer corps from the eighteenth century to the present day.<sup>1</sup> Instead, it will focus on the

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<sup>1</sup> The history of the British-led Indian armed forces, from the Honourable East India Company's conquest of the subcontinent through the Great Mutiny/Sepoy Rebellion of 1857 to the apogee of the Raj in the late 19th century is well known and closely documented in any number of works. See S. Cohen, The Indian Army: Its Contribution to the Development of a Nation (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971); B. Farwell, Armies of the Raj: From the Mutiny to Independence, 1858-1947 (New York: W.W. Norton & Company); T.A. Heathcote, The Indian Army: The Garrison of British Imperial India 1822-1922 (Vancouver: David and Charles, 1974); V.I. Longer, Red Coats to Olive Green: A History of the Indian Army 1600-1974 (Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1974.); P. Mason A Matter of Honour: An Account of the Indian Army, Its Officers and Men Pbk. ed. (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1986. First published London: Jonathan Cape Limited, 1974); Major M.P. Singh, Indian Army Under the East India Company (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt Ltd.,

period from the opening of the Royal Military Academy to Indian cadets to the eve of World War II. Throughout, the development of the commissioned Indian officer's professional role and responsibilities will be emphasised.

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## I. Commissioned Indian Officers

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### I.A Indian Non-Commissioned and Viceroy's Commissioned Officers

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Although Indians had fought in the British-led armed forces of the subcontinent for over 300 years, not one was serving as a full King's commissioned officer (KCO) in 1914. Instead, the Indian Army's Indian soldiers, or *jawans*,<sup>2</sup> were led by a unique combination of Indian non-commissioned (NCOs) and Viceroy's commissioned officers, and British KCOs. While Indian Army NCOs filled positions comparable to their British Army counterparts (lance-*naik* or corporal, *havildar* or sergeant, and *havildar-major* and quartermaster-*havildars* of various levels), VCOs held all the commissioned officer places (*jemadar*, equivalent to a second-lieutenant; *subedar*, similar to a lieutenant; and *subedar-major*, of a status equal to a major) which in a British Army regiment were filled by KCOs. Only the commander of an Indian Army unit, a British lieutenant or second-lieutenant in command, was a KCO.<sup>3</sup> In an army where the British commander (CO) was of another culture and where his troops might speak a mixture of dialects different than his one Indian

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1976); and C.C. Trench, The Indian Army and the King's Enemies, 1900-1947 (London: Thames and Hudson, 1988).

<sup>2</sup> *Jawan*, strictly translated as "youth" or "lad", replaced "*sepoy*", from the Persian *sipah* or army, during the late 19th century. See Cohen, op.cit., p. 50; Heathcote, op.cit., p. 114; Mason, op.cit., p. 31.

<sup>3</sup> Cohen, op.cit., pp. 42-44.

language, VCOs provided the crucial interface and could attain great respect and responsibilities.<sup>4</sup> Yet their career opportunities were limited: none were promoted beyond the regimental level and at no time could a VCO command British troops.

Only the Indian Army's heroic performance during the First World War<sup>5</sup> and the need to secure the continued participation of the subcontinent at its height (see Chapter Three) led the authorities to open up command positions. Although almost invariably too uneducated or too old to rise far, nine serving VCOs and holders of temporary commissions won King's commissions before the Armistice, as did a few NCOs (including future Pakistan President Iskander Mirza).<sup>6</sup> Six of the 39 Indians in the sole graduating class of the Cadet College, Indore (opened in 1918 to give preliminary military training to "a few carefully screened Indian boys"),<sup>7</sup> were later granted regular King's commissions (including the first Indian Indian Army Commander-in-Chief, General K.M. Cariappa).<sup>8</sup> Nearly 700 Indian doctors serving in the

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<sup>4</sup> See Trench, op.cit., pp. 16-17.

<sup>5</sup> From 1914-18, Indian Army personnel increased from 150,000 to almost 600,000 in number. In all, over 700,000 Indian troops served on the Western front, in Mesopotamia, Egypt, Macedonia, East Africa, Aden, Singapore, Hong Kong and China. They suffered 36,000 killed and 70,000 wounded while winning 16 Victoria Crosses and 99 Military Crosses. See Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Commemoration of the War Dead of Undivided India (Maidenhead, England: Commonwealth War Graves Commission, n.d.), pp. 5-8; Heathcote, op.cit., p. 79; Longer, op.cit., pp. 127, 150-169; Mason, op.cit., pp. 412-443; Recruiting in India Before and During the War of 1914-1918 (Army H.Q., India, October, 1919), Appendix 9, as used in Cohen, op.cit., p. 69; Brigadier R. Singh, History of the Indian Army (New Delhi: Army Educational Stores, 1963), p. 121 ff., as used in Cohen, op.cit., p. 68; and N.a., "The Trouble at Singapore", India, February 26, 1915, p. 100.

<sup>6</sup> See Cohen, op.cit., p. 73-75; Farwell, op.cit., p. 293; V.I Longer, The Defence and Foreign Policies of India (London: Oriental University Press, 1988), pp. 3, 29; and Longer, Red Coats to Olive Green, p. 171.

<sup>7</sup> Thorat From Reveille To Retreat, p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> Muthanna, General Cariappa, p. 27.

military's auxiliary Indian Medical Service (IMS) also became KCOs during the First World War.<sup>9</sup>

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#### I.B. King's Commissioned Indian Officers

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The First World War also saw the first "permanent" step in the creation of the modern Indian commissioned officer corps when the authorities opened the Royal Military College (RMC), Sandhurst, to Indians.<sup>10</sup> Up to ten Indian Gentleman Cadets (GCs) per year would be trained to be KCOs. The initial batch of were examined in 1918, attended from January 1919, and were variously commissioned from July 1920 to August 1921.<sup>11</sup> Although, as full second-lieutenants of the British Armed Services, they were entitled to command any of His Majesty's forces

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<sup>9</sup> See Farwell, op.cit., p. 297; and Thapar, The Morale Builders, p. 328.

<sup>10</sup> For a history of the RMC (and other training establishments for British officers of the Honourable East India Company's Presidency armies), see Heathcote, op.cit., pp. 130-131, 135; Longer, op.cit., p. 49; Mason, op.cit., p. 179; J. Smyth, Sandhurst The History of the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, and the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst 1741-1961 (London: Weidenfeld, 1961), pp. 27-206; and M. Yardley, Sandhurst: A Documentary (London: Harrup, 1987), pp. 17-70.

<sup>11</sup> Although this was the first time Indians under Crown rule were admitted to the RMC, Dr. T.A. Heathcote notes that "the first ever Indian gentleman cadet, Prince Dhulip" of one the Princely States attended Sandhurst in the 1890s and joined the British Army's Blues (the Royal Horse Guards) "on the grounds that they did not go overseas much, and [as] his father was working up a rebellion...it would be rather embarrassing to have to fight against him". NOTE: In their respective autobiographies, both J.N. Chaudhuri and S.P.P. Thorat mistakenly write that Indian cadets attended the RMC only from 1922. See "A Nominal Roll of Indian Gentlemen Cadets Attending the Royal Military College at Sandhurst Between 1 January 1919 and 31 December 1927", "Seniority Roll of Indian Gentlemen Cadets Attending the Royal Military College at Sandhurst Between 1 January 1919 and 31 December 1927", and "Summary of India Gentlemen Cadets at the RMC Between Jan. 1919 and Dec. 1927"; unpublished documents compiled from the "Registrar of Gentleman Cadets of the Royal Military College from 1919 to 1927" by Dr. T.A. Heathcote, Curator, The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst Collection and given to me in correspondence, 1990; Chaudhuri, General J.N. Chaudhuri, p. 30; and Thorat, op.cit., pp. 2-3.

throughout the world, Indian KCIOs (henceforth referred to as King's commissioned Indian officers, or KCIOs) had to make their careers in the Indian Army (after spending their initial year with a British Army unit on a tour of duty in the subcontinent).

Entrance to the RMC for prospective Indian candidates was not easy. One had to have access to considerable funds,<sup>1,2</sup> and the examination procedure varied tremendously. As a student at Highgate School, London, General J.N. Chaudhuri answered a newspaper notice inviting applications for a King's Indian Cadetship to Sandhurst, then sat before just one interview board (including Field Marshal Sir Claud Jacob in the India Office).<sup>1,3</sup> Lieut.-General S.P.P. Thorat describes the more common and harrowing experience faced by Indian candidates on the subcontinent:

All applicants were first interviewed by the provincial Governors who submitted the names of deserving candidates to the Government of India.

This initial screening was very selective and in 1924 only ten candidates from the whole of India and Burma were chosen to take the entrance examination. This small batch of raw sixteen-year old boys gathered in Simla...and was given a written test of the under-graduate level. Then followed a series of interviews. The first was by the Selection Board and I was overawed by the array of Army officers who constituted it. They asked me a few simple questions but followed each with exhaustive supplementaries to ascertain the depth of my knowledge. After this ordeal came the interview with the Commander-in-Chief, Field Marshal Sir William Birdwood...The next [and final] face I saw was His Excellency Lord Reading, Viceroy of India...[My indent.]<sup>1,4</sup>

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<sup>1,2</sup> While RMC fees were Rs.11,000 (Rs.7,000 if the son of a military officer), leave and other expenses upped the necessary sum to approximately Rs. 20,000 (to be deposited in full before applying). See Khan, Friends Not Masters (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 8; and Thorat, op.cit., p. 3; and A.L. Venkateswaran, Defence Organisation in India (A study of major developments in Organisation and Administration since Independence) (n.p.: Publications Division Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Government of India, 1967), p. 159.

<sup>1,3</sup> Chaudhuri, op.cit., pp. 24-25.

<sup>1,4</sup> Thorat, op.cit., pp. 3-4. See also Venkateswaran, op.cit., p. 159.

Graduates of the Prince of Wales Royal Indian Military College (PWRIMC; established at Dehra Dun in 1922 to prepare Indian boys for the rigours of Sandhurst, its initial batch of 32 cadets included future Indian Army Chief General K.S. Thimayya) bypassed preliminary selection rounds and advanced straight to Simla.<sup>15</sup>

Throughout the selection process, preference was given first to sons of military officers and then those from conservative, "politically inert"<sup>16</sup> families which had for generations constituted the Indian princely, landed and military elite. Belonging to one of the "martial races" from which British commanders had preferentially recruited troops since the mid-18th century, made a candidate that much more admissible.<sup>17</sup> A random sample of seven illustrious Indian graduates of the RMC—Generals Thimayya, Chaudhuri and M. Ayub Khan (who reached this rank in the Pakistan Army and later become the country's President), Lieut.-Generals Thorat, S.D. Verma and B.M. Kaul, and Adjutant (later Ambassador) M.R.A. Baig—reveals these preferences.<sup>18</sup> Thimayya (a cousin of Field Marshal Cariappa who himself came from a Westernized family

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<sup>15</sup> See Cohen, *op.cit.*, p. 84; and Evans, *Thimayya of India*, p. 43.

<sup>16</sup> Cohen, *The Indian Army*, p. 119.

<sup>17</sup> See Great Britain, *Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Organisation of the Indian Army; together with the Minutes of Evidence and Appendix*, Cmd. 2515, 1859 and *Recruiting in India Before and During the War of 1914-1918*, p. 7, as used in Cohen, *op.cit.*, pp. 38, 44; Cohen, *op.cit.*, p. 40-41, 51; Heathcote, *op.cit.*, pp. 81-82, 94-95; Longer, *op.cit.*, pp. 109-110, 121-123; Mason, *op.cit.*, p. 345; Major G.F. MacMunn, *The Armies of India* (Bristol: Crecy Books, 1984. First published by n.p.: A & C Black, 1911), pp. 129-172, and *The Martial Races of India* (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co., Ltd., 1933); D. Pal, *Traditions of the Indian Army*, 3rd ed. (1961; rpt. New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1978), pp. 1-91; R. Thapar, *A History of India: Volume One* Pbk. ed. (1966; rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1986), pp. 37-40; and Trench, *op.cit.*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>18</sup> See Baig, *In Different Saddles*; Chaudhuri, *op.cit.*; Evans, *op.cit.*; Kaul, *The Untold Story*; Khan, *op.cit.*; Thorat, *op.cit.*; Verma, *To Serve with Honour*.



with a tradition of government service)<sup>19</sup> and Thorat came from wealthy and Westernized families of traditional, martial races' communities. Chaudhuri was raised in a rich and virtually bi-cultural though non-martial Bengali family. Khan's father was a land-owning, martial races' *risaldar*-major of the Indian Army's famous Hodson's Horse, while Verma's was an England-trained barrister-at-law. Baig's grandfather was a *risaldar* in a unit which later formed the nucleus of the elite Royal Deccan Horse, while his father (CSI, KCIE) retired as Vice-President of the Council of India, at that time the "highest post an Indian could occupy in government service".<sup>20</sup> Baig himself spent most of his adolescence in comfort in England. Only Kaul came from a relatively poor, non-martial family.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Muthanna, op.cit.

<sup>20</sup> Baig, op.cit., p. 10.

<sup>21</sup> The RMC's preference for cadets from martial races' areas and Princely States may be seen on Table FT 2.1 in which such regions are highlighted. Figures for (a) and (b) adapted from Longer, op.cit., p. 196; and Heathcote, "A Nominal Roll of Indian Gentlemen Cadets", "Seniority Roll of Indian Gentlemen Cadets", and "Summary of India Gentlemen Cadets". Figures for (d) adapted from J.H. Hutton, Census of India, 1931 Vol. I-India Part I-Report (Delhi: Manager of Publications, 1933), p. 35. NOTE: Both Cohen and Heathcote mistakenly refer to 83 Indian cadets admitted to the RMC between 1918 and 1926. Cohen also miscounts his own list of 89 cadets as printed. See Cohen, op.cit., pp. 75, 119; Evans, op.cit., pp. 53-4, 56, 58-9, 70-1, 74; Heathcote, op.cit., p. 147.

TABLE FT 2.1

Indian Officer Candidates in the first 18 RMC courses (1919-25) by area, area's percentage of national population (1921), and ratios				
(a) Province, State or Agency	(b) Number of Candidates	(c) Percentage of Total Number of Candidates	(d) Area's Percentage of National Population	(e) Ratio of (c) to (d)
(1) Punjab	35	41.18	6.49	6.35/1
(2) Bombay	12	14.12	6.07 <sup>a</sup>	2.33/1
(3) United Provinces	9	10.59	14.23 <sup>b</sup>	0.74/1
(4) Bengal	9	10.59	14.64	0.72/1
(5) NWFP	5	5.88	0.71	8.28/1

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## I.C. Interwar Military Reforms

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Appointed in 1925 and containing a majority of Indian politicians including Motilal Nehru, Mohammed Ali Jinnah and Sir Jogendra Singh, the Indian Sandhurst Committee (ISC) found many shortcomings in the selection process, numbers, academy education, and subsequent promotion opportunities of Indian GCs. The subcontinent's over 300 million people<sup>22</sup> contained more potential officers than the 85 Indian GCs admitted to the RMC from 1919-1925. More worrying was that 30% of Indian cadets, compared to only 3% of British GCs, failed to graduate.<sup>23</sup> Many in the ISC felt the low Indian pass rate existed largely because non-PWRIMC candidates were disadvantaged by insufficient and/or improper educational preparation. The PWRIMC's high fees and exclusivist admissions almost regardless of aptitude were also thought unfairly restrictive.<sup>24</sup> Another major complaint was the lack of Indians in higher

(6) Hyderabad State	3	3.53	3.91	0.90/1
(7) Rajputana Agency	3	3.53	3.08	1.15/1
(8) Burma	2	2.35	4.14	0.57/1
(9) Coorg	2	2.35	0.05	47.00/1
(10) Bihar	1	1.18	10.66 <sup>c</sup>	0.11/1
(11) Assam	1	1.18	2.34	0.50/1
(12) Central India Agency	1	1.18	1.88	0.63/1
(13) Other/Unknown	2	2.35	-.—	-.—/1
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Total	85	100.01	68.20	

<sup>a</sup> Population percentage is for "Bombay Presidency including Aden".

<sup>b</sup> Population percentage is for "United Provinces of Agra and Oudh".

<sup>c</sup> Population percentage is for "Bihar and Orissa".

<sup>22</sup> Hutton, op.cit., p. 35.

<sup>23</sup> Mason, op.cit., p. 463.

<sup>24</sup> PWRIMC fees were @ Rs.2000 per year for eight years. See Evans, op.cit., p. 43; and Brigadier Sukhwant Singh, Three Decades of Indian Army Life (Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1967), p. 30.

command positions, seen to be a direct result of limiting KCIOs to the army's Indianized eight units (see below).

The ISC report of 1926 proposed various remedies.<sup>25</sup> The number of RMC places reserved for Indians should be doubled from ten to 20, thereafter increasing annually by four. KCIOs should also be allowed to join the army's Artillery, Engineer, Signal, Tank and Air arms. The limited eight unit experiment (see below) should be replaced by a comprehensive programme of Indianization including the opening of a military college equivalent to Sandhurst on the subcontinent. Finally, Indians of all communities, martial and "non-martial", should be given an equal chance of admission for all of the above.

Although the British dragged their feet on implementing all of the unanimous proposals of the ISC (whose members they themselves had appointed), reforms did come. The RMC's annual intake of Indian candidates was doubled, and an additional five places (rising to ten if the number of direct entry candidates was lower than the allowed limit) were reserved for VCOs. Indians also were given six vacancies at the **Royal Military Academy (RMA)**, Woolwich, for training in artillery, engineering and signals, and six places at the **Royal Air Force College (RAFC)**, Cranwell (see below). Subsequent pressure from the first **Indian Round Table Conference Defence Subcommittee** resulted in a threefold increase in RMC places reserved for Indians (bringing the total to 60), and a widening of Indianization (see below). By far the Defence subcommittee's most important result was the 1931 creation of a **Committee of Experts** under General Sir Philip W. Chetwode to investigate the establishment of an Indian equivalent of the RMC.

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<sup>25</sup> Longer, op.cit., pp. 196-197.

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## I.C. Indian Commissioned Officers

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A landmark change came with the establishment of the **Indian Military Academy** (IMA) at Dehra Dun on 10 December 1932. With the closure of Sandhurst to Indian GCs, all Indian officers henceforth would experience their military education wholly on the subcontinent.<sup>26</sup> While IMA graduates were to be known as **Indian Commissioned Officers** (ICOs), like KCIOs they would begin their careers with a year in a British Army regiment serving in India before transferring to the Indian Army. However, unlike KCIOs who had been commissioned by the King into "**His Majesty's Land Forces**", ICOs were commissioned by the Viceroy into "**His Majesty's Indian Land Forces**", giving them complete authority over jawans anywhere in the world but British troops in India only.<sup>27</sup>

The IMA's admissions procedure was perhaps more rigorous and certainly less arbitrary than that of the RMC. After submitting his application through the Collector or Deputy Commissioner of the district in which his parents resided, a candidate would attend a competitive examination held twice a year in Delhi by the **Federal Public Service Commission** (FPSC). The examination consisted of four compulsory subjects, three optional subjects, and an Interview and Record Test conducted by a board made up of a FPSC member (Chairman), two Indian Army officers nominated by the Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C) in India, and

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<sup>26</sup> The last of Sandhurst's Indian GCs graduated in 1934. See Longer, op.cit., p. 209.

<sup>27</sup> ICOs were not accorded completely equal powers of command until the impending arrival of Japanese forces on India's borders in 1942. See Venkateswaran, op.cit., p. 160.

two non-official gentlemen (one nominated by the Government of India and one by the C-in-C).<sup>28</sup>

The IMA was set up as a copy of the RMC. Its commandant was a senior British brigadier, his teaching and drill staff was overwhelmingly British, and they provided a virtually identical military education to officer candidates who would continue to be called GCs. However, due to the lack of suitable preparatory institutions on the subcontinent, IMA cadets would undergo five terms of training over two and a half years instead of Sandhurst's three terms in 18 months.<sup>29</sup> Many felt that the extra two terms spent at Dehra Dun often resulted in a more uniformly educated and knowledgeable second-lieutenant.<sup>30</sup>

Socially, admission was no longer restricted. Admittedly, the make-up of the IMA's first half-yearly batch of 40 GCs (which included future Indian Army Chief S.H.F.J. Manekshaw)<sup>31</sup>—15 (37.50%) cadets admitted by open competition, 15 selected from Indian Army VCOs and other ranks (after a two-year course at the Kitchener College, Nowgong), and ten from the Indian State Forces (ISF) of the Princely States<sup>32</sup>—reflected the military authorities' traditional bias for cadets of the martial

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<sup>28</sup> IMA admission age limits were 18 and 20. See *ibid.*, pp. 189-190.

<sup>29</sup> For the IMA pattern of instruction, see Sukhwant Singh, *op.cit.*, pp. 29-31.

<sup>30</sup> See Cohen, *op.cit.*, p. 121; Farwell, *op.cit.*, p. 299; and Sukhwant Singh, *op.cit.*, p. 35.

<sup>31</sup> See Longer, *op.cit.*, p. 209.

<sup>32</sup> In 1901, the British established the **Imperial Cadet Corps (ICC)** to train Princely States' subjects for officer positions in the **Imperial Service Troops (IST)**. A special form of commission in "**His Majesty's Native Indian Land Forces**" made available four years later allowed ICC graduates to avoid the years as a sepoy which Indian Army VCOs had to endure—though their powers were just as restricted. Despite their sterling contribution during WWI, IST personnel were re-integrated into individual state militias or armies and renamed the **Indian State Forces (ISF)**. See above and Longer, *op.cit.*, pp. 208-209; Lieut.-General Sir George MacMunn, *The Indian States and Princes* (London: Jarrolds, 1936), pp. 177-178, 182, 265; and Venkateswaran, *op.cit.*, p. 189.

racers and/or aristocracy.<sup>33</sup> Nonetheless, the IMA's much lower, all-inclusive fees made the academy affordable to a wider segment of Indian society, especially the sons of the burgeoning, educated middle-class.<sup>34</sup>

A limited number of scholarships provided by provincial governments

<sup>33</sup> The IMA's bias for cadets from martial races' areas and Princely States may be seen on Table FT 2.2 in which such regions are highlighted. Figures for (a), (b) and (c) adapted from Lt Gen Dr M.L. Chibber, Military Leadership to Prevent Military Coup (New Delhi: Lancer International, 1986), p. 40. Figures for (d) adapted from Hutton, op.cit. NOTE: I have corrected the arithmetical/typographical errors in lines 1, 3, 7-12, 15, and the total as shown in Chibber's table of figures on p. 40.

TABLE FT 2.2

Officer candidates in the first ten IMA regular courses (1932-36) by area, area's percentage of national population (1931), and ratios				
(a) Province, State or Agency	(b) Number of Candidates	(c) Percentage of Total Number of Candidates	(d) Area's Percentage of National Population	(e) Ratio of (c) to (d)
(1) Punjab	165	41.67	6.68	6.24/1
(2) NWFP	50	12.63	0.69	18.30/1
(3) United Provinces	41	10.35	13.72	0.75/1
(4) Delhi	13	3.28	0.18	18.22/1
(5) Bombay	9	2.27	6.22 <sup>A</sup>	0.36/1
(6) Central Provinces	6	1.52	4.40	0.35/1
(7) Madras	6	1.52	13.25	0.11/1
(8) Bengal	4	1.01	14.20	0.07/1
(9) Gujarat	4	1.01	1.13 <sup>B</sup>	0.89/1
(10) Kerala	3	0.76	1.91	0.40/1
(11) Burma	3	0.76	4.16	0.18/1
(12) Bihar	2	0.51	5.34 <sup>C</sup>	0.10/1
(13) Orissa	1	0.25	5.34 <sup>C</sup>	0.05/1
(14) Other	1	0.25	—	—/1
(15) Princely States	88	22.22	13.03	1.71/1
Total	396	100.01	90.25	

<sup>A</sup> Population percentage is for "Bombay Presidency including Aden".

<sup>B</sup> Population percentage is for "Western India States Agency".

<sup>C</sup> Respective population percentages for "Bihar" and "Orissa" are halved number for "Bihar and Orissa".

<sup>34</sup> Compare the IMA fee of Rs.3850 to the expected expenditure of Rs.20,000 at the RMC. See above and Venkateswaran, op.cit., p. 190.

provided further access.<sup>35</sup> (No fees were charged to army-nominated cadets.) Thus, the first batch of IMA cadets included youths of "all castes and creed—Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis and Anglo-Indians—and from the high and humble families".<sup>36</sup>

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## II. Developing Professionalism

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### II.A. Objective and Subjective Control

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To a large extent, the British-led government of pre-independent India ensured its supremacy-of-rule over the Indian Army's British officers through objective control; minimizing their influence by maximizing their professional characteristics of expertise, responsibility and corporateness. While these officers' expertise, as measured by "objective standards of professional competence"<sup>37</sup> may be argued to have been no better and perhaps poorer than that of some European counterparts, it was superior to any found on the subcontinent. The professional responsibility of British Indian Army officers to deploy their expertise only at the discretion of its client, society, under penalty of expulsion from their profession was also respected, as evidenced by their unquestioned obedience to Crown rule. Finally, corporateness, or that "sense of organic unity and consciousness of themselves as a group apart",<sup>38</sup> flourished among officers so obviously different to the general population. Firmly under objective control, British Indian Army officers were the tools of their civilian masters.

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<sup>35</sup> Venkateswaran, op.cit., p. 190.

<sup>36</sup> Longer, op.cit., p. 210.

<sup>37</sup> Huntington, The Soldier and the State, p. 8.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*, p. 10.

To a greater extent, however, the Raj secured ultimate power over British Indian Army officers through subjective control, minimizing their power by maximizing their identification with the character and/or objectives of the regime. Britain's historical mistrust of a standing army<sup>39</sup> meant only those wealthy enough to purchase a commission and support themselves in a style unobtainable on an officer's meagre official salary could command troops in the British Army.<sup>40</sup> Besides inhibiting a coup from within, officers owing their position to the *status-quo* also discouraged any civilian radical reform movement. Although the purchase system was abolished by Royal warrant in 1871,<sup>41</sup> and British Army officers increasingly professionalized after the respective Crimean and Boer Wars,<sup>42</sup> British Indian Army officers retained their traditional, privileged and conservative character. Indistinguishable from the Indian ruling civilian elite by ethnicity, education and socioeconomic status,<sup>43</sup> British Indian Army officers were a mirror of their government, and little doubted the desirability, necessity and correctness of the Raj.

Theories of objective and subjective control are less clear when applied to the Indian Army's growing numbers of commissioned Indian officers. In Table 0.1, the questionnaire respondents appear to suggest the paramountcy of objective control by ranking "Professionalism of the

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<sup>39</sup> J. Haswell, The British Army A Concise History (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975), pp. 7-11, 17-26.

<sup>40</sup> See Haswell, *op.cit.*, pp. 28-29; Heathcote, *op.cit.*, pp. 177- 119; A. Perlmutter and V.P. Bennett, The Political Influence of the Military (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980) as used in Chibber, *op.cit.*, p. 10; and Yardley, *op.cit.*, pp. 31-34.

<sup>41</sup> Yardley, *op.cit.*, p. 34.

<sup>42</sup> See Chibber, *op.cit.*, p. 10; and Haswell, *op.cit.*, pp. 95-102, 109-119.

<sup>43</sup> Heathcote, *op.cit.*, pp. 121-122, 140-144.



armed forces" as the most important factor in the armed forces' non-involvement in independent India's politics. Yet follow-up interviews reveal most respondents as understanding an officer's professionalism to be composed simply of military expertise.<sup>44</sup> Questions concerning the nature of the military professionalism as bequeathed by the British to independent India's military officers, of Huntington's perception of professional responsibility and corporateness, and of larger civil-military questions are dismissed as the province of the very highest ranks only. Most officers, says Air Marshal 5, simply are too busy "concentrating on the technical and other working aspects of the job".<sup>45</sup> Where the respondents do discuss professionalism in the context of civil-military relations, opinion is divided as to whether it includes an implicit, explicit, or no understanding at all of officers' subservience to the government.

Despite most respondents' reticence to view professionalism as more than expertise in training, tactics and command, their ranking of it as the prime factor ensuring civil supremacy-of-rule demands that it be examined in a context of historical subjective and objective methods of control. To begin with, was subjective control relevant--given their obvious ethnic and cultural differences, could commissioned Indian officers share their British counterparts' identification with the subcontinent's ruling elite? What made up objective control? Could British officers and KCIOs who had studied at Sandhurst have the same understanding of professional expertise as ICOs educated at the IMA?

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<sup>44</sup> Lieut.-General Dr. M.L. Chibber breaks this expertise down into: "(1) the organizing, equipping, and training of this [military] force; (2) the planning of its activities; and (3) the direction of its operation in and out of combat". See Chibber, *op.cit.*, p. 75.

<sup>45</sup> From an interview with Air Marshal 5; New Delhi, 17 August, 1989.

With the rise of the independence movement, would KCIOs and ICOs see their professional responsibility to the legitimate ruler of the subcontinent as laying with the British Raj or Indian nationalist leaders? Finally, given the many sources of conflict KCIOs and ICOs faced within the military (see below), to what degree did they count themselves part of the overall corporate identity of the Indian Army?

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## II.B. At the Academies: "Officers and Gentlemen"

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During the interwar years, the Indian Army's British and Indian commissioned officers began their careers with the same military education intended to make them into an "officer and gentleman". If the "officer" half of this equation may be taken to entail professional expertise, responsibility and corporateness, or those qualities which make officers the tool of a government, the "gentleman" half may be interpreted as that behaviour appropriate for those chosen to be the armed mirror of the ruling elite.

Before becoming an officer and gentleman, a young Indian cadet had to overcome any number of prejudicial attitudes and practices at the RMC. Living in England from 1910 to 1923 had made ~~Ambassador~~ Baig "almost a young Englishman". Only at Sandhurst did he "for the first time...[encounter] racial prejudice...We did not belong and were made to feel it".<sup>46</sup> Of course, most Indian GCs had never before travelled outside the subcontinent nor had to deal with British boys as equals.<sup>47</sup> For them, Thorat's experience of suffering an "inferiority complex vis-

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<sup>46</sup> Baig, op.cit., pp. 32-34.

<sup>47</sup> Among the exceptions was Chaudhuri: "Three years at an English school and a year as a house prefect had completely removed any inhibitions I might have had about white men. I neither feared nor disliked them". See Chaudhuri, op.cit., p. 13.

a-vis British cadets"<sup>48</sup> was common. That British and non-British GCs hardly ever mixed compounded this new sense of not belonging, and President Ayub Khan recalls how Indian cadets "all sensed that we were regarded as an inferior species".<sup>49</sup> To protect themselves and to bolster their self-esteem, adds Chaudhuri, Indian GCs developed their own

unwritten code of conduct, a break from which would have meant ostracism. The rules were fairly simple. An Indian GC was to tip his servant 5 shillings weekly, which was double the normal rate. At the cinema, the Indian GCs were to use the more expensive balcony seats and not the cheaper stalls. Visiting "Ma Hart", the RMC's favourite pawn shop was taboo. Attendance at the end of term ball, a very colourful, affair, was forbidden unless one could bring an Indian girl to it. Finally, cutting in on or filching another Indian GC's girlfriend was the greatest crime of all. I suppose the first three rules were designed to show that Indians were not a poor race. Rule 4 made sense and rule 5, looking at the shortage of girls who in those days would be seen with Indians, was a safety device.<sup>50</sup>

Unwritten rules also applied in the "open" competition between cadets for executive ranks. "Indians", writes Lieut.-General Kaul, "were allowed to hold only an honorary rank of up to a Corporal and could go no higher, unlike others. Nor could they command anyone except their own nationals. This discrimination seemed incongruous..."<sup>51</sup>—especially as KCIOs would be entitled to command British troops and junior officers upon graduation.

Despite the painful adjustment from India's privileged class to Sandhurst's underclass, many Indian cadets flourished under the RMC's strict regimen of training in academic, physical and leadership skills. Chaudhuri speaks for many Indian cadets when he fondly remembers

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<sup>48</sup> Thorat, op.cit., p. 5.

<sup>49</sup> Khan, op.cit., p. 10. Sandhurst had hosted a number of foreign nationals from the Middle East, Siam and the Orient for many years before the arrival of Indians. See Chaudhuri, op.cit., p. 30.

<sup>50</sup> Chaudhuri, op.cit., p. 36.

<sup>51</sup> Kaul, op.cit., p. 23.

the riding schools, the hours spent in the "halls of study"...the crack and thud of the rifle ranges, long bicycle rides in columns of two for outdoor exercise, bridge building, field engineering which seemed to mean digging interminable holes in the ground, and the frequent ceremonial parades, all of which made up life at the RMC remain wholly pleasant memories.<sup>5 2</sup>

Lieut.-General Verma also enjoyed cadet life and does "not recall any particular instance of racial discrimination at Sandhurst".<sup>5 3</sup>

For all the prejudice against Indian GCs, they shared a privileged, conservative and, in the case of PWRIMC graduates, a public school background with the vast majority of British cadets<sup>5 4</sup> which enabled most to assimilate, and the RMC to impart, those qualities necessary to a "gentlemanly" military professionalism. Kaul's recollection of his education includes descriptions of professional expertise, responsibility and corporateness:

I had imbibed much at Sandhurst. I learnt a code of conduct, a sense of discipline and the significance of honour. I was taught a set of principles true to spiritual values by which can be judged what is right. I acquired the rudiments of military knowledge, the basic techniques of my profession and to appreciate the importance of turnout and skill at professional work and games and also to face agreeable and unpleasant situations alike. I was taught how to play the game, to know what the qualities of leadership were, the sense of many values and the honour of serving one's country selflessly and with devotion.<sup>5 5</sup>

That their education was intended to make Indian GCs into an integral part of the ruling elite is confirmed by Chaudhuri's recollection of the briefing given to all newly commissioned officers travelling to India:

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<sup>5 2</sup> Chaudhuri, op.cit., p. 42.

<sup>5 3</sup> Verma argues out that Indians "are perhaps over-sensitive to expressions used by English-speaking white races to describe non-whites...We feel insulted, but never think twice about referring to an African as a habshi, or call and refer to our own "low caste" citizens by all sorts of derogatory names". See Verma, op.cit., p. 8.

<sup>5 4</sup> Yardley, op.cit., pp. 40-41.

<sup>5 5</sup> Kaul, op.cit., pp. 30-31. See also Thorat, op.cit., pp. 7-8.

The natives had to be firmly handled for familiarity would breed disrespect. Native habits and customs were declared to be incomprehensible and generally unclean. Apart from the men enlisted into the Indian army, the locals were classed as usually dishonest. The only section of natives to whom these rules did not apply were some, but not all, rajas and maharajas who could be useful hosts for shikar and polo. Indian women of any category were to be severely left alone though the Anglo-Indian could be discreetly dallied with but not married. Nothing was said about their history and culture of the country, nor about the faiths and beliefs of the people...The emphasis lay on preserving the prestige of the white man...<sup>5 6</sup>

Chaudhuri doubts if the briefing officers were "really conscious"<sup>5 7</sup> of the three Indians present.

While created in the hope of widening the intake, the IMA continued disproportionately to admit Gentleman Cadets from the north and northwest preserves of the martial races and train them according to the RMC ideal of an officer and gentleman—devoid of racism. Former NDA Secretary A.L. Venkateswaran lists the intentions of the IMA's course of instruction as:

(a) to develop in the Cadet the characteristics of leadership, discipline and physical fitness, and to instill in him a high sense of duty and of honour, and a realisation of the responsibilities of a *servant of the State*,

(b) to ensure that a Cadet on joining his unit is in a position to discharge the essential duties of a platoon commander. [My indents and italics.]<sup>5 8</sup>

Although virtually identical in its emphasis on gentlemanly professionalism and professional expertise and corporateness, the fact that IMA cadets were all Indians and were taught wholly on Indian soil allowed the academy to lay greater stress on officers' professional sense of responsibility to their client, society. The following extract

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<sup>5 6</sup> Chaudhuri, op.cit., pp. 45-46.

<sup>5 7</sup> Chaudhuri, op.cit., p. 47.

<sup>5 8</sup> Venkateswaran, op.cit., p. 190.

from C-in-C General Sir Philip Chetwode's inaugural speech at Dehra Dun was later inscribed on the walls of the IMA for all GCs to see:

The safety, honour and welfare of your country come first, always and every time.

The honour, welfare and comfort of the men you command come next.

Your own ease, comfort and safety come last, always and every time. [My indents.]<sup>59</sup>

Despite the IMA's more explicit emphasis on officers' professional responsibility to their society, one awkward question remained: in pre-independent India which, exactly, was the client meant by Venkateswaran's "the State" and Chetwode's "your country" above? Was it the same as saying the British Government of India or did it entail a "higher" loyalty to the "nation" of India, and/or to her peoples?

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## II.C. "Indianization"

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Commissioned Indian officers' understanding of professional corporateness was also a matter for debate, especially after the 1923 imposition of the "eight unit experiment" which limited KCIOs to two cavalry regiments and six infantry battalions of the Indian Army.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, these eight units would no longer accept newly commissioned British officers, and all KCIOs already serving elsewhere encouraged to transfer. Officially justified as an attempt to prove Indian officers could perform as efficiently as their British counterparts on a regimental scale, the "Indianization" of the army unofficially ensured that, at least within the designated units, no British officer would have to serve under an Indian superior.<sup>61</sup> And such was the paucity of

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<sup>59</sup> As used in Mason, op.cit., p. 465.

<sup>60</sup> Verma, op.cit., p. 17.

<sup>61</sup> See Baig, op.cit., p. 53; Heathcote, op.cit., p. 147; and Mason, op.cit., p. 454.

higher positions now open to KCIOs that it would require over 25 years fully to Indianize the eight units!<sup>62</sup>

The increasing number of KCIOs entering the Indian Army soon forced the eight units to replace their VCOs with KCIOs of second-lieutenant rank. Although British Army subalterns began their careers by leading platoons, KCIOs deeply resented the "platoonism"<sup>63</sup> of having to command the Indian Army's smallest body of men as demeaning their commissions, especially since non-Indianized units retained their VCOs. Platoonism also greatly increased competition for promotion within the battalion, kept static the number of Indian officers in the army as a whole, and angered jawans by reducing their prospects. The first Round Table Conference Defence subcommittee's extension of Indianization still forced KCIOs and, later, ICOs to begin at platoon level.<sup>64</sup>

In addition to the formal career restrictions of Indianization, commissioned Indian officers, especially the pioneering KCIOs, attempting to develop a sense of professional corporateness had to face the challenge of informal professional and social prejudice. Chaudhuri explains that, as the army was admitting Indians to positions of significant responsibility much later than other government services, many British officers "had not yet got used to Indians who were prepared to meet them in every way on their own terms".<sup>65</sup> Baig agrees:

A British officer could speak with almost tears in his eyes about old Risaldar Bewaqoof Khan, or Jemadar Ooloo Singh, who may have served under him, but, at the same time, could hardly tolerate the presence of an Indian who held the King's commission and was thus his social equal.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> See Cohen, op.cit., p. 107; and D. Omissi, The Sepoy and the Raj: The Indian Army 1860-1940, unpublished manuscript, Table 6.1.

<sup>63</sup> Farwell, op.cit., p. 299.

<sup>64</sup> Mason, op.cit., p. 465.

<sup>65</sup> Chaudhuri, op.cit., p. 69.

<sup>66</sup> Baig, op.cit., p. 65.

KCIOs expecting to assume a social position commensurate with their responsibilities often came up against unspoken barriers. KCIOs were the first Indians to break the colour-bar at military clubs and social functions—and this usually only if a sympathetic commanding officer took it upon himself to intervene on their behalf.<sup>67</sup> For Thorat, the usual British officers'

social behaviour [towards Indian officers]...bordered on the hostile. They made no secret that Indians were not wanted as officers. We were forbidden to bring Indian food or play Indian music even in our own rooms. Some British officers did not allow their wives to dance with Indians in the club; in short we were treated as outcasts.<sup>68</sup>

Kaul recalls British officers in his training regiment contemptuously referring to Indians as "WOGs (Westernized Oriental Gentlemen)" and keeping aloof from any contact with them.<sup>69</sup> For the sons of India's elite, accustomed to deference and lives of ease, such treatment could not have been easy to tolerate, much less serve under, and General Thimayya saw how it "could bring on feelings of inferiority and insecurity with attendant personality complications"<sup>70</sup> on junior officers who felt they could not openly protest or retaliate.

Some KCIOs coped by visiting their frustrations with professional and social discrimination on ICOs. **IMS Lieut.-General D.R. Thapar** recalls a mess dinner discussion on the new ICOs at which a young KCIO asked the guests to "imagine our feelings when we have to call these [Dehra] Doon [sic] Pansies our brother officers. They are only glorified V.C.Os and will never be real officers...after all these pseudo-officers

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<sup>67</sup> See Thapar, op.cit., pp. 135-136; Evans, op.cit., pp. 86-88, 100-101, 111; and Verma, op.cit., p. 22.

<sup>68</sup> Thorat, op.cit., p. 21.

<sup>69</sup> Kaul, op.cit., p. 39.

<sup>70</sup> Evans, op.cit., p. 81.



are young men who could not afford to go to Sandhurst".<sup>71</sup> "Fortunately", continues Thapar, "there were only a few of this irritating type and the large majority were proud of these young officers and did all they could to make them at home".<sup>72</sup>

KCIOs and ICOs also differed in their respective contact with British officers. While KCIOs had at first been scattered throughout the Indian Army, ICOs were posted to units long Indianized and had much less contact with British officers. Sceptics thought their lack of professional intercourse with British comrades would result in ICOs being of inferior quality. IMA supporters hoped instead that the onset of ICOs would signal the end of the tragicomic "Brindian" officer who, though Indian by birth and background, heedlessly aped British ways. Thapar remembers one such officer who, though born and raised in Rawalpindi, pretended to forget Hindustani with such insistence that his British commander put him up for the relevant language test where he "sang quite a different tune". Another kept his drawing room clock set to Greenwich time "just to know what people at home are doing at this time" yet had never having travelled further west than Egypt.<sup>73</sup> Although "Brindian" entered common usage as a derogatory term, the British authorities approved, believing, writes Mason, that commissioned Indian officers "must resemble British officers—and what is more, British officers from public schools—in every respect except the accident of birth".<sup>74</sup> Anything else would imply a lowering of standards.

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<sup>71</sup> Thapar, op.cit., p. 126.

<sup>72</sup> ibid., p. 126.

<sup>73</sup> ibid., pp. 93, 123.

<sup>74</sup> Mason, op.cit., p. 458. In this particular instance, Mason is referring to the 1923 A.H.Q. committee reporting on the Progress of Indianization.

Despite the multitude of obstacles, commissioned Indian officers acquired a high degree of professional expertise and corporateness during the interwar years. Surprisingly, it was Indianization which provided the motivation and conditions for KCIOs and ICOs to develop more quickly high professional standards. Initially, this was because British—and jawan—scepticism pushed the first commissioned Indian officers to work twice as hard to learn the basics of military expertise. Kaul recalls how

The British had conveyed an impression to the Indian ranks that the Indian officer was perhaps sectarian in outlook and might be partial to them in promotion, welfare and in other respects, unlike the 'sahebs' who were so 'just and impartial'. The rank and file, therefore, greeted us rather apprehensively. They also wondered if we could compete in all respects with our foreign counterparts since they had never seen an Indian on equal terms with a 'saheb'. We had to work extremely hard and under great provocation, to do well.<sup>75</sup>

Indianization also encouraged a kind of professional corporateness by forcing the small number of commissioned Indian officers to compete not only with themselves, but as a group apart from the mainstream of British Indian Army officers. Chaudhuri explains:

Had a handful of Indians been scattered round the whole army, their impact would have been minimal and, swamped by the British officers, they would have found it difficult to establish an identity of their own. Concentrated in the Indianising units their impact was much stronger and easier to evaluate as a successful, long overdue step.<sup>76</sup>

Thus, Indianization ultimately helped to spur KCIOs and ICOs to pursue only the highest professional standards of expertise and to develop a distinct corporate identity within the Indian Army.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Kaul, op.cit., p. 40. See also Chaudhuri, op.cit., p. 69.

<sup>76</sup> Chaudhuri, op.cit., p. 54.

<sup>77</sup> Not all commissioned Indian officers enjoyed successful military careers. Chaudhuri describes the first KCIOs to join his regiment (the 7th Light Cavalry). The first, a Burmese, "must have disliked both India and soldiering for in a couple of years he left for home and a job with the Burma Police". The second displayed "a total inability to pass his

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## II.C.1. Questionnaire Respondents

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Is this gloomy picture of Indian-British commissioned officer relations an accurate portrayal of that found during the later interwar years and World War II? See Table 2.1. Note: in Table 2.1, respondents are divided into four categories: "All"; "Pre-1945" (those joining up to 1945 inclusive); "Post-1945" (those enlisting after 1945); and "Unknown" (those with no known date of joining). The examination focuses on "Pre-1945" respondents. Respondent Lieut.-General 92, as a KCIO, is omitted.

TABLE 2.1

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What was the attitude of Indian officers towards British officers  
and vice-versa in the pre-independent Indian Army?

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Respondents	All	Pre-1945	Post-1945	Unknown
	Percent (No.)			
Positive	25.26 (24)	34.29 (12)	17.07 (7)	26.32 (5)
Generally Positive	15.79 (15)	20.00 (7)	12.20 (5)	15.79 (3)
Mixed	17.89 (17)	20.00 (7)	17.07 (7)	15.79 (3)
Generally Negative	13.68 (13)	8.57 (3)	21.95 (9)	5.26 (1)
Negative	15.79 (15)	17.14 (6)	14.63 (6)	15.79 (3)
No Answer	11.58 (11)	0.00 (0)	17.07 (7)	21.05 (4)
Total	99.99 (95)	100.00 (35)	99.99 (41)	100.00 (19)

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promotion examination from Captain to Major" and eventually "faded out via the Army Service Corps". The third, (future) Ambassador Baig, resigned for a mix of political and personal reasons (see **Chapter Three**). The fourth, too fond of alcohol, "had to go" and ultimately ended up as an officer in one of the Princely States. The fifth was killed in the 1935 Quetta earthquake. The sixth, Niranjan Singh Gill, "fell out with the Colonel and was transferred to an infantry battalion". After capture in WWII, he joined the **Indian National Army** (see **Chapter Four**) and after independence held a "number of minor ambassadorial appointments very successfully". Chaudhuri does not describe the fates of the three KCIOs who joined the regiment before him. He does point out that, "If the Indian officers were rather a mixed bunch, that mixture was well matched by the British officers on the books of the 7th Light Cavalry at that time". See *ibid.*, pp. 62-63.

By more than two to one, the "Pre-1945" respondents characterize relations with their British counterparts as "Positive" (34.29%) or "Generally Positive" (20.00%) versus "Generally Negative" (8.57%) or "Negative" (17.14%). Air Chief Marshal 12 is among the minority who recall relations as "very poor. I saw Indians transferred when promoted so that they would not be in a position of superiority over British officers. I also heard high-ranking touring British officers enunciate this policy".<sup>78</sup> For Brigadier 29, "Indians were allowed to become officers [only] due to worldwide losses and inadequate numbers of Britishers". Yet Brigadier 70 explains how good Indian-British officer relations needed understanding on both sides:

The cultural divide tended to to separate the two and our Indian taboos such as abhorrence of beef and pork and similar propensities did not help in the fusion of the two. Indian officers generally tended to criticise and find fault with the B.O.s [British officers], perhaps more out of envy at their aplomb and phlegm.

Brigadier 20 recalls "those Indians who blamed British prejudice for slights when really it was there own shortcomings and/or personality clashes which were to blame...Once you proved [to British superiors] you were good, you were good".<sup>79</sup> In the end, writes Lieut.-General 4, "Indians respected the average British officer for his character, integrity and education". The majority of "Pre-1945" respondents agree with Brigadier 28 that the reverse was also true and that Indian and British commissioned officers displayed "mutual respect and regard".

That KCIOs and the majority of "Pre-1945" respondents disagree as to the state of Indian-British officer relations may be ascribed to their respective dates of commissioning. For, whereas Indian only stopped

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<sup>78</sup> From an interview with Air Chief Marshal 12; Pune, 11 October 1987.

<sup>79</sup> From an interview with Brigadier 47; New Delhi, 19 August 1989.

being granted King's commissions in 1934, only two of Table 2.1's "Pre-1945" officers enlisted during the interwar years—the remaining 33 joined during World War II.<sup>80</sup> These two distinct periods saw very different British officers joining the Indian Army. Brigadier 70 recalls

two classes of B.Os [British officers] when I joined [in 1942]—the old-time regular and those that became officers during the war. The former, while strictly fair in most instances, only accepted the Indian [officer] as an equal when one proved oneself in some way. The newcomers fraternised more.

Indeed, while prewar-commissioned British officers tended to display the inbuilt prejudices of the *koi-hai* ("who's there?") types who felt the subcontinent their natural preserve, those entering the Indian Army during WWII usually had a more liberal upbringing and joined without previously having formed censorious attitudes towards the capabilities of Indian personnel. These significant differences mean the older Sandhurst-educated group of KCIOs' description of a relationship full of pitfalls is more accurate of interwar Indian-British commissioned officer relations than that of the majority of "Pre-1945" respondents who describe such relations as generally positive.

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#### II.C.2. Price's "Reference-Group" Theory of Military Intervention

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The existence of Brindian officers signals a potential dilemma for the corporateness of independent India's officer corps. Robert Price's "reference-group" theory of military intervention holds that all individuals internalize the central norms and values, including certain modes of group thought and behaviour, of the societal reference-group

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<sup>80</sup> The 35 "Pre-1945" respondents joined so: one in 1932, one in 1938, five in 1940, three in 1941, eight in 1942, seven in 1943, five in 1944, and five in 1945.

with which they identify.<sup>8 1</sup> Military academy training, however, is a socialization process which replaces a cadet's identification with his original civilian reference-group with new "ego-involved" associations centred on the armed forces. Price argues that so powerful is the desire of Third World officers to retain all aspects of their prestigious Western academy training that they develop a positive reference-group identification with the officer corps of the educating state.

Where the overseas training of a particular developing country's officer corps is widespread, continues Price, a large proportion of officers may become "*non-nationalistic*" and "*non-puritanical*".<sup>8 2</sup> The first relates to officers who are

not only...likely to share the disdain for politicians that is a component of the military ideology of the army of the "mother" country, but also...likely to share its contempt for leaders of the anti-colonial movement, men who subsequently become the leaders of the governments under which these officers serve.<sup>8 3</sup>

The second describes officers who, instead of having an ideological predisposition towards a regimented and austere mode of living, apply their Western reference-group's standards to matters such as career compensation and social behaviour, thus appearing extravagant to the poorer, more conservative society of their own, developing country. Such officers may then find themselves at odds with political leaders attempting to shift scarce resources away from the armed forces towards other areas, especially during early independence. This "emulation paradox"<sup>8 4</sup> of non-nationalism and non-puritanism, argues Price, creates an inherent tension between officers who wish that their country would

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<sup>8 1</sup> Price, "A Theoretical Approach to Military Rule in the New States".

<sup>8 2</sup> *ibid.*, p. 402.

<sup>8 3</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 412-413.

<sup>8 4</sup> *ibid.*, p. 402.

return to pre-independence standards of behaviour and order and the new civilian regime striving to lead the country in a more egalitarian direction. If the military perceives the new rulers or their corporate status and/or rewards as less than those of colonial days, they may execute a coup d'état.<sup>85</sup>

Obviously, all commissioned Indian officers had to feel some form of reference-group identification with their British counterparts. Selected because of their respective families' service to the Raj, membership of a community deemed particularly loyal, and/or socioeconomic ties to the British ruling elite, KCIOs were sent to the "mother" country to be trained as servants of the Empire. Although chosen from a wider pool of applicants, most IOOs continued to be drawn from the martial races and/or families which had benefited from British rule. While they attended a military academy on Indian soil, it was geared to producing officers with the same professional skills and attitudes of Sandhurst. Lieut.-General 49 describes the Indian-British reference-group relationship from an unusual angle:

By 1944 there was no real difference between Indian and British [commissioned officers] due to [the] needs of the war and [a] great dilution of the traditional British officer with non-public school educated [officers and those from]...lower social classes. In fact, the public school Englishman seemed more at

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<sup>85</sup> Price, however, constructs his reference-group military intervention theory from the "soft" autobiographical data of only two instigators--A.A. Afrifa and A.K. Ocran--of one military coup--Ghana 1966. Yet both Afrifa and Ocran were reacting in large part to the civilian regime's mishandling of armed forces' corporate concerns, the formation of official armed groups perceived to be competing with the army, and these groups' pay and perquisites. Even if relevant to Ghana in 1966, Price's reference-group theory appears inadequate as a model for all developing nations with a strong colonial past. See A.A. Afrifa, The Ghana Coup 24th February 1966 (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1966); K. Nkrumah, Dark Days in Ghana (London: Panaf, 1968); A.K. Ocran, A Myth is Broken: An Account of the Ghana Coup D'État (London: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd., 1968); and Price, op.cit.

home with public school Indians than with some of his own kind who were not public school.

Public school-educated or not, far from all KCIOs commissioned abroad developed the extreme reference-group identification of Brindians (many of whom, paradoxically, had not been educated in England). Chaudhuri, for instance, recalls that when the British commander of the non-Indianized unit in which he underwent a fortnight's "suitability for the cavalry" assessment requested him to remain if Army HQ agreed, he refused. Chaudhuri reasoned that not only would HQ's almost certain denial blot his future career, but it "seemed more important to go to an Indianized unit where I would be wholly an Indian instead of a continuing to be something of a brown Englishman".<sup>6</sup> With their much lower level of contact with British officers, ICOs could be expected to feel even less influenced to become a "brown Englishman".

That most KCIOs—and many ICOs—were less forthright than Chaudhuri in rejecting the extreme British reference-group identification of the Brindian officer is potentially dangerous for the future of independent India's civil-military relations. At least the Brindian was open, if somewhat ridiculous, in his loyalty to all things British. Only the coming of independence would reveal wherein and/or to what degree lay the reference-group identification—the old Crown or the new republic—and ultimate allegiance of the majority of commissioned Indian officers with more subtly expressed attitudes.

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II.D. *Izzat*

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<sup>6</sup> Chaudhuri, *op.cit.*, pp. 54-56.



In pre-independent India, the question of to whom or what commissioned Indian officers felt loyal, or professionally responsible, began with the Indian soldier. To a large extent the jawan, like the sepoy before him (and the NCOs and VCOs who rose from the ranks), enlisted for the security and rewards offered first by the Honourable East India Company and then by the Crown.<sup>87</sup> The martial races enjoyed their designation as men of special fighting ability, the army's steady pay, and being pensioned off with newly irrigated land in Punjab. Their communities were pleased with receiving their sons' remittances, having army pensions spent locally, and the knowledge that future generations were virtually guaranteed military careers. While the long-term benefits may have been less obvious to the military's non-martial races, their personal rewards were equally attractive. Finally, no stigma was attached to serving under a leader not of one's own background, and the "mercenary" tag which later dogged Indian men—and officers—up to Independence had not yet surfaced (see Chapter Three).

Yet on the battlefield, Company and Crown soldiers fought not just for pay and pension but to defend their *izzat*, a complex mix of personal, familial, caste, religious and even generational honour melded with that of the unit in which they served.<sup>88</sup> In the Indian Army, a close identification with regimental honour was encouraged with the

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<sup>87</sup> See Heathcote, *op.cit.*, pp. 105-110; Longer, *op.cit.*, p. 65; J. Lunt, ed., From Sepoy to Subedar being the Life and Adventures of Subedar Sita Ram, a Native Officer of the Bengal Army written and related by himself (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970. Translated and first published by Lieutenant-Colonel Norgate, Lahore, 1873); Lieut.-General Sir G. MacMunn, Vignettes From Indian Wars (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co. Ltd, 1932), pp. 195-210; Mason, *op.cit.*, pp. 207-215; and J.A.B. Palmer, The Mutiny Outbreak at Meerut in 1857 (Cambridge: CUP, 1966), p. 139.

<sup>88</sup> Mason interprets the Hindustani word *izzat* as a combination of "glory, honour, reputation". See Mason, *op.cit.*, p. 127.

development of a unique internal structure of "class"—made up entirely of the same caste or ethnic group—and "class company"—containing a different class in each of its three companies—regiments. As well as ensuring a measure of *divide et impera* within each unit, class and class company regiments allowed a British commander to do his recruiting simply by sending his NCOs to their villages with orders to get "more of the same". He then would then have troops united by speech, religion, caste, and blood to their immediate superiors who were, in turn, conscious of proving to their commander that his faith in their judgement of recruits was fully justified.<sup>89</sup> The boundaries between individual, clan and unit identities were then blurred by incorporating men's traditional social and religious observances into regimental functions,<sup>90</sup> and the bond between officers, men and their unit further reinforced by emphasizing the solemnity of the oath upon enlistment, the precision of guard-mounting, and the sacredness of the colours as the symbol of honour.<sup>91</sup>

For the pre-independent Indian Army, a close identification of the jawan with his unit was extremely important as there was no obviously patriotic reason to join and fight, even after British control over the subcontinent became near total. The Indian soldier may have felt a kind

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<sup>89</sup> Mason, op.cit., p. 350.

<sup>90</sup> Some say British insistence on recruiting only those Sikhs who strictly observed their religious rites helped preserve the Sikh faith as a separate religion. See Heathcote, op.cit., p. 103; MacMunn, The Armies, p. 135; and Trench, op.cit., p. 11.

<sup>91</sup> Regimental *izzat* created in the Indian Army a special working relationship fondly recalled in any number of British officers' memoirs, including F. Ingall, The Last of the Bengal Lancers (London: Leo Cooper, 1988); J. Masters, Bugles and a Tiger (London: Michael Joseph, 1956) and The Road Past Mandalay (London: Michael Joseph, 1961); C.C. Trench, The Frontier Scouts Paperback ed. (1985; rpt. Oxford University Press, 1986); and F. Yeats-Brown, Bengal Lancer Paperback ed. (1930; rpt. London: Anthony Mott Limited, 1984).

of loyalty to a distant white ruler, but he understood his place in society more as a client or an associate of an alien ruler.<sup>92</sup> Therefore, it was crucial that throughout their career, jawans could feel that their regiment was their home, and their British commander their *mai bap meherbani* (literally "benign mother and father"). No problem would be too small to ignore, none too big to overcome—together.<sup>93</sup> When the troops were well led, fairly treated and respected, the intensely personal nature of the Indian Army's unique system of class and class company regiments and dependence on martial races created a virtually unbreakable bond of loyalty between a man and his unit in which was tied the very definition of his existence.<sup>94</sup>

Despite the huge gulf in their respective political and socioeconomic classes, commissioned Indian officers developed just as powerful a loyalty to their respective regiments' *izzat* as did the jawans. Like the troops, KCIOs were of specific communities and usually served out their careers in one regiment, with every opportunity to develop an intensely proud, proprietorial attitudes towards it. As a young lieutenant reporting to his new unit, Thorat recalls being greeted by both an Indian NCO and the British commander with words to the effect of "welcome to the finest battalion in the Indian Army".<sup>95</sup> He adds:

What pride those old soldiers had in their units! It is this fierce pride which welds a unit together and makes it good in peace and even better in war. It drives men to make unceasing efforts to maintain and enhance its good name—its "Izzat". This is a big war-winning factor and the Services must assiduously foster it.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Heathcote, *op.cit.*, p. 105.

<sup>93</sup> See Kaul's description of an Indian Army unit as "like a large family with high traditions" in Kaul, *op.cit.*, p. 33.

<sup>94</sup> See MacMunn, *Vignettes*, p. 55; and Mason, *op.cit.*, p. 128-130.

<sup>95</sup> Thorat, *op.cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>96</sup> *ibid.*, p. 13.

Although many ICOs differed from KCIOs in their respective families' political and socioeconomic status, most continued to come from British-designated martial races' areas. Those with previous familial or community martial histories desired to add to them, while those without such traditions were anxious to start new ones. Whatever their backgrounds, ICOs, like KCIOs, shared a stake in their regiment's *izzat* and felt just as strong a desire to succeed in their prestigious profession. In the end, an army based on recruiting selected martial races into strictly segregated class and class company regiments created a keen sense of personal and professional responsibility among jawans, NCOs, VCOs and commissioned Indian officers alike towards their client, not society but the regiment and, through the regiment, the army.

The close personal identification of Indian Army men and officers with their regiment and, through it, the army, might pose a danger to independent India's future civil supremacy-of-rule. Huntington argues that military professionalism's corporate characteristic lends officers a shared consciousness of themselves as a group apart from society. With its unique *izzat*, specialized recruiting and distinctive internal structure, the Indian Army could be characterized as an impenetrable inner society. While very effective in battle, its personalized corporate loyalty might adversely affect commissioned officers' understanding of their proper role in civil-military relations. Come independence, how would Indian officers react to government decisions affecting their corporate well-being? Would their personal, regimental loyalty be transformed into a corporate allegiance to the central government, or further, to loyalty to some higher notion of India?

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### III. The Indian Navy and Air Force

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An examination of the potential actors in a military coup which ignores or dismisses naval and air forces on the basis that only the army has the equipment and manpower necessary to take power and/or fill multiple government positions is incomplete. Experience shows that non-army officers, especially those in the air force, can lead a military intervention to replace the legitimate government.<sup>97</sup> On the other hand, such has become the destructive power, range and efficiency of modern air forces that this branch of the armed forces may itself severely damage or even prevent an attempted takeover of government by the army. The perceptions of naval and air force officers also indicate how military officers in general feel about government actions directed at the armed forces. Finally, as a number of the questionnaire respondents are either naval or air force officers (four and 10 of the total 96, respectively), an examination of their professional origins follows—although lack of space precludes a fuller treatment.

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#### III.A. The Indian Navy

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Like the Indian Army, the Royal Indian Marine (RIM), as the British-led Indian naval force was known until well into the twentieth century, owes much of its traditions, tactics and professional character to the British. It, too, sprang from Honourable East India Company origins, served faithfully in the conquest of the subcontinent and abroad, and

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<sup>97</sup> For example, Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings' 1981 coup in Ghana. See N.a., "Ghana timetable for civilian rule", The Independent (London), 7 March 1992, p. 11.

fulfilled Imperial duties in the First World War.<sup>98</sup> The RIM also recruited selected Indian communities to serve in the ranks—Hindu Ratnagiri seamen and stokers (descendants of the sea-going Angria clan of Mahrattas) and Goanese galley, wardroom and paymaster staff giving way to a Punjabi Muslim majority by Independence<sup>99</sup>—while reserving commissioned officer positions for British personnel only.

Only after Sandhurst's example did the RIM consider opening its commissioned officer corps to Indians. The first step came on 1 December 1927 when the RIM Dufferin was re-dedicated as a mercantile marine officer-training vessel for Indian cadets (one of the first of whom was R.D. Katari, later independent India's first Indian Chief of the Naval Staff).<sup>100</sup> However, while British cadets of two similar UK training vessels had long been eligible to sit the entrance examination for direct entry into the RIM, Dufferin graduates could join private shipping companies or various government port authorities in India only. Not until 1931 were the first Dufferin cadets allowed to sit for the RIM entrance test (when four were admitted, including B.S. Soman, the second Indian Chief of the Naval Staff).<sup>101</sup> Indeed, the first two Indians to become RIM officers had bypassed the Dufferin altogether.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> See Commonwealth War Graves Commission, *op.cit.*, p. 12; Commander D.J. Hastings, The Royal Indian Navy, 1612-1950 (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 1988), pp. 1-35, 309-319; K.S. Sidhu, The Role of [the] Navy in India's Defence (New Delhi: Harnam Publications, 1983), pp. 5-21; and Venkateswaran, *op.cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>99</sup> See Hastings, *op.cit.*, p. 81-82; and Katari, A Sailor Remembers, p. 62.

<sup>100</sup> Katari, *op.cit.*, pp. 6, 90.

<sup>101</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>102</sup> Dijendra Nath Mukherji was commissioned as an Engineer Sub-Lieutenant in 1928 after training as an engineer in Calcutta and Scotland, while Haji Mohammed Siddique Chaudhri won entry through open examination in 1930. See Hastings, *op.cit.*, pp. 360-362; and Katari, *op.cit.*, p. 14.

Opportunities for Indians to win commissions in what, from 1934 became the Royal Indian Navy (RIN),<sup>103</sup> remained inconsistent, limited and expensive. While British candidates could opt for an examination held in London and valid for all three Indian armed forces, Dufferin graduates sat a special test conducted by the FPSC, and other Indian candidates appeared for an examination in Delhi held conjointly with the IMA entrance test.<sup>104</sup> The (historically) limited size of the officer corps in the sea-going branch of the British-led Indian naval forces also meant the annual intake of all new officers, British and Indian, was tiny, and permanent vacancies arose only from natural wastage and the like. Whether selected in India or England, all RIN officers were trained in UK naval establishments for which they had to deposit in full a personal share of their fee.<sup>105</sup>

Although few in number, the RIN's commissioned Indian officers represented a wider geographic and socioeconomic background than the Indian Army's KCIOs and ICOs.<sup>106</sup> To a large extent, this was because the RIN's technically demanding posts demanded educated youths who, by the late 1920s, were to be found among the Westernized middle-class in any of subcontinent's larger cities. Moreover, while the RIN continued to favour Punjabi Muslims as seamen, its lack of NCO positions and the subcontinent's relatively meagre sea-going tradition combined to curtail the growth of a naval martial races' lobby.

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### III.B. The Indian Air Force

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<sup>103</sup> Venkateswaran, op.cit., p. 21.

<sup>104</sup> *ibid.*, p. 191.

<sup>105</sup> This personal share was £260 or Rs.3500. The Government of India contributed a further £1,268 for an Executive Officer and £2,261 for an Engineer Officer. See Venkateswaran, op.cit., p. 191.

<sup>106</sup> See Hastings, op.cit., pp. 82-83; and Katari, op.cit., p. 11.

With no pre-British predecessor on the subcontinent, the air force of modern India perforce had traditions, tactics and professional character based on British origins. The subcontinent's first military flying school was established in 1913 at Sitapur.<sup>107</sup> A Royal Flying Corps (RFC) detachment arrived two years later and slowly grew into a body of some strength until 1919 when, like its UK counterpart which became the separate Royal Air Force (RAF), it too split from the army to become the Royal Air Force in India (RAFI). Although the RAFI remained closed to the few Indians who had learnt their aviation skills at civil flying clubs set up in Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Lucknow in the late 1920s,<sup>108</sup> several Indian pilots had managed to become RFC commissioned officers during the First World War, distinguishing themselves in European theatre combat.<sup>109</sup>

The gallantry of the RFC's Indian pilots added weight to the argument that Indians be allowed to train as air force commissioned officers. The ISC recommended giving selected Indians King's commissions to form an Air Arm of the Indian Army and, pending the establishment of proper flying training facilities on the subcontinent, training them at Cranwell.<sup>110</sup> As with RIN candidates, Indians hoping to attend the RAFC sat their entrance examination alongside prospective IMA cadets. After

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<sup>107</sup> Lal, My Years with the IAF, p. 11. The history of the IAF from its inception to the eve of WWII described in the text is taken from Air Marshal M.S. Chaturvedi, History of the Indian Air Force (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd, 1978), pp. 1-8; Lal, op.cit., p. 11-13; and Venkateswaran, op.cit., pp. 21-22, 192.

<sup>108</sup> Lal, op.cit., p. 11.

<sup>109</sup> Before being killed in action, Lieutenant Indra Lal Roy won the Distinguished Flying Cross and Lieutenant S.G. Welingkar the Military Cross. Another pilot, H.S. Malik, later joined independent India's Ministry for External Affairs. See *ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>110</sup> *ibid.*, p. 11.



paying their fees,<sup>111</sup> successful candidates then endured the same two year course as their British classmates. The first batch of six Indian cadets went to Cranwell in September 1930 and five passed out as pilots two years later (including Subroto Mukherjee, independent India's first Indian Chief of the Air Staff) into what, on 8 October 1932, became the Indian Air Force (IAF).<sup>112</sup>

Unlike the Indian Army and RIN, the IAF granted commissions only to Indians. Because of nationalist fears expressed in the Legislative Assembly that the creation of a third, separate defence service could be used as an additional means of continuing British domination of the subcontinent, the Indian Air Force Bill had insisted that only "genuine" Indians as opposed to "statutory" Indians be permitted to join the IAF.<sup>113</sup> However, as there were very few commissioned Indian officers,<sup>114</sup> a number of senior British officers and technicians sufficient to run a separate service were seconded to the IAF from the RAF. The Indian Air Force Bill also stated that the IAF be open to all suitable Indian candidates.<sup>115</sup> This requirement, combined with military aviation's technical demands and the lack of any significant domestic tradition of

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<sup>111</sup> RAFC fees were £360 or Rs.4800 for the cadet and £220 for the Government of India. See Venkateswaran, op.cit., p. 192.

<sup>112</sup> See Chaturvedi, op.cit., p. 2-4; Lal, op.cit., pp. 12-13; and Venkateswaran, op.cit., p. 21.

<sup>113</sup> Chaturvedi, op.cit., p. 4.

<sup>114</sup> Until its great expansion during WWII, the IAF developed slowly, and only in 1936 was it detailed to assist the Indian Army in combat operations directed at maintaining peace in the NWFP. On the eve of WWII, the IAF included just 16 Indian officers and 144 Indian airmen, with mechanical backup provided by the 22 out of 29 Indians who, recruited from civilian railway workshops and trained for a year at the Royal Air Force Base in Karachi, had successfully qualified as Apprentice Aircraft Hands. See Chaturvedi, op.cit., pp. 2-4, 6; Lal, op.cit., pp. 12-13; and Singh, Birth of An Air Force.

<sup>115</sup> Chaturvedi, op.cit., p. 4.

flying, produced an IAF officer corps more educated and nationally representative than the Indian Army.

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## Conclusion

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The Indian Army's great strength remained the relationship of trust, loyalty and pride which jawans and their officers felt for one another and their regiment. With the exception of the Great Mutiny, this shared *izzat* grew and flourished through the conquest of the subcontinent, the unification of the three Presidency armies, the shift to martial races recruitment, the strains of the First World War, and the introduction of commissioned Indian officers. The exploits of the British-led Indian armed forces would provide independent India's military with a long history of glorious fighting tradition on three continents.

The credit for much of this tradition must go to the small group of pre-independence commissioned Indian officers. Despite a multitude of formal and informal challenges—including the trials of Sandhurst, the racist eight unit experiment, the prejudice of British officers and polite society, and even the discrimination visited by KCIOs upon ICOs—the RMC and IMA turned out officers who were quick to master military professionalism's qualities of expertise and corporateness. Their prowess was crucial as immediately upon independence these relatively inexperienced officers were rapidly promoted to senior command positions with responsibility for repulsing considerable threats to national security. See Table 2.2.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Adapted from Chibber, *op.cit.*, p. 35. Commissioned in 1950, General V.N. Sharma was the first Indian Army Chief (1988-90) to have joined the independent Indian Army. From an interview with Lieut.-General 101; New Delhi, 18 August 1989.

TABLE 2.2

The academy origins of army commanders in the major military conflicts of independent India

Years	Adversary	Senior Commanders (Lieut.-Colonels)	Higher Commanders (Brigadiers and Above)
1947-48	Pakistan	Pre-War IMA	1921-34 RMC
1962	China	1944-45 IMA	1921-34 RMC, Pre-War IMA
1965	Pakistan	1946-47 IMA	Pre-War IMA, Wartime (1941-43) IMA
1971	Pakistan	1954-56 IMA	Pre-1949 IMA

Independence would also reveal wherein lay commissioned Indian officers' professional responsibility. Chosen for their loyalty to the Raj and then trained to feel full members of the ruling elite, would KCIOs and ICOs—and jawans—be able to transfer their sense of professional responsibility to the new rulers of independent India? Chaudhuri does not doubt the jawans' ability to do so:

Having been recruited and maintained in India, and having been recruited almost wholly from the rural areas where their land and its produce were their essential livelihood, Indian soldiers had their roots deep in the country. Once India became real and tangible, once it became their own, it was quite clear that they would fight as fiercely for their country as they had once fought for their good name, their community and for gain.<sup>117</sup>

Yet for commissioned Indian officers, the departure of the British ruling elite meant their "membership" lapsing and the subjective methods of controlling the military lessening. At the same time, depending solely on objective methods of control meant allowing the Indian Army's "mercenaries" (in that officers and jawans volunteered to serve for the military's security, rewards and status) wider corporate autonomy. Might such a course threaten independent India's civilian supremacy-of-rule? Much would depend on Indian officers' understanding of the relationship,

<sup>117</sup> Chaudhuri, General, p. 82.

discussed in the next chapter, between themselves and those nationalist leaders who were poised to take over the reins of government.

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CHAPTER 3

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## CHAPTER 3

### Commissioned Indian Officers and Indian Nationalism

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#### Introduction

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The likelihood of a military coup depends as much on commissioned officers' perception of the civilian leadership—and vice-versa—as on their understanding of professional responsibility. If a regime is perceived as incompetent and/or illegitimate, civil supremacy-of-rule is endangered. So long as the Viceroy and his administration represented the universally acknowledged governing authority on the subcontinent, questions concerning professional responsibility remained straightforward and commissioned Indian officers were free to concentrate on loyalty to their unit. However, steadily more forceful and responsible nationalist leaders were questioning the British right-to-rule. Could military *izzat* continue to shield Indian officers from the changing political landscape, or would the freedom struggle cause their professional responsibility to shift from the King Emperor to the nation?

Obviously, this chapter cannot provide a comprehensive record of the Indian nationalist movement from the 1885 founding of the Indian National Congress to the eve of World War II.<sup>1</sup> Instead, it will focus on

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<sup>1</sup> The Indian nationalist movement is well known and detailed elsewhere. See J.M. Brown, Modern India: The Origins of an Asian Democracy Pbk. ed. 1988. (Oxford: OUP, 1985); P.N. Chopra, ed., Towards Freedom 1937-47 (New Delhi: Indian Council of Historical Research, 1985); L. Collins and D. Lapiere, Freedom at Midnight (London: Collins, 1975); D. Das, India From Curzon to Nehru and After (London: Collins, 1969); P. Moon, The British Conquest and Dominion of India (London: Duckworth, 1989); and P. Spear, A History of India: Volume Two Pbk. e. 1986 (Harmondsworth,

KCIOs' and ICOs' perceptions of the independence movement, and the views of nationalist leaders—and the public—of the Indian armed forces.

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## I. Commissioned Indian Officers and the Nationalist Movement

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### I.A. KCIOs

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The independence movement interfered little with the military careers of KCIOs. Like young officers in any army, KCIOs were kept busy with their professional duties and responsibilities. Whether they were taught under diffident *koi hai* types or helpful and tolerant British officers, the small number of KCIOs were very aware that as the first members of the army's Indianization experiment, they were under close scrutiny by both British authorities and Indian politicians to see if Indians could handle command responsibilities as well as their British counterparts. So learn they must, and to the highest standards.

Conforming to the Indian Army's professional practices also meant assiduously ignoring politics, especially of the nationalist variety. As most Indian Army cantonments were located far from urban centres where nationalist politics were most prevalent, KCIOs became isolated from mainstream Indian thought after joining the military. More importantly, in the regimental mess, that particularly British military institution where "decorum and regimental customs were taught and observed".<sup>2</sup> political discussions of any sort were judged wholly inappropriate. What little political awareness was allowed consisted of contrasting the internal racial and religious harmony of the army with the often

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England: Penguin Books, 1973).

<sup>2</sup> Thorat, From Reveille to Retreat, p. 14.

ferocious communal violence afflicting Indian society at large. KCIOs worked just as hard as British officers to shield their men from any external attempts at highlighting religious and political differences which could destroy their regimental izzat.

The absence of nationalist sentiments amongst the majority of KCIOs was also connected with their conservative, privileged upbringing.

General Chaudhuri describes the interwar years as

an age when the upper middle classes in India felt it necessary to have moderate political views, which they must have felt was more important at the time than open revolution, violent or non-violent. This seems to have been true all over India and not only in Bengal...It was only after Gandhiji began his first mass movement in 1921, that a greater political awareness slowly started to come into every Indian's consciousness.<sup>3</sup>

For the most part, the families of KCIOs viewed nationalist politics as upsetting the *status quo* from which they profited and their privileged, commissioned officer sons accepted these sentiments. That the better Indian families continued to send their sons to Sandhurst despite the Indian GCs' high failure rate was but one indication of their unwavering enthusiasm for British institutions.

Even where there was some family history of political involvement, the freedom movement was not seriously discussed. Despite a grandfather being W.C. Bonnerjee, Congress' first President, and growing up in a Bengal "seething with political and nationalist fervour",<sup>4</sup> Chaudhuri confesses that

much though I would like to...show myself as an ardent nationalist at an early age as some of my military contemporaries seem to have done, I find it difficult to recall any significant political action or discussion either in our own home or in the homes of our relations and friends. Naturally we

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<sup>3</sup> Chaudhuri, General J.N. Chaudhuri, pp. 11-12.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 3, 11.



admired the nationalists and talked about a time when the country would be free but this is where it ended.<sup>5</sup>

Only "many years" later did Chaudhuri discover that his father had "in 1917...openly joined the extremists and played a leading role in ousting the moderates from...the Congress Party".<sup>6</sup> For reasons of secrecy or simply because their families were uninterested, most upper-class youths—including future KCIOs—were shielded from nationalist politics.

Yet a few KCIOs were involved in the freedom movement while youths. Lieut.-General Kaul recalls pasting up a "nationalistic poster at the entrance of a British official's residence", delivering "a parcel to a mendicant in the Old Fort [of Delhi]...at the dead of night", and frequent visits to the Legislative Assembly where he heard "stirring speeches" by leading nationalist politicians.<sup>7</sup> Lieut.-General Verma recounts how his father, "a strong nationalist", reluctantly gave his consent for him to leave school in response to Gandhi's call for student boycotts.<sup>8</sup>

The general lack of nationalist sentiments among KCIOs is reflected in their reasons for joining the Indian Army. Take the seven illustrious RMC GCs discussed above. General Thimayya, Lieut.-General Thorat and Ambassador Baig enlisted in the military with boyish enthusiasm after little prompting from families and/or clans with a tradition of government service. President Khan was eager to follow in the footsteps

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<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>7</sup> Kaul was also in the gallery when Bhagat Singh and B.K. Dutt exploded two bombs in the Legislative Assembly and, along with many others present, was detained briefly on suspicion. See Kaul, The Untold Story, pp. 9-11.

<sup>8</sup> Verma returned after losing an academic year and went on to join the RMC from the famous Government College, Lahore. See Verma, To Serve with Honour, pp. 2-3.

of his *risaldar*-major father.<sup>9</sup> Despite his strong nationalist sentiments, even Kaul chose the military because he "sought a life of adventure".<sup>10</sup> While Chaudhuri enlisted mainly as a means of getting away from his extended family circle of lawyers and doctors, he told his army interview board he wanted to join-up because "the military profession was an honourable and necessary one while the importance of Indians joining the army of their country could not really be ignored".<sup>11</sup> Verma (who to a much lesser degree than Kaul displayed some nationalist sympathies) does not give any particular reason for his choice of career. Thus, of the six out of seven KCIOs above who give a specific reason for choosing an army career, five do so because of a family/clan tradition of government/military service and/or to seek adventure. Only one, Chaudhuri, explains his decision in what may be deemed patriotic terms.

Not surprisingly, Indians with overt nationalist sentiments were hard to find once commissioned into the army. Kaul (perhaps enhancing a tattered reputation) remembers

that whilst I and a few other Indians, in extreme minority, used to argue for our nationalist cause or in support of our nationalist leaders, many of our compatriots who rose later to occupy the highest military posts...poured unwarranted and critical comment on our national leaders...<sup>12</sup>

Although Kaul's compatriots may have included a number of Brindian officers who believed in the superiority of all things British, others must have been playing safe since Indian officers deemed particularly

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<sup>9</sup> See Baig, *In Different Saddles*, p. 32; Evans, *Thimayya of India*, pp. 30, 40; Khan, *Friends Not Masters*, pp. 2, 7; and Thorat, *op.cit.*, pp. 1, 218-223.

<sup>10</sup> Kaul, *op.cit.*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>11</sup> Chaudhuri, *op.cit.*, pp. 2-3, 25.

<sup>12</sup> Kaul, *op.cit.*, p. 41.

unsuitable to serving the Raj were sometimes forced to resign.<sup>13</sup> A few KCIOs also resigned their commissions voluntarily, though this was usually the result of a disillusionment with the harshness of military life, the debilitating effect of entrenched racism, and/or because one could not make the grade rather than any appreciation of the nationalist cause.<sup>14</sup>

A combination of all of the above factors led to Baig resigning his Captain's commission. From a very Westernized and privileged background, Baig was deeply resentful of the racism he encountered in the Indian Army. Moreover, he clashed on two occasions with the same superior British officer, the second of which cost him a sufficiently high grading to be appointed adjutant. The politics of the freedom movement also entered his life when, while stationed at Allahabad, he visited leading nationalists. Baig left this posting

a very different person...[who] felt that there were greater things to be done than to be trained, and to train others, for a war with which India might not be concerned. To prepare to die and to kill for someone else's country seemed particularly abhorrent.<sup>15</sup>

Soon afterwards, and despite the protestations of his fellow KCIOs that leaving would only add to arguments that Indians were unfit for King's commissions, Baig resigned.

Yet the vast majority of KCIOs concentrated on conforming to the professional standards and established practices of military life. Most were keen to achieve excellence in a career previously reserved for British officers which meant learning the methods which continued to

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<sup>13</sup> See Evans, *op.cit.*, pp. 96-98, 114-115.

<sup>14</sup> Verma recalls that the "one universal explanation for failing on a course or Indian examination or getting an adverse report was: 'because I was anti-British'". See Verma, *op.cit.*, p. 14.

<sup>15</sup> Baig, *op.cit.*, p. 69.

bond all commissioned officers to each other, their men, and the regiment. Even Kaul admits that his British Company Commander, Major Rees, "was my idol and I tried to emulate his example throughout my professional life".<sup>16</sup>

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### I.B. IOOs, or Questionnaire Respondents

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If KCIOs had little compunction about dismissing nationalist politics in favour of advancing their career, what of IOOs? Unlike the former, trained in England largely in the 1920's, the latter imbibed their professional education at the Dehra Dun-based IMA from the early 1930's onwards. Moreover, IOOs entered the Indian Army at a time when the freedom struggle had been active for some time; when the question of the British leaving India was rapidly changing from a context of "if" to "when". Would their personal politics be more in sympathy with the goals of Indian nationalism than with the KCIOs' status-quo conservatism? If so, would this affect the continued loyalty and discipline of the British-led Indian armed forces?

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#### I.B.1. Youthful Involvement

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Given its growing popularity during the interwar years, were IOOs involved in nationalist activities? See Table 3.1. In Tables 3.1 to 3.6 KCIO Lieut.-General 92 has been omitted. Since the remaining respondents consist of IOOs or other IMA-trained officers, they are deemed interchangeable with IOOs and are addressed as such. In Tables 3.1 to 3.8, respondents are divided into four categories: "All"; "Pre-

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<sup>16</sup> Kaul, *op.cit.*, pp. 48-49.

1945" (those joining up to 1945 inclusive); "Post-1945" (those enlisting after 1945); and "Unknown" (those with no known date of joining).

TABLE 3.1

Were you yourself, any family members, and/or close friends personally active in the independence movement?				
Respondents	All	Pre-1945	Post-1945	Unknown
	Percent(No.)			
No	69.47 (66)	77.14 (27)	68.29 (28)	57.89 (11)
Yes	28.42 (27)	20.00 (7)	29.27 (12)	42.11 (8)
Self Only	40.74 (11)	14.29 (1)	41.67 (5)	62.50 (5)
Family and/or Friends	44.44 (12)	71.43 (5)	41.67 (5)	25.00 (2)
Both	14.81 (4)	14.29 (1)	16.67 (2)	12.50 (1)
No Answer	2.11 (2)	2.86 (1)	2.44 (1)	0.00 (0)
Total	100.00 (95)	100.00 (35)	100.00 (41)	100.00 (19)

Like KCIOs, the vast majority of IOOs did not have first- or even second-hand experience of the independence movement. Over two-thirds (69.47%) of "All" respondents answer "No"; neither they, their family nor their friends were involved in the struggle for *swaraj* (freedom).

Of the more than a quarter (28.42%) of "All" respondents who say "Yes" to involvement in nationalist activities, just over two-fifths (44.44%) describe actions by "Family and/or Friends" only. These usually took the shape of joining Congress Party activities and/or youthful, student-day exploits. Major-General 85 describes the consequences:

My elder brother was President of the Indian National Congress Committee in 24 Parganas. He took [an] active part in the independence movement and spent many years in jail on several occasions. Later he was detained at home with a police guard mounted 24 hours.

Lieut.-General 49 adds that such familial and/or friends' actions "did not seem to affect our personal relations". Despite growing popular

resentment with the Raj, sons and cousins continued to join the armed forces without censure from their more politically active family members and/or friends (see below).

Of the minority (28.42%) of "All" respondents who recall nationalist activities, a majority (55.55%, or 40.74% "Self Only" plus 14.81% "Both") were themselves involved. Most such actions were limited to student days, with Bengalis in the forefront. Major-General 33, "as a student in Presidency College, Calcutta...was involved in [the pro-independence] All-India Student Federation", while Brigadier 47, as "a student in Calcutta" joined the 1932 civil disobedience movement and was subsequently "sentenced to six months imprisonment". Admiral 58 "was a member of the Seva Dal which was a youth wing of the Congress", and Brigadier 64 "used to attend all local Congress meetings". Brigadier 40 participated "to the extent that all young men were fired with zeal in those days...[and took part] in demonstrations, shouting slogans and being thrilled when chased by the police!"

A few respondents were more daring—or foolhardy—in their nationalist exploits. "As a student", Major-General 20 "planted a high explosive bomb under a British military train. I was nearly killed by the police firing. I saved myself by jumping into the swollen Ganges and swimming 11 miles". While a Lucknow University student, Lieut.-General 95 formed "a small secret party of six in 1942...[which] carried out violent activities on a fair scale—[we] burnt some police stations, destroyed by explosives communications' channels, cyclostyled and secretly distributed revolutionary material". After arrest under the Defence of India Rules which allowed only death by hanging as punishment, he and his compatriots refused to enter their cells because

they were "not provided with the regulation six lanterns". Lined up against a wall and given a count of ten to reconsider or be shot on the spot, they were saved on seven by the sympathetic (Indian) jail superintendent who agreed to their demand for the lanterns before sending them to their cells with the whispered advice: "you want to serve your country? You can do it much better alive than dead". Due to a combination of his (American) college president's arguments on his behalf and police bungling, Lieut.-General 95 was eventually freed.<sup>17</sup>

The nationalist movement's increasing attraction for educated Indian youth during the interwar years is highlighted by the growing participation of the "Yes" respondents. Just over a quarter (28.58%, or 14.29% "Self Only" plus 14.29% "Both") of "Pre-1945" officers themselves participated in nationalist activities compared to fully three-fifths (58.34%, or 41.67% "Self Only" combined with 16.67% "Both") of "Post-1945" respondents. (Over the same period, such actions by "Family and/or Friends" fell from just under three-quarters (71.43%) to just over two-fifths (41.67%).) Unlike KCIOs and even "Pre-1945" IOOs, a significant minority of Indian officers commissioned after 1945 could boast of youthful, personal involvement in the nationalist movement.

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### I.B.2. Reasons for Joining-Up

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Did this significant minority's involvement in, and/or knowledge of nationalist activities lead IOOs to choose a career in the armed forces for different reasons than had KCIOs? See Table 3.2. As with KCIOs,

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<sup>17</sup> From the questionnaire and a follow-up interview with Lieut.-General 95; New Delhi, 14 September 1989. His story is confirmed in T.N. Kaul, Reminiscences Discreet and Indiscreet (New Delhi: Lancers Publishers, 1982), pp. 93-94.

factors affecting ICOs' decision to enlist also depended on their respective family backgrounds, so see also Table 3.3.

TABLE 3.2

Why did you join the military?				
Respondents	All	Pre-1945	Post-1945	Unknown
-----				
	Percent(No.)			
Adventure	31.58 (30)	34.29 (12)	21.95 (9)	47.37 (9)
Career Prospects	29.47 (28)	25.71 (9)	34.15 (14)	26.31 (5)
Unplanned	12.63 (12)	8.57 (3)	19.51 (8)	5.26 (1)
Family Military Tradition	12.63 (12)	20.00 (7)	9.76 (4)	5.26 (1)
Patriotic	9.47 (9)	8.57 (3)	12.20 (5)	5.26 (1)
To Fight in WWII	4.21 (4)	2.86 (1)	2.44 (1)	10.53 (2)
-----				
Total	99.99 (95)	100.00 (35)	100.01 (41)	99.99 (19)

TABLE 3.3

What was your father's occupation?				
Respondents	All	Pre-1945	Post-1945	Unknown
-----				
	Percent(No.)			
Government Service	36.84 (35)	37.14 (13)	36.59 (15)	36.84 (7)
Law/Business	12.63 (12)	14.29 (5)	9.76 (4)	15.79 (3)
Engineering	10.53 (10)	11.43 (4)	12.20 (5)	5.26 (1)
Medical Doctor	9.47 (9)	5.71 (2)	9.76 (4)	15.79 (3)
Education	8.42 (8)	5.71 (2)	9.76 (4)	10.53 (2)
Military	7.37 (7)	11.43 (4)	7.32 (3)	0.00 (0)
Agriculture	5.26 (5)	8.57 (3)	2.44 (1)	5.26 (1)
Landlord	4.21 (4)	0.00 (0)	9.76 (4)	0.00 (0)
Other	2.11 (2)	0.00 (0)	2.44 (1)	5.26 (1)
No Answer	3.16 (3)	5.71 (2)	0.00 (0)	5.26 (1)
-----				
Total	100.01 (95)	99.99 (35)	100.03 (41)	99.99 (19)

Comparing the respondents in Table 3.3 with the seven KCIOS described above reveals a continuity in family occupations. Like four—Khan, Thimayya, Thorat and Baig—of the six (66.67%) KCIOS giving a reason for joining the military, almost half (44.21%) of "All" respondents had fathers employed in "Government Service" (36.84%) or the



"Military" (7.37%). IOOs, too, grew up knowing something of serving the Government of India and could be expected to be desirous of, or pushed into following in their fathers' footsteps.

Table 3.2 shows IOOs also following KCIOs in their motives for joining the armed forces. The third (34.29%) of "Pre-1945" respondents who describe "Adventure" as the main factor in choosing a military career share the boyish enthusiasm of Thimayya, Kaul and Thorat, and Baig. Brigadier 28 was "fascinated with military life and [the] glamour of an officer's life in prewar India".

The quarter (25.17%) of "Pre-1945" respondents who joined the armed forces for "Career Prospects" make this the second most popular reason. Like the above KCIOs, this choice is partly due to these officers' positive experiences of fathers employed in "Government Service" or the "Military". It also reflects the IOOs' more modest socioeconomic standing compared to most KCIOs, and thus their greater concern with job security, promotion prospects and earning potential.

The fifth (20.00%) of "Pre-1945" respondents who make "Family Military Tradition" the third most popular reason for joining-up continue a more obvious tradition of the above KCIOs. (That this percentage is higher than the 11.43% of Table 3.3's "Pre-1945" respondents whose fathers were in the "Military" is due to clan, generational and/or an extended family record of service in the armed forces.) Air Marshal 3 describes a "family tradition of government service, especially in the army, since Maharaja Ranjit Singh's time". "My great grandfather was wounded during [the Great] Mutiny in 1857", , adds Major-General 86. "We knew no other profession".

Only after WWII do more differences emerge in ICOs' and KCIOs' respective reasons for joining the military. In Table 3.2, "Post-1945" respondents relegate "Adventure" (21.95%) to second place in favour of "Career Prospects" (34.15%). Major-General 31 explains how "during WWII, all options other than the armed forces were nearly closed". The military, adds Lieut.-Colonel 11, offered "about the only career...when I finished my B.A. in 1943". (To entice educated young men to enlist, recruitment to non-military all-India government services was suspended from 1942 until the end of the war.)<sup>18</sup> The war's limited job market also forced boys with no history of martial service to consider a career in the armed forces as evidenced by the comparatively small number (9.76%) of "Post-1945" respondents who joined-up because of a "Family Military Tradition".

Perhaps the most striking change over time between ICOs' and KCIOs' respective reasons for choosing a military career is the growing number of the former joining-up for "Unplanned" reasons. Whereas less than a tenth (8.33%) of "Pre-1945" respondents choose this option, the fifth (19.51%) of their "Post-1945" counterparts who do make this their third most popular reason. Wing Commander 26 entered the air force to avoid a "wait for two years before I could appear for [the entrance examination to the] Indian Administrative Service". Major-General 85 joined-up after reading an "advertisement in the The Statesman in 1946 calling upon Indians to apply for selection as Permanent Commissioned Officers". Brigadier 39 explains how, "after studying for [the] 'medical group' for two years in college, I found myself not fit enough to follow [in] the footsteps of my ancestors [and therefore] decided to join the army".

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<sup>18</sup> T.N. Kaul, op.cit., p. 105.

Unlike KCIOs, many IOOs, especially after WWII, opted for the armed forces only after other career options had been exhausted.

Table 3.2 also reveals a small but growing number of respondents who, like Chaudhuri above, chose a military career for "Patriotic" reasons. However, because of their respective times of commissioning, just what KCIOs and IOOs understood to be "patriotism" was very different. For the former, concerned with finding their place in a British-ruled subcontinent, there could be little sense of "Indianness" exclusive of King and Empire. Yet for many of the latter, the rise of nationalism during the interwar years meant that to be truly "Indian" entailed imagining a subcontinent free from British rule. The few (8.57%) "Pre-1945" "Patriotic" respondents perceived a military career as a means to an end. Lieut.-General 10 joined-up so as "to assist in the independence of India by being prepared to weaken the British military stronghold from within", while Lieut.-General 49 chose an army career "as a possible beginning to help in getting the British out of India after the war finished". Such sentiments were potentially explosive in an army still commanded by a British C-in-C and a country ruled by a British Viceroy.

By the time the tenth (12.20%) of "Post-1945" "Patriotic" respondents gained their commissions, there was less argument over what the term meant. Entering the armed forces after 1945 but before the end of the Raj, Brigadier 90 recalls that "at the time of joining one felt a sense of participation and belonging to the army of free India". In 1946, Lieut.-General 95 gave up a planned career in engineering when his "patriotic instincts were aroused" by Congress' The National Herald in which Nehru appealed to Indian youth to enlist in the defence services

so as to serve independent India's needs.<sup>19</sup> In light of the nationalist movement's grip on the imagination of the subcontinent, what is surprising is that not more "Post-1945" respondents cite a "Patriotic" reason as their strongest motive for joining the armed forces.

Whatever their family background and reasons for joining, IOOs believed they were embarking upon a highly respected career. See Table 3.4. As with the KCIOs, the vast majority (83.11%) of "All" respondents recall the reputation of their chosen profession as "Excellent". Nonetheless, regional variations in the military's status reflected both the Indian Army's traditional martial races' recruiting bias and differences in nationalist awareness. For Brigadier 41, "the general public in North India had shown respect and consideration to the military...States like Kerala showed indifference, while in Bengal they tended to be hostile".

TABLE 3.4

What was the generally perceived status of a military career when you joined?				
Respondents	All	Pre-1945	Post-1945	Unknown
	Percent(No.)			
Excellent	83.11 (79)	88.57 (31)	78.05 (32)	84.21 (16)
Good	13.68 (13)	5.71 (2)	19.51 (8)	15.79 (3)
Fair	1.05 (1)	0.00 (0)	2.44 (1)	0.00 (0)
Poor	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)
No Answer	2.11 (2)	5.71 (2)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)
Total	100.00 (95)	99.99 (35)	100.00 (41)	100.00 (19)

There are also the first signs of a slide in the respondents' perceptions of the armed forces's reputation. As "Excellent" becomes a less popular choice (from 88.57% of "Pre-1945" respondents to 78.05% to

<sup>19</sup> From a follow-up interview with Lieut.-General 95; New Delhi, 14 September, 1989.

of "Post-1945" officers), "Good" quadruples its tally (from 5.71% to 19.51%), and "Fair" gains its first adherent (from nil to 2.44%). For Vice Admiral 6, the armed forces offered "a lot of gold on the arms; no money in the bank". Still, as yet no respondent thinks that an armed forces' career suffered a generally "Poor" image when he joined.

That an overwhelmingly positive image of a military career continued from KCIOs to ICOs is also shown in Table 3.5. Three-fifths (58.82% "Yes") versus less than one-fifth (16.18% "No") of "All" respondents' respective families approved of their young relations' career choice despite the wider political context of rising nationalism, if not also their own involvement in swaraj activities. What little parental disapproval there was tended to be worries about their son's safety.

TABLE 3.5

Did your career choice meet with your family's approval?				
Respondents	All	Pre-1945	Post-1945	Unknown
	Percent(No.)			
Yes	58.82 (40)	63.16 (12)	63.89 (23)	38.46 (5)
No	16.18 (11)	10.53 (2)	13.89 (5)	30.77 (4)
No Answer	25.00 (17)	26.32 (5)	22.22 (8)	30.77 (4)
Total	100.00 (68)	100.01 (19)	100.00 (36)	100.00 (13)

Thus, despite a growing nationalist awareness—and involvement—ICOs continued to chose a career in the armed forces for much the same reasons as had KCIOs. The similarities are most striking for interwar-commissioned officers. Both KCIOs and "Pre-1945" respondents tended to come from families where the father was employed in "Government Service" or the "Military", selected the armed forces for reasons of "Adventure" or "Family Military Tradition", thought their chosen career enjoyed "Excellent" status, and had the full support of their families in their

job choice. The one noticeable difference, the importance of "Career Prospects" as a factor in the latter's choice of a career, simply reflects their relatively lower socioeconomic standing. This slightly different background, combined with a dearth of alternative employment opportunities during and immediately after WWII, meant "Post-1945" respondents joined the armed forces more for "Career Prospects" and/or "Unplanned" reasons than had their predecessors. Yet they too tended to have fathers in "Government Service" or the "Military", enlisted also for "Adventure", looked forward to a job with "Excellent" status, and enjoyed their families' backing in joining-up. Except for the tiny minority of respondents joining for "Patriotic" reasons, ICOs, like KCIOs, did not let nationalist politics affect their choice of career.

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### I.B.3. Career Attitudes

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Once commissioned, ICOs also shared the KCIOs' opinions of the independence movement. See Table 3.6.

TABLE 3.6

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What was the attitude of Indian officers towards the nationalist movement and its leaders?

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Respondents	All	Pre-1945	Post-1945	Unknown
	Percent(No.)			
Negative	3.16 (3)	2.86 (1)	4.88 (2)	0.00 (0)
No Particular Notice	18.95 (18)	22.86 (8)	12.20 (5)	26.32 (5)
Generally Supportive				
Though Passive	65.26 (62)	65.71 (23)	65.85 (27)	63.16 (12)
Sympathetic to				
Active Support	4.21 (4)	2.86 (1)	4.88 (2)	5.26 (1)
No Answer	8.42 (8)	5.71 (2)	12.20 (5)	5.26 (1)
Total	100.00 (95)	100.00 (35)	100.01 (41)	100.00 (19)

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In a reflection of the conservatism of families used to government service, a small number (3.16%) of "All" respondents had "Negative" feelings about the independence movement. Brigadier 70 explains:

My own and, dare I say, the attitude of officers who came from gov't service houses were aware of the foibles of some of our politicians and hence [had] little respect for Nehru, his sister Vijaya Lakshmi, G.B. Pant, etc. Their doubtful credentials for leadership viewed against the background of disciplined and controlled and well-led gov't servants...gave little, if any, hope of the grant of independence.

Though less likely than KCIOs to be the sons of military officers, aristocratic families and/or martial races' communities, ICOs continued to be drawn from the subcontinent's establishment, albeit a more middle-class one.

A fifth (18.95%) of "All" respondents took "No Particular Notice" of the nationalist movement. Like KCIOs, ICOs adhered strictly to professional military discipline. Officers, recalls Wing Commander 26, were just "not authorised to think about it [nationalist politics]". "I don't think it [the independence struggle] mattered much", adds Lieut.-Colonel 80, "politics was not part of the make-up of a service man". The methods of winning *swaraj* were not stimulating. "For a soldier", writes Brigadier 69, "Satya and *Ahimsa* [non-violence]<sup>20</sup> did not appeal much" even though there is a growing awareness of the nationalist struggle over time.

In the most popular response, two-thirds (65.26%) of "All" respondents were "Generally Supportive Though Passive" admirers of the independence movement. For Major-General 34, "Indian politicians of those days were men of tremendous integrity and moral force and they enjoyed a very high regard among the Indian Army officers". Yet overt

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<sup>20</sup> Brown, *op.cit.*, pp. 204-205.

support was shunned since, writes Brigadier 31, "British officers definitely did harm to those Indian officers whom they suspected to be nationalists". The official anti-swaraj bias of the Indian armed forces continued to be respected throughout the interwar years: two-thirds of both "Pre-1945" and "Post-1945" respondents agree a "Generally Supportive Though Passive" attitude towards the independence movement and its leaders remained the most popular view of Indian officers.

Whatever the dangers, a few (4.21%) "All" respondents rendered "Sympathetic to Active Support" to the nationalist movement. As with similarly minded KCIOs, however, their options were limited. Brigadier 83 recalls how "several officers supported the independence movement and were prepared to relinquish their commissions towards this end. But they were persuaded to remain in the army because their services would have been required when independence was achieved". Publicly supporting swaraj remained perilous. "After Gandhi's movement in '42", writes Air Marshal 7, "some officers openly voiced their support for the [nationalist] movement and lost their jobs".

That a majority of respondents felt "Generally Supportive Though Passive" towards the nationalist movement and its leaders would be crucial to civil supremacy-of-rule in independent India. See Table 0.1 in which officers rank "Wisdom and stature of national leaders" as the joint eighth contributing factor in India never having experienced a military coup. The development of a core group of political leaders of one party—Congress' Gandhi, Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, Maulana Azad—who could unite and command both urban intellectuals and the uneducated masses in the campaign for independence was its greatest achievement. Moreover, mass participation in the freedom struggle over many years



would give Indians an understanding of *swaraj* as rule by those popular political leaders who had led the movement. The stability crucial to ensuring civilian rule free from military interference was almost guaranteed as nationalist leaders, through the Congress Party, would govern during India's formative years as a sovereign nation with the overwhelming consent of the people.

Yet this open support was in the future—despite a significant minority of IOOs having participated in nationalist actions while youths, few serving officers were willing to speak up in favour of *swaraj* during the interwar years. Like KCIOs, they concentrated on developing professionalism, ignoring any open support for nationalist politics which might interfere with their career prospects,<sup>21</sup> and living

<sup>21</sup> The general reluctance of commissioned Indian officers to get involved in any sort of political activity is further evident in Tables FT 3.1 and FT 3.2.

TABLE FT 3.1

Outside of the nationalist movement, have you and/or any members of your family ever been involved in politics and/or stood for political office?

	Self	Family	Both
	Percent(No.)		
No	95.79 (91)	88.42 (84)	98.95 (94)
Yes	3.16 (3)	10.53 (10)	1.05 (1)
No Answer	1.05 (1)	1.05 (1)	0.00 (0)
Total	100.00 (95)	100.00 (95)	100.00 (95)

In Table FT 3.1, overwhelming majorities of respondents say "No" all categories of involvement in politics. The details of the respective three (3.16%) ten (10.53%) and one (1.05%) who say "Yes" to "Self", "Family" and "Both" follow. "Self": Lieut.-General 10 stood for Parliament as an independent candidate in 1984; Lieut.-Colonel 25 helped on J. Balliles' respective campaigns for Virginia, USA, Attorney General and Governor; Group Captain 77 was a member/advisor(?) with "Janata 1976-1978". "Family": Vice Admiral 6's father is a life-long supporter of Congress and for 10 years after his retirement was a nominated member of the Kerala Assembly; Lieut.-Colonel 11's brother stood for a

to the full the pampered lifestyle of the hard-drinking, polo-playing, shikari-fond "Poona colonel".

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## II. Nationalist Politicians' Understanding of the Military

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Livermore, California, USA, city council seat; Lieut.-General 15's maternal uncle is a U.P. Congress M.L.A.; Major-General 33's grandfather (mother's uncle) was an active member of CPI before and after independence "based in Calcutta and Moscow"; Brigadier 53: "Yes, Congress(I)"; Brigadier 55's "cousin sister [sic]" was a "Congress central minister, 1970-75"; Major-General 68's "younger brother [was an] independent[?] at Lucknow from 1956-1963"; Group Captain 77: "father--Congress"; Brigadier 84's "in-laws were in the Congress Party in Darjeeling since [sic] a long time. They were Congress Presidents of the District during [the] forties and fifties. My mother-in-law was a member of Parliament for 12 years (1952-1964)"; Major-General 85's "elder brother [was active in the] Indian National Congress [in] pre- and post-independence Bengal". "Both": Group Captain 77 (see above).

TABLE FT 3.2

How often have you voted in national elections?		
	Percent(No.)	Total Percent(No.)
Always	7.37 (7) >	
Almost Always	12.63 (12) >	35.79 (34)
Most Times	15.79 (15) >	
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Sometimes	25.26 (24) >	
Twice	1.05 (1) >	36.84 (35)
Once	10.53 (10) >	
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Never	26.32 (25) >	26.32 (25)
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No Answer	1.05 (1) >	1.05 (1)
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Total	100.00 (95)	100.00 (95)

In Table FT 3.2, a large number of the two-thirds of respondents who vote seldomly or not at all (25.26% "Sometimes" plus 1.05% "Twice" plus 10.53% "Once" plus 26.32% "Never") blame career obstacles; most usually the failure of ballot papers either to reach remote garrisons in time to be returned by the final count or to keep up with an officer's frequent moves. When repeated this put them off trying to vote altogether. Although a few (re)discover a voting habit when retirement brings a measure of locale stability, most officers' failure to vote must be seen as a measure of their apathy to deeper political involvement.

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## II.A. Congress Party Actions

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Nationalist politicians' concern for the armed forces of the subcontinent began early. At Congress' inaugural 1885 session members expressed their concern at the excessive cost of maintaining the Indian Army. A year later Raja Rampal Singh complained that prevailing military practices were "systematically crushing out of us all martial spirit...converting a race of soldiers and heroes into a timid flock of quill-driving sheep".<sup>22</sup> In 1886, Congress resolved that

the military service in its higher grades should be practically opened to the natives of this country, and that the Government of India should establish military colleges in this country where the natives of India, as defined by statute, may be educated and trained for a military career as officers of the Indian Army.<sup>23</sup>

Six years later, G.K. Gokhale lamented that "India is about the only country in the civilised world where the people are debarred from the privileges of citizen-soldiership and from all voluntary participation in the responsibilities of national defence".<sup>24</sup> Even extremists like B.G. Tilak supported the participation of Indian military personnel during the First World War: "If you want Home Rule be prepared to defend your Home...You cannot reasonably say that the ruling will be done by you and the *fighting for you*..."<sup>25</sup> Tilak understood that self-government without the will or expertise for self-defence meant nothing.

Nonetheless, even those nationalist politicians most interested in military matters felt that increasing Indians' administrative,

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<sup>22</sup> As used in Longer, Red Coats to Olive Green, p. 124.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, p. 124.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*, p. 136.

<sup>25</sup> From a speech at Poona, n.d., in B.G. Tilak, His Writings and Speeches (Madras: Ganesh, 1918), p. 365, as used in Cohen, The Indian Army, p. 92.

legislative and socioeconomic opportunities took precedence over defence issues. The efforts of those loyal members of the opposition interested in military matters who Cohen labels "instrumental gradualists" (ranging from Raja Rampal Singh and G.K. Gokhale to P.S. Sivaswamy Aiyer, Motilal Nehru, H.N. Kunzru and, during his time as a Congress member, Muhammad Ali Jinnah did achieve important gains in expanding Indian participation in the armed forces.<sup>26</sup> Yet the more conservative instrumental gradualists' "jobbery",<sup>27</sup> their preoccupation with opening up particular positions to Indians, eventually became seen as an unnecessary drag on the greater goal of independence.

As instrumental gradualists became consumed by the gathering pace of the nationalist movement, defence matters were increasingly left to the British authorities and those Indians Cohen terms "traditional militarists".<sup>28</sup> The latter represented communities which the British had previously or were presently recruiting into the Indian armed forces. In seeking enhanced enlistment opportunities for their members only, they hindered efforts at promoting a truly representative Indian Army. The combined pressure of traditional militarists and conservative British commanders ensured that the Indian Army's commissioned Indian officer corps continued to remain disproportionately drawn from traditional, British-designated martial races' recruiting areas.

Despite their waning interest in defence matters, instrumental gradualists consciously decided to allow commissioned Indian officers to

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<sup>26</sup> See Cohen, op.cit., pp. 65-68, 78-85; and Longer, op.cit., pp. 183-185.

<sup>27</sup> J. Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru: An Autobiography (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1980. First published at London: John Lane, The Bodley Head Ltd., 1936), pp. 293-294.

<sup>28</sup> Cohen, op.cit., pp. 58-65.

learn their profession free from external political interference. Their reasoning is perhaps best expressed in the following conversation between Motilal Nehru and (then Lieutenant) Thimayya where the latter has just asked if he should continue in with his army career:

"First nothing would please the British more than your resignations. For thirty years we've fought for army Indianization. We're now winning the fight. If you give up, we shall have lost it...But that's not the most important reason you must continue...We're going to win independence. Perhaps not this year or the next, but sooner or later the British will be driven out. When this happens, India will stand alone. We will have no one to protect us but ourselves. It is then that our survival will depend on men like you."

"You mean that we should stay with the army to learn as much as we can?"...

"Exactly...And it won't be easy. Often you'll be playing polo when your friends are fighting, perhaps dying. You will begin to hate yourselves, and the temptation to weaken will be great...But no matter what people say to you, none of you must give up...you must persuade the other Indian officers to stick with it as well."<sup>9</sup>

Thorat describes a very similar conversation with Lala Lajpat Rai.<sup>30</sup>

Despite his frequent social contact with leading nationalist politicians and thinkers, Baig also reports no direct attempt to influence his military career for political ends.<sup>31</sup> By never trying to wean commissioned Indian officers (and soldiers) away from unquestioning obedience to their British commanders and towards nationalist politics,

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<sup>29</sup> Evans, op.cit., p. 124.

<sup>30</sup> Newly graduated from Sandhurst, Thorat found himself travelling back to India on the same ship as Rai. He asked the nationalist leader:

"Sir, do you think that we have done wrong in joining the Indian Army, on the strength of which the British are ruling us?..."

"No, I don't think so at all. How long will the British continue to rule us? One day India shall become a free country, and then we will need trained men like you. So work hard and qualify yourself for that moment." [My indents.]

See Thorat, op.cit., p. 8.

<sup>31</sup> Baig, op.cit., pp. 52-75.

Congress' instrumental gradualists not only allowed KCIOs and IOOs to learn a degree of professionalism essential come independence, but ensured that India's future civilian governments did not have to contend with a politicized officer corps.

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#### II.A.1. Mercenaries?

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Although nationalist politicians' paramount concern was the political and socioeconomic battle for *swaraj*, KCIOs and IOOs were not completely free from claims that they were mercenaries coldly enforcing British subjugation of the subcontinent. "The fact", said Patel in his presidential address to Congress' 1931 Karachi convention, "is that the British army in India is an army of occupation. Defence is a misnomer. Frankly, the army is for defending British interests and British men and women against any internal uprising".<sup>32</sup> Would such sentiments adversely affect the instrumental gradualists' attempts to protect commissioned Indian officers and men from nationalist politics?

Hardly. In his speech above, Patel lays out the two most salient concerns of Indians about "their" army: its role as the chief instrument of foreign rule; and the drain of its needs on the government's budget. Of the two, the latter was always the prime concern for India's politicians, from the first days of organized Indian political opinion in the second half of the eighteenth century through to the interwar years. The mercenary question, in contrast, was ignored by the political leadership except when "speechifying", again sparing Indian officers and men from political interference.

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<sup>32</sup> As used in A.M. Khan, Leader by Merit a study of the career and character of Sardar Patel, as well as his ideas and ideals, including all his important speeches from 1921 to 1946 (Lahore: Indian Printing Works, 1946), p. 98.

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## II.B. Mahatma Gandhi

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Contrary to popular belief, Gandhi did not forswear violence:

I do believe that when there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence...I would rather have India resort to arms in order to defend her honour than she should in a cowardly manner become or remain a helpless victim to her own dishonour.<sup>33</sup>

He had explained raising a volunteer ambulance corps to aid the British Boer War effort as a rebuke to the "average Englishman [who] believed that the Indian was a coward, incapable of taking risks or looking beyond his immediate self-interest".<sup>34</sup> The First World War was no different, and Gandhi formed a Indian volunteer corps for ambulance duties while in London on his way back from South Africa to India, and helped with army recruiting efforts in Kheda upon his return.<sup>35</sup> Despite his hope that the subcontinent's loyal service during the First World War would hasten the day of self-government, peace brought not freedom but an extension of wartime's harsh Rowlatt Act and the infamous Jallianwala Bagh massacre.<sup>36</sup> Still Gandhi did not then, or ever afterwards, resort to violence in fighting for *swaraj*. That he did not may be traced to Gandhi's first-hand knowledge of the horrors of war in South Africa.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> M.K. Gandhi, "The Doctrine of the Sword", in Young India 11 August 1920, p. 3.

<sup>34</sup> M.K. Gandhi, An Autobiography: The Story of my Experiments with Truth (London: Phoenix Press, 1949. Translated from the Gujarati by Mahadev Desai.), p. 179.

<sup>35</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 289-291; and Longer, *op.cit.*, p. 170. For a first-hand account of the formation, training, duties and experience of serving in the Indian Volunteer Ambulance Corps, see Thapar, The Morale Builders, pp. 2-10.

<sup>36</sup> See M. Edwardes, Nehru: A Political Biography (London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1971, p. 39; and Spear, *op.cit.*, p. 191.

<sup>37</sup> Gandhi served in a volunteer ambulance corps during the Boer War and helped nurse wounded Zulu prisoners during the Zulu "Rebellion". See

Nor was Gandhi enamoured of military discipline. While serving with the volunteer ambulance corps he raised in London at the outset of the First World War, he had become unhappy with the British commander's unequivocal strictness and failure to appoint section leaders by democratic vote. In response, Gandhi naively organized a "miniature *satyagraha*".<sup>38</sup> When this attempt at subverting what was correct military procedure failed, he wrote to the Secretary of State for India, "acquainting him with all the facts and enclosing a copy of the resolution".<sup>39</sup> The Secretary's reply naturally defended the justness of the British commanders' orders.

Gandhi's experience of war and frustration with military discipline led to a scathing opinion of the Indian Army's lowly soldiery. He judged their work as inferior to that of true Indian patriots such as the humble weaver:

Many weavers of the Punjab have left the handloom for the sword of the hireling [during the First World War]. I consider the former to be infinitely preferable to the latter. *I refuse to call the profession of the sepoy honourable when he has no choice as to the time when and the persons or people against whom he is called upon to use his sword. The sepoy's services have more often been utilised for enslaving us than for protecting us, whereas the weaver to-day can truly become the liberator of his country and hence a true soldier. [My italics.]*<sup>40</sup>

The "mercenary" tag cannot have been far from Gandhi's thoughts.

That Gandhi's military experience (considerably more than any other leading nationalist politician) helped him reject armed struggle in favour of *satyagraha* as the chief means of mobilizing the masses against

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Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, pp. 179-180, 263, and "The Doctrine of the Sword", p. 3.

<sup>38</sup> Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, pp. 293-296.

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 295-296.

<sup>40</sup> M.K. Gandhi, "Notes", in *Young India* 27 October 1921, p. 338.



the Raj boded well for civil supremacy-of-rule in independent India since it precluded the use of commissioned Indian military officers' expertise in the management of violence. When independence came, there was little chance of the Indian public accepting any officer as a worthy rival to the highly respected civilian politicians who had led the fight for *swaraj*. The questionnaire respondents agree; in Table 0.1 the "Independence struggle's non-'violent nature" is ranked in joint 14th place as a factor contributing to India never having experienced a military coup. Officers, argues Commander 99, are well aware that "the absence of a military father of the country means that if [General] Manekshaw or Thimayya are slighted [by the government], the armed forces may feel rebuffed but the people would not care".<sup>41</sup> As arms were unnecessary in successfully combating the British Raj, no public associations were made between might and right.

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## II.C. Jawaharlal Nehru

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Nehru, too, had seen the positive side of military action and tasted military discipline. Along with the rest of the subcontinent, he had closely followed Japan's 1905 defeat of the Russian fleet, the first time in modern history an "uncivilized" Asian people had beaten a major European power. He describes how, as a lad of 14, "Japanese victories stirred up my enthusiasm...Nationalistic ideas filled my mind...I mused of Indian freedom and Asiatic freedom from the thralldom of Europe".<sup>42</sup> Nehru was then made "sergeant" in the Officer Training Corps at Harrow.<sup>43</sup> That he must have enjoyed his duties is borne out by his

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<sup>41</sup> From an interview with Commander 99; Bombay; 6 October 1987.

<sup>42</sup> Nehru, *op.cit.*, p. 16.

<sup>43</sup> M.J. Akbar, Nehru: The Making of a Nation (London: Viking, 1988), p.

enthusiastic response to the "great deal of discussion [during the First World War]...about the new Indian Defence Force (IDF) which the Government was organising from the middle classes on the lines of the European defence forces in India". Despite the "humiliating distinctions" between the IDF and its European equivalents, Nehru decided it was "worth while for our young men to have military training" and helped set up a committee in Allahabad to back the scheme. Just at this time however, Annie Besant was arrested for her Home Rule League activities leading an angry Nehru to persuade his fellow committee members to cancel their pro-IDF activities and issue a notice to this effect.<sup>44</sup> But for this coincidence Nehru would have become a soldier (albeit a reserve)!

Despite the above (mostly favourable) experiences, a *shikari* expedition the young Nehru undertook after his return from England is more pertinent to an understanding of his later views on the military. He describes wounding an antelope: "This harmless little animal fell down at my feet, wounded to death, and looked up at me with great big eyes full of tears. Those eyes have often haunted me since".<sup>45</sup> Nehru's inability to forget the ugliness of killing only fortified what was to become a lifelong disapproval of military methods.

Nehru's pre-independence views and post-independence actions regarding the military reflect the classic liberal belief in the basic rationality and innate charitable behaviour of all men. He admired

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<sup>44</sup> Nehru, *op.cit.*, p. 32. See also S. Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography: Volume I, 1889-1947* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), pp. 32-33.

<sup>45</sup> As used in Akbar, *op.cit.*, p. 81.

democratic societies in which politicians had to respond to the wishes of the people. In contrast, he wrote:

The soldier is bred in a different atmosphere where authority reigns and criticism is not tolerated. So he resents the advice of others and when he errs, he errs thoroughly and persists in error. For him the chin is more important than the mind or the brain.<sup>46</sup>

Moreover, this reliance on brute strength rather than reason caused a military man to lose his basic civility: "The soldier, stiffening to attention, drops his humanity and, acting as an automaton, shoots and kills inoffensive and harmless persons who have done him no ill".<sup>47</sup>

Nehru's rejection of the armed forces' Hobbesian view of society in favour of stressing the individual goodness to be found in all men and, hopefully, harnessed for the good of all, meant he never fully understood military thinking or its justification for unpleasant actions.<sup>48</sup>

Turned off by the military mind, Nehru readily appreciated Gandhi's belief that the armed forces were unnecessary in the fight to oust the British from India. For, though he viewed non-violence as a political tool rather than a moral obligation, Nehru disdained violence as inimical to Indian interests. Like the Congress Party's mainstream instrumental gradualists and Gandhi, Nehru rejected the military and militarism as viable instruments or targets for nationalist propaganda.

Indeed, Nehru never gave military matters much serious thought. He was far more interested in wresting fundamental political, social and economic control over the subcontinent from the British than in wasting

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<sup>46</sup> Nehru, *op.cit.*, p. 448.

<sup>47</sup> From J. Nehru, *Toward Freedom* Paperback ed. (1941; rpt. Boston: Beacon Paperback, 1958), pp. 3-4; as used in Cohen, *op.cit.*, p. 105.

<sup>48</sup> See Nehru, *Jawaharlal*, p. 446.

time with the "jobbery" of opening up army recruitment or speeding up military Indianization. Nehru did, however, feel the armed forces would have to be changed to suit the needs of an independent nation: although "our present [1931] army is efficient, we must bear in mind that we shall have to reorganise it completely and create out of it and out of fresh material a truly national army, with a national purpose and a national outlook".<sup>49</sup> For Nehru, India's freedom would ultimately depend on the will of its people, not the strength of its armed forces. Raised and educated on British ideals of law, justice and democracy, displaying the typical liberal's aversion to the military mind, Nehru—perhaps naively—never questioned that with supreme political authority would come complete control over the military. Only then would armed forces' concerns demand the attention of the political leadership.

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## II.D. Subhas Chandra Bose

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The one prominent nationalist leader to appreciate the utility of violence was Subhas Chandra Bose. Deeply influenced by Swami Vivekananda's "muscular Hinduism" which held that India would become strong only by fusing Western "self-confidence, viability, skills, [and] above all power" with Hinduism's nearly forgotten scientific, rational characteristics and superior traditional spiritual strength,<sup>50</sup> he believed Indians should not be afraid of defending their rights by force if necessary. In 1916 Bengal, where youths were physically combating petty racism on public transport, the "effect was instantaneous.

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<sup>49</sup> J. Nehru, "The Defence of India", in Young India, 1 October 1931, pp. 284-285.

<sup>50</sup> M. Bose, The Lost Hero: A Biography of Subhas Bose Pbk. ed. (London: Quartet Books, 1982), p. 8.

Everywhere the Indian began to be treated with consideration. The word went round that the Englishman understands and respects physical force and nothing else".<sup>51</sup> He himself was involved in physical violence while a student at Presidency College, Calcutta, when he either master-minded, led or simply witnessed the beating of an English history professor critical of Indian nationalism and accused of manhandling a student.<sup>52</sup> Held responsible and expelled, Bose recalled the incident with pride.<sup>53</sup> For him, violence as a instrument for winning respect was effective—and stimulating.

Bose's belief in Indians standing up for their rights as equals extended to learning self-defence. "If India was to be a modern civilized nation, she would have to pay the price and she would not by any means shirk the physical, the military, problem...a nation that did not possess military strength could not hope to preserve its independence".<sup>54</sup> Upset that Bengalis were denied opportunities to receive the training necessary to defend the country, Bose applied to join the Indian Army's newly formed Bengali Regiment (instituted as a concession to local sentiment that Bengalis be allowed to participate in the First World War) to prove they were not the non-martial race the British believed.<sup>55</sup> Though rejected for his poor eyesight, Bose went on

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<sup>51</sup> Subhas Chandra Bose, An Indian Pilgrim (reprint ed.; Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1965), pp. 65-66; as used in Cohen, op.cit., p. 100. See also Bose, The Lost Hero, p. 15.

<sup>52</sup> Bose, The Lost Hero, p. 15.

<sup>53</sup> G.H. Corr, The War of the Springing Tigers (London: Osprey, 1975), p. 79.

<sup>54</sup> Bose, An Indian Pilgrim, pp. 65-66; as used in Cohen, op.cit., pp. 100-101.

<sup>55</sup> Unfortunately, writes Chaudhuri, the 49th Bengalees "went to Mesopotamia, World War I's most ill managed campaign where they mutinied". See Bose, The Lost Hero, p. 16; Chaudhuri, op.cit., p. 13; and Cohen, op.cit., pp. 99-100.

to gain military experience as a member of the Calcutta University (he had found a place at Scottish Church College) branch of the IDF.<sup>56</sup> He revelled in the experience: "What a change it was from sitting at the feet of anchorites to obtain knowledge about God, to standing with a rifle on my shoulder taking orders from a British Army officer!"<sup>57</sup> The beginning of his life-long taste for military methods and love of uniforms next manifested itself during his student days at Cambridge where he—unsuccessfully—tried to have Indian undergraduates admitted to the university's Officers' Training Corps.<sup>58</sup>

Bose's background, beliefs, military training and considerable charisma combined to propel him as a real alternative to the nationalist leadership duo of Gandhi and Nehru whose non-violent tactics too often appeared to delay winning independence. Recalling the terrorist tactics of early Bengali revolutionaries, he boasted: "We in Bengal represent the real revolutionary force. Jawahar[lal Nehru] only talks. We act".<sup>59</sup> Later, when faced with many Indian nationalists' caution at the first Round Table Conference, Bose pressed for the setting up of parallel administrative and legislative institutions: "I am an extremist and my principle is—all or none".<sup>60</sup> His radicalism made him very popular, both within Congress and especially among the Bengali public. Yet his sometimes overbearing militaristic streak<sup>61</sup> and unwillingness to toe the Gandhi/Nehru religious/liberal line led Gandhi to force Bose out of

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<sup>56</sup> See Cohen, *op.cit.*, p. 101; and Corr, *op.cit.*, p. 80.

<sup>57</sup> Bose, *An Indian Pilgrim*, p. 80; as used in Cohen, *op.cit.*, p. 101.

<sup>58</sup> See Bose, *An Indian Pilgrim*, p. 91; as used in Cohen, *op.cit.*, p. 100; and Corr, *op.cit.*, p. 80.

<sup>59</sup> Edwardes, *op.cit.*, p. 73.

<sup>60</sup> *ibid.*, p. 78.

<sup>61</sup> During the 1928 Congress session in Calcutta, for example, Bose organized a volunteer corps outfitted with military uniforms and designated himself commanding officer. See Cohen, *op.cit.*, p. 101.

Congress in 1939 and into the political wilderness. Early in 1941 he left India to fight British rule with methods considerably more militant than those of the mainstream independence movement (see Chapter Four).

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## II.E. Questionnaire Respondents

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Were commissioned Indian officers aware of Gandhi's and Nehru's respective negative views of the military and its methods? See Table 3.7. More importantly, would these perceptions have any effect on independent India's civil-military relations?

TABLE 3.7

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What was the attitude of nationalist politicians towards the pre-independence Indian Army?

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Respondents	All	Pre-1945	Post-1945	Unknown
	Percent(No.)			
Positive	32.35 (22)	21.05 (4)	36.11 (13)	38.46 (5)
No Particular Notice	19.12 (13)	26.32 (5)	16.67 (6)	15.38 (2)
Negative	29.41 (20)	31.58 (6)	27.78 (10)	30.77 (4)
No Answer	19.12 (13)	21.05 (4)	19.44 (7)	15.38 (2)
Total	100.00 (68)	100.00 (19)	100.00 (36)	99.99 (13)

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A third (32.35%) of "All" respondents remember nationalist leaders as having a "Positive" opinion of the armed forces before independence. Major-General 52 emphasizes the politicians' understanding of the future need for a professional army:

[Nationalist leaders had a] great respect for its [the military's] professional competence and need to maintain it for use after independence. Hence no effort was made to politicise the army or do anything to subvert its discipline, morale or professional loyalty to the then government.

Moreover, adds Brigadier 31, "the politicians knew that [the] sympathies of all [Indian armed forces'] personnel were with the movement and the leaders". Brigadier 40 supports Nehru's somewhat naive belief that with

political rule would come control of the military; nationalist leaders had "a recognition of the fact that, as long as the army served the central government, it could not help being loyal to the government".

Nonetheless, almost a third (29.41%) of "All" respondents argue that nationalist politicians displayed a "Negative" attitude towards the military. "Indian politicians were very ignorant in military matters and regrettably even more so of the Indian Army", writes Brigadier 44.

They didn't even try to understand the background of the origins of the Indian Army...They saw the Indian Army as a kind of police force meant only for domestic settlement of strife. They thought it to be indoctrinated, wholly forgetting the lessons of 1857; whereas the Indian soldier was a man wholly consumed with pride in the military performance of his regiment, which he thought of as a family possession.

Nationalist leaders are also criticized for their dismissive attitude. "They looked down upon us as mercenary soldiers, slaves of the British", writes Brigadier 69. And if nationalist politicians did not interfere with the careers of commissioned Indian officers, others were not so fortunate. "While they kept away from the army personnel", says Brigadier 70, "they openly ridiculed, insulted, abused and incited subordinate gov't servants of other departments".

Despite the almost even split between the "Positive" and "Negative" options above, the respondents' overall perception is of nationalist politicians holding a pejorative attitude towards the military. This may be seen when adding the fifth (19.12%) of "All" officers who believe swaraj leaders took "No Particular Notice" of the armed forces to the virtual third (29.41%) who choose the "Negative" characterization, on the basis that to ignore such an important instrument of contemporary British and future Indian rule denotes a contemptuous or, at the least, dismissive attitude. Together, these two choices reveal half (48.53%) of



"All" respondents understood nationalist politicians as scornful of the military. "They were, with the exception of a handful of persons, [an] ignorant lot and knew very little about the armed forces", recalls Brigadier 45. This ignorance appears particularly prevalent during the interwar years: almost three-fifths (57.90%) of "Pre-1945" officers remember nationalist politicians having either a "No Particular Notice" (26.32%) or "Negative" (31.58%) attitude towards the military.

The respondents' perception that nationalist politicians had a lowly opinion of the armed forces could prove very dangerous to continued civil supremacy in an independent India. As seen in Table 3.6, most officers in pre-independent India held the freedom struggle and its leaders in high, if undeclared, esteem. At the same time, a majority felt that their admiration was not reciprocated by the nationalist politicians. The third set of military intervention theorists believes that such a situation may readily lead to tense civil-military relations, possibly culminating in a coup.

A closer look at Table 3.7, however, mitigates somewhat the fear of future military intervention. For instance, not all "No Particular Attitude" respondents feel that this characterization denotes a pejorative sentiment. For Lieut.-General 56, "the attitudes of the important leaders is [sic] clear from their writings. They recognized that the Indian Army was a necessity and that they could not disband the pre-independence one and re-raise it afresh". The respondents' perceptions of the nationalist leaders' opinions of the Indian Army also markedly improve over time: while only a fifth (21.05%) of "Pre-1945" respondents think that swaraj politicians had a "Positive" attitude towards the armed forces, over a third (36.11%) of "Post-1945"

respondents do. There is a related, if smaller, decrease among officers opting for the "Negative" characterization: from just under a third (31.58%) of "Pre-1945" respondents to over a quarter (27.78%) of their "Post-1945" counterparts. Indian independence and rule by the independence movement's leaders was yet to come; if the above trend continues, it may yet develop into a mutual opinion of high esteem between the Indian officer corps and the nationalist politicians (see Chapter Five).

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### III. The General Public's Understanding of the Military

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#### III.A. Respect, Ignorance and Indifference

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As officers and jawans lived almost exclusively in secluded cantonments, most Indian civilians had little opportunity for contact with the military. Chaudhuri recalls the prevalent interwar attitude: "The local Indian community [of Ahmedabad], who were among the most articulate, intelligent and highly commercial in India but not among the most martial, ignored the garrison".<sup>62</sup> The physical isolation endured by commissioned Indian officers only exacerbated the tension of wearing the oppressor's uniform while out in polite Indian society. The following conversation begins with "a middle-aged Indian in faultless English tailoring" (later revealed to be Motilal Nehru)<sup>63</sup> asking a question of Thimayya and some fellow KCIOs during the interval of a play all were attending:

"Tell me...what does an Indian *feel*, wearing the uniform of our British rulers?"

"Hot", Thimayya answered flippantly. The Indian officers

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<sup>62</sup> Chaudhuri, *op.cit.*, p. 53.

<sup>63</sup> Evans, *op.cit.*, p. 116.

expected the civilian to be unpleasant about their being British stooges. They prepared to move away...

"I'm serious...Does wearing a foreigner's uniform make you feel like a foreigner?"

"No...but we don't feel like Indians either"...

"Mix two cultures and you end up with no culture at all".

"It's not the uniform...We don't feel like foreigners. But our own people won't accept us as Indians".

"Oh, come now...Isn't it that you don't accept us?"

The four officers denied this emphatically.<sup>64</sup>

Perhaps only the aristocratic families which supplied the KCIOs both knew of, and appreciated, the efforts of the Indian Army and its men as guardians of the *status quo*.

The relationship, as it existed, between the general public and the Indian military during the interwar years was usually a variant of each party's respective station in life. Thorat remembers how

even in 1924...the Army was a closed book to most Indians. The masses were afraid of it, the middle classes were disinterested, and the intelligentsia saw in it the perpetuation of the British raj in India. All avoided it; hence not many knew much about the Indian Army.<sup>65</sup>

On the subcontinent as elsewhere, simple rural folk were impressed by the stories of heroic derring-do and foreign campaigns which most soldiers tell. The burgeoning Indian middle-class, chiefly interested in enlarging their educational and career possibilities, took their cue from instrumental gradualist politicians and gave little thought to the armed forces except when pressing for more commissioned officer places. Even the intelligentsia for the most part disregarded the importance of the military as the enforcer of British Rule, thinking, like Nehru, that with political independence would come control of the military. For now, the armed forces were shunned as a tool of imperialism.

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<sup>64</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 116-117.

<sup>65</sup> Thorat, *op.cit.*, p. 1.

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### III.B. Questionnaire Respondents

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Did ICOs see the same class and regional variations in the general public's understanding of the Indian armed forces before the coming of swaraj? See Table 3.8.

TABLE 3.8

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What was the common man's attitude towards  
the pre-independence Indian Army?

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Respondents	All	Pre-1945	Post-1945	Unknown
	Percent(No.)			
Admiration/Respect	47.92 (46)	61.11 (22)	36.59 (15)	47.37 (9)
Awe/Fear	13.54 (13)	8.33 (3)	17.07 (7)	15.79 (3)
Mixed Respect/Hostile	7.29 (7)	8.33 (3)	7.32 (3)	5.26 (1)
Mercenaries	13.54 (13)	11.11 (4)	12.20 (5)	21.05 (4)
No Particular Notice	13.54 (13)	8.33 (3)	19.51 (8)	10.53 (2)
No Answer	4.17 (4)	2.78 (1)	7.32 (3)	0.00 (0)
Total	100.00 (96)	99.99 (36)	100.01 (41)	100.00 (19)

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A combined two-thirds (61.46%) majority of "All" officers feel the public had either "Admiration/Respect" (47.92%) or "Awe/Fear" (13.54%) for the military. "The Indian Army was kept in absolute isolation from the civil population", recalls Major-General 34, "this lent [it] a mysterious and fearsome image". Like the above KCIOs, Brigadier 62 argues that military personnel were "held in respect, firstly because they were on the side of power, and secondly because they lived well compared to people of their kind in towns and villages".

A combined fifth (20.83%) of "All" respondents think the general public saw the military in either a "Mixed Respect/Hostile" light (7.29%) or as "Mercenaries" (13.54%). "The common man", writes Brigadier 46, "liked the men in uniform—for their sense of fairness, justice, wide outlook and also as they provided [a] livelihood for their

families. Others thought they were 'lackeys' and 'slaves' of the British". Rank also mattered, adds Major-General 67, for whereas the ranks were dismissed as "hired bodies to die for the British", commissioned officers were seen "to belong to a good all-India service".

Just over a tenth (13.54%) of "All" respondents perceive that the common man took "No Particular Notice" of the military before independence. After all, writes Brigadier 49, "India has been ruled for a thousand years by big and small kingdoms...Mercenary armies were the rule and the common Indian took them all in his stride for centuries. The British Indian Army was tolerated in the same way". Brigadier 44 describes the jawans' physical isolation from physical life:

The Indian soldier was kept in a cocoon, totally divorced from all side-effects of civil administration. When he went on leave, he spent all his time in the company of ex-soldiers of the same regiment, caste and community. If he had a civil problem, his status as a soldier gave him immediate and favourable dispensation. The civilian never understood what made the soldier tick; the soldier disassociated himself from all civilian aspects of life. The two sides dressed differently, spoke differently and had almost nothing in common except family ties which, for the army man, was all military.

Such isolation of the military, continues Brigadier 44, "is a supreme example of British organisation". These respondents believe that the general public had neither the opportunity nor the inclination to interact with jawans and thus did not form any kind of attitude, positive or negative, towards him and his institution.

While the respondents generally agree with the above KCIOs that public opinion of the pre-independent Indian Army was a function of class and region, their responses reveal some noticeable changes over time. From "Pre-1945" to "Post-1945", respectively, "Admiration/Respect" plummets (from 61.11% to 36.59%) while "Awe/Fear" (8.33% to 17.07%) and

"No Particular Notice" (8.33% to 19.51%) record large rises. The readiness of "Admiration/Respect" to change into the seemingly contradictory "Awe/Fear" or "No Particular Notice" leads to two conclusions. One, the army's increasing role in combating the independence movement by internal policing actions changed some of the general public's "Admiration/Respect" of the military into "Awe/Fear", and two, that as *swaraj* was increasingly perceived as both inevitable and imminent, the common man lost interest in the Indian Army, replacing his "Admiration/Respect" of the British-led armed forces with "No Particular Notice". The public, it seems, was merely following the example of their nationalist leaders.

The importance of the public following their nationalist leaders may be seen on Table 0.1 where the respondents rank "Political awareness of masses" in joint eighth place among factors precluding a military coup in India. Although it may be argued that the Indian electorate's political sophistication is less than that in modern Western democracies, elections on the subcontinent have proved people understand the power of their vote in changing governments. "The common man", argues Air Chief Marshal 1, "is very aware of who can provide for his needs and how to influence them."<sup>6</sup> Again, the particular methods of the Indian independence movement—*swadeshi* (supporting Indian-made goods), *hartals* (the cessation of all normal activity) and *satyagraha* (non-violent non-cooperation)—demanded the participation of many millions of people from all across the subcontinent's geographical, linguistic and socioeconomic boundaries. If nothing else, the struggle for *swaraj* gave

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<sup>6</sup> From a follow-up interview with Air Chief Marshal 1; New Delhi, 9 September 1987.

the diverse communities of the subcontinent a novel sense of political unity, of together belonging to an entity called "India".

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## Conclusion

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The paramount political importance of the nationalist movement on the subcontinent during the interwar years had minimal affect on the loyalty and discipline of commissioned Indian officers. While the conservative backgrounds of KCIOs made many indifferent to the politics of *swaraj*, many IOOs had first- and/or close second-hand experience of participating in nationalist activities. Yet, although some KCIOs and IOOs questioned the morality of their chosen career as demands for independence grew, once commissioned their desire to prove their professional competence and the armed forces' internal discipline of an apolitical outlook checked most displays of nationalist sympathies, however deeply felt. For some, this outward indifference was not easily achieved. Brigadier 40 recalls how commissioned Indian officers

seemed to have a split personality...[a] favourable attitude towards the [nationalist] movement trying to overcome...[their] "loyalty" to the Crown...[with this] dichotomy building up a diffidence in them. While in private they were with the movement...they seemed to have been aggressively against it in their public posture. They generally had a very reverential attitude towards the leaders of the movement at the time—the *latter were not yet politicians!* [My italics.]

Despite such internal struggles, commissioned Indian officers' notions of professional responsibility never shifted from the King Emperor to nationalist leaders during the interwar years.

The indifferent attitude of most nationalist leaders towards military matters was also crucial in ensuring the continued loyalty of Indian armed forces' personnel. Rather than question the role of the

army as the chief instrument of British rule, most Indian politicians sought only to open military careers to all Indians, or to better the advancement chances of preferred martial races' recruits. Even Nehru disdained thoughtful reflection of the present and future role of the armed forces in favour of assuming that with independence would come the armed forces' subservience to civil supremacy-of-rule. Those few nationalist politicians interested in defence issues made it clear that a young officer's prime duty was to learn his profession to the best of his ability as his knowledge would be essential come independence.<sup>67</sup>

Nationalist politicians' generally indifferent attitude towards the military was shared by the general public. The common man remained ignorant of the armed forces, the educated middle-class were interested only insofar as to employment possibilities, while the wealthy and/or aristocratic Indian families sending their sons to the RMC and IMA were unwilling to see their social position reduced by challenges to the *status quo*. The "protective shield of objective control" which separated the Indian military from the general societal upheaval caused by the independence movement remained firmly in place up to the eve of WWII.

That both nationalist politicians and the general public could afford a lackadaisical attitude towards the armed forces was due to the unique non-violent nature of the independence movement. With no battles to be fought, the military's expertise of tactics and weaponry was

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<sup>67</sup> Some officers came to this conclusion on their own. Chaudhuri describes how any nationalist misgivings about his choice of career were salved with the thought that "After independence, the country would need an efficient, national army and this meant we Indian officers had to learn our duties and responsibilities in whatever school they were taught and the British were conscientious teachers". See Chaudhuri, *op.cit.*, pp. 79-80.



superfluous. *Swaraj* would be attained by appealing over the heads of armed forces' jawans and officers, as it were, directly to the people.

The exclusion of the military in the struggle for independence (with the exception of the Indian national armies of WWII; see the following chapter) boded well for the future of civil supremacy-of-rule in India. As no arms were necessary to overthrow the Raj, there was no mystification of the soldier as hero. Instead, both jawans and commissioned Indian officers had to defend themselves against the charge of doing nothing to hasten *swaraj* in contrast to the personal participation of millions of common people in nationalist activities. When independence came no one, least of all the military man, would be in a position to challenge the right-to-rule of those nationalist leaders who became India's democratically elected representatives.

Civil-Military Relations in British and Independent India, 1918-1962,  
and Coup Prediction Theory

CHAPTER 4

Test One: The Indian National Armies of World War II

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## CHAPTER 4

### Test One: The Indian National Armies of World War II

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#### Introduction

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World War II found commissioned Indian officers divided in their loyalties for the first time. While the vast majority served with distinction on Allied fronts throughout the world, a small but significant minority held in Axis prisoner-of-war (PoW) camps joined tens of thousands of jawans imprisoned with them to form various Indian "national" armies with the express purpose of invading the subcontinent and overthrowing the Raj. Although these forces proved to be no match for the Allies in combat, their mere existence and *raison d'être* worried a British Empire contemplating defeat on both the European and Far Eastern fronts and facing the nationalist "Quit India" movement<sup>1</sup> on the subcontinent. How did Indian officers—and men—react to national armies' demands that they switch allegiances and join their brethren in fighting for *swaraj*?

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#### I. Commissioned Indian Officers and World War II

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<sup>1</sup> On 8 August 1942, the All-India Congress Committee passed what became known as the Quit India resolution which demanded: "The immediate ending of the British rule in India as an urgent necessity, both for the sake of India and for the success of the cause of the United Nations" (i.e., a free India would immediately join the Allied war effort). Gandhi declared the "mantra is: 'do or die'...This is an open rebellion...I want freedom immediately, this very night..." and the AICC called on Indians to launch a "mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale". See Akbar, *Nehru*, pp. 343-347; Edwardes, *Nehru*, p. 44-45, 147; Longer, *Red Coats to Olive Green*, p. 242; T. Royle, *The Last Days of the Raj* (London: Michael Joseph, 1989), pp. 77-93; and Spear, *A History of India*, p. 220.

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## I.A. The Indian Armed Forces

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With the exception of the formation of the Indian national armies (see below) and a few minor mutinies,<sup>2</sup> the Indian armed forces joined wholeheartedly in the war effort. From 1939 to 1945, the Indian Army expanded from under 200,000 to over 2,000,000 men and officers, while the RIN and the RIAF (the IAF won the "Royal" prefix in March 1945) grew from 1,590 and 200 to 27,650 and 28,540 personnel, respectively.<sup>3</sup> Although unprepared for WWII, all three services performed gallantly in five separate theatres.<sup>4</sup> "My Indian Divisions after 1943 were among the

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<sup>2</sup> In September 1939, a group of 35 jawans and NCOs deserted from the 31st Punjab Regiment just before its departure for Egypt, and three months later there was a mutiny of Sikhs in the 25th Motorised Transport Company already in Egypt. In July 1940, the most serious indiscipline of the war happened when 106 men of a Sikh unit attached to the Central India Horse (CIH) refused to embark at Bombay for overseas service. Other acts of indiscipline included: two VCOs and 24 jawans of the 1/11th Sikh Regiment surrendering and/or deserting after being inadequately prepared for immediate action in Burma; seven Indian gunners mutinying and then surrendering to the enemy on Christmas Island in 1942; and three Indian bombardiers trying to instigate an armed uprising on RAF bases in the Cocos-Keeling Islands. All of the above incidents were isolated and the eventual punishment severe. See Farwell, Armies of the Raj, p. 311; Mason, A Matter of Honour, pp. 490-491, 513-514; and Royle, op.cit., pp. 121-122.

<sup>3</sup> Indian Army wartime expansion figures vary: Farwell puts the numbers at 189,000 and 2,644,323; Heathcote at 150,000 and 1,800,000; Longer at 189,000 and 2,644,323; Mason at 189,000 and 2,500,000; and Royle at 205,058 and 2,251,050. See Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Commemoration of the War Dead of Undivided India, pp. 12, 14; Farwell, op.cit., pp. 304, 308; Heathcote, The Indian Army, p. 293; Longer, op.cit., p. 216; Mason, op.cit., p. 495; and Royle, op.cit., p. 74.

<sup>4</sup> Up to August 1945, the Indian Army suffered 179,935 casualties including 24,338 killed, 64,354 wounded, 11,754 missing and 79,489 POWs. 28 of the army's 31 VCs were won by Indians, including 20 of the 27 awarded for the Burma campaign. The RIN and RIAF also participated fully in the war effort, as did the ISF which by January 1944 had grown from 47,000 to 98,00 personnel. See Commonwealth War Graves Commission, op.cit., pp. 9-11, 12, 14; Evans, Thimayya of India, pp. 230-245; Farwell, op.cit., p. 304, 311-312; Longer, op.cit., pp. 214, 216-234, 236; Singh, Birth of an Air Force, p. 215; Thapar, The Morale Builders, p. 219; Trench, The Indian Army and the King's Enemies, pp. 143-144; and Venkateswaran, Defence Organisation in India, p. 179.

best in the world", said Fourteenth Army commander General W.J. Slim, "They would go anywhere, do anything, go on doing it, and do it on very little".<sup>5</sup>

The Indian Army's huge wartime expansion necessitated new patterns of recruitment and posting which appeared to signal the end of its overdependence on traditional martial races. For the first time, previously separated communities of jawans were mixed together (although *harijans*, or "children of God", recruited for the first time in large numbers, were usually kept apart from higher caste soldiers). The military authorities found that proportionate representation of all classes from all provinces was not only necessary in terms of numbers, but desirable in promoting a national spirit of contribution. The Indian Army's stuttering adoption of modern military technology also convinced the authorities of the need for better educated jawans who were more readily found outside traditional recruiting areas. All of the above changes made for an Indian Army more like the RIN and the RIAF in that recruits were chosen in a more meritocratic and non-discriminatory way.<sup>6</sup>

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#### I.B. Commissioned Indian Officers

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The Indian Army's commissioned Indian officers also experienced great changes. Most obvious was their huge numerical increase: whereas from 1920 to 1934, 214 Indians had become KCIOs and, from 1936 to 1939, 279 ICOs, by the war's end 9540 Indians held commissioned officer positions in the Indian Army.<sup>7</sup> Although the army's complement of British

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<sup>5</sup> As used in Longer, *op.cit.*, p. 227. See also pp. 237-238; and Royle, *op.cit.*, p. 90.

<sup>6</sup> Cohen, *The Indian Army*, pp. 141-143.

<sup>7</sup> Venkateswaran, *op.cit.*, pp. 161, 163.

officers also rose, the ratio of British to Indian officers (excluding those in the IMS) fell from 10.1/1 before the war to 4.1/1 afterwards.<sup>8</sup> Indian officers faced new responsibilities. Before the war, the seniormost KCIO was (later General) Major Cariappa; by its end over 220 Indian officers were lieut.-colonels and above, including four temporary or acting brigadiers.<sup>9</sup> Other wartime changes included granting ICOs powers of command equal to KCIOs and, under the direction of C-in-C General Auchinlek, ending the Indianization experiment. All Indian Army units (save Gurkha battalions) now took both British and Indian officers, commissioned Indian officers no longer replaced VCOs, and British and Indian officers entering during wartime were paid equally. On 22 October 1945, Auchinlek announced that permanent commissions in the Indian Army henceforth would be granted to Indians only.<sup>10</sup>

In the rush to fill commissioned officer positions, the Indian Army recruited approximately 9,000 Indian Emergency Commissioned Officers (ECOs) by the end of WWII (such commissions ceased in 1946).<sup>11</sup> Their (usually) non-military background and shorter IMA training period, combined with a belief that their motivation to join the military was solely to gain a government position, raised suspicions that Indian ECOs

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<sup>8</sup> N. Prasad, Expansion of the Armed Forces and Defence Organization, 1939-45 (Bombay: Orient Longmans, 1956) as used in Cohen, op.cit., p. 144. In 1930, the ratio of British to commissioned Indian officers was 28/1. See Longer, op.cit., p. 204.

<sup>9</sup> In 1930, the highest-ranking commissioned Indian officer was a brevet major. See Longer, op.cit., pp. 204, 213, 234-235; and Venkateswaran, op.cit., p. 161.

<sup>10</sup> See Evans, op.cit., pp. 190-228; Longer, op.cit., p. 235; Mason, op.cit., p. 511; Muthanna, General Cariappa, p. 32; Major K.C. Praval, Indian Army After Independence (New Delhi: Lancer International, 1987), p. 6; Thapar, op.cit., pp. 151-152; Thorat, From Reveille to Retreat, pp. 49-51, 53-80; and Venkateswaran, op.cit., p. 160.

<sup>11</sup> See Chibber, Military Leadership to Prevent Military Coup, p. 33; and Venkateswaran, op.cit., p. 163.

lacked initiative and would prove less self-sacrificing than KCIOs and IOOs. They did bring to the army a different attitude. Lieut.-General 93 recalls how "KCIOs and prewar IOOs were very pro-British and in most cases looked upon the British officers as their masters. The [Indian] Emergency Commissioned Officers...no doubt obeyed authority but were resentful of the British superior attitude". Yet the strong performance of the majority of Indian EOOs in officer training schools and their superior knowledge of, and ability to understand the customs of the jawans compared to British EOOs eventually won many admirers.<sup>12</sup>

While complaints about the quality of Indian EOOs did not halt their recruitment—hardly possible during the war—upon demobilization a large proportion were found "unfit" for continued military service or other government employment. T.N. Kaul, then a member of the War Services Selection Board set up to select civilian government officers from the thousands of Indian EOOs about to leave the military, describes how

[Although they] were fine young men...[who] had certainly benefited from their short service with the military...they could not all make the grade in the armed forces or the top civil services. A few of them were given permanent commissions in the armed forces; some were absorbed in the senior and junior All-India Civil Services, but more than half had to fend for themselves.<sup>13</sup>

That those Indian EOOs found fit to retain their commissions were high-quality officers was shown when one, General K.V. Krishna Rao, served as Chief of the Indian Army from 1981-83.<sup>14</sup>

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## II. The Indian National Armies

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<sup>12</sup> Cohen, op.cit., pp. 144-146.

<sup>13</sup> T.N. Kaul, Reminiscences Discreet and Indiscreet, pp. 108-109.

<sup>14</sup> Chibber, op.cit., p. 33.

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## II.A. Formation and Deployment

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KCIOs, ICOs, Indian ECOs and jawans alike had to face the unique test of conflicting loyalties posed by the various Indian national armies.<sup>15</sup> The first two were the *Frei Hind*, or Free India Legion (FIL), raised by Subhas Chandra Bose during his stay in Nazi Germany from Indian military personnel captured in North Africa, and the *Centro Militare India* (Indian Military Centre) mustered by Mohammed Iqbal Schedai under the patronage of Mussolini from Indians held in Italian PoW camps. Both were relatively small forces and of negligible military consequence.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Of the limited number of works which describe and/or include a history of the Indian national armies, those used as principle references for this chapter are: Bose, *The Lost Hero*, pp. 165-269; Corr, *The War of the Springing Tigers*; Farwell, op.cit., pp. 329-347; M.W. Fay, *The Forgotten Army India's Armed Struggle for Independence 1942-1945* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1993); K.K. Ghosh, *The Indian National Army: Second Front of the Indian Independence Movement* (Meerut: Meenakshi Prakashan, 1969); Mason, op.cit., pp. 514-522; K.R. Palta, *My Adventures with I.N.A.* (Lahore: Lion Press, 1946); and Royle, op.cit., pp. 119-126.

<sup>16</sup> The 4,000-strong FIL was used chiefly for propaganda purposes (apparently inspiring 47 desertions from the Indian Army in North Africa during July-August 1942) and not as a combat army; Rommel refused to accept it into his Afrika Korps. Two months after Bose, fed up with his hosts' cavalier attitude towards both the FIL and Indian nationalism, left for Japan, the force moved to Holland where its personnel refused to go on active service (despite their newly sworn allegiance to Hitler). Its three battalions were then absorbed into the German Army as Infantry Regiment No.950 and posted to Bordeaux for non-combat duties. Later, during the Allied offensive, the remnants of the FIL were incorporated into the Waffen SS where they remained until Germany's surrender and their subsequent repatriation to India. Trained as saboteurs, the two companies of the *Centro Militare India* under the command of Italian Major Avrea mutinied on 9 November 1942 when they—falsely—thought they would be sent back to Libya to help counter Allied landings. As a result, the force was dissolved. See Bose, op.cit., pp. 182-185, 187, 198-199, 201, 246; Corr, op.cit., p. 190; Farwell, op.cit., p. 331; Fay, op.cit., pp. 199-200; Royle, op.cit., p. 120.



The third Indian national army was the Indo-Japanese Indian National Army (INA) led by Indian PoW Captain Mohan Singh. Though he had initially felt "proud, glorified and dignified" of his rise from the ranks to a commissioned officer position in the 1/14th Punjab Regiment, he soon became dissatisfied with the "arrogance" and "debauchery" of his new comrades.<sup>17</sup> This discontent combined with other grievances over promotion disputes, the racist snubs meted out to Indian troops in Malaya and Singapore, and the British exploitation of India to create in Singh an officer ripe for mutinous action.<sup>18</sup> Placed by the Japanese in charge of the 55,000 Indians PoWs who had been separated from their British officers after the fall of Singapore on 15 February 1942,<sup>19</sup> Singh detected their disillusionment with the Raj and began thinking of forming a revolutionary army: "A few simple lectures did the miracle, and the results were beyond my expectations. In an unbelievably short time our men began to consider themselves Indians first and Indians last".<sup>20</sup> He fostered this new identity by abolishing caste divisions and starting a common kitchen for the men and mess for officers of all religions, measures thought impossible by the British military authorities. Eventually, Singh convinced the Japanese that this new, universal Indian identity could be used as the basis of a fighting force.<sup>21</sup> While up to 40,000 Indian PoWs volunteered to serve, a lack of

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<sup>17</sup> See Corr, op.cit., pp. 67-70; and General Mohan Singh, Leaves From My Diary (Lahore: Free-World Publications, 1946), p. 61.

<sup>18</sup> See Corr, op.cit., pp. 67-70; and Cohen, op.cit., p. 148.

<sup>19</sup> See J. Connell, Auchinlek A Biography of Field-Marshal Sir Claude Auchinlek (London: Cassell, 1959), p. 794; Fay, op.cit., pp. 81, 525; and Longer, op.cit., p. 219.

<sup>20</sup> Corr, op.cit., p. 77.

<sup>21</sup> See Connell, op.cit., p. 794; Corr, op.cit., pp. 49-64.

resources and suitable officer numbers and experience (see below) limited the INA to approximately 16,000 armed personnel.<sup>22</sup>

Whilst (now) "General" Singh hoped the heroic exploits of a battle-hardened, revolutionary liberation force close to India's frontiers would inspire the wholesale defection of Indian Army troops to the INA, his men were never allowed to demonstrate this theory. Despite some success in recruiting Indian Army jawans from among the remnants of the Slim River engagement and the PoW camps in Kuala Lumpur, the INA was used mainly for propaganda purposes and the mundane tasks of guarding concentration camps, constructing runways and acting as camp followers to Japanese troops. Singh's protests over Japan's unwillingness to respect and equip the INA as a fighting force, the transportation of its personnel to far-flung labour camps, and the ill-treatment of Indian civilians in Japanese-controlled territories eventually led to his arrest and exile at the end of 1942.<sup>23</sup> The INA now contracted to 10,000 men as thousands of its soldiers reverted to PoW status, a few hundred deserted, and all who remained were disarmed.<sup>24</sup>

A brief stopgap force organized by the respected Japan-based Indian revolutionary Rash Behari Bose<sup>25</sup> under the leadership of Singh's right-hand men, (Indian Army Lieut.-Colonel) Major-General J.K. Bhonsle and (Captain) Major-General Shah Nawaz (aka Shah Nawaz Khan) was re-

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<sup>22</sup> See Fay, op.cit., pp. 525-526; a copy of the speech delivered in the Rajya Sabha on 18 February 1964 by General Mohan Singh explaining the case of arrears of I.N.A. personnel, All-India I.N.A. Relief and Enquiry Committee, Delhi, as used in Ghosh, op.cit., p. 59; and Lieut.-General Sir Francis Toker, While Memory Serves (London: Cassell and Company, Ltd, 1950), p. 68.

<sup>23</sup> See Corr, op.cit., pp. 92, 95-98, 135; and Farwell, op.cit., p. 333.

<sup>24</sup> Various estimates put the contracted INA at 8,000 to 12,000 men. See Corr, op.cit., p. 139; Cornell, op.cit., p. 796; and Fay, op.cit., pp. 526-527.

<sup>25</sup> Corr, op.cit., pp. 49-64, 139.

energized by the April 1943 announcement that the nationalist hero Subhas Chandra Bose would be coming from Germany to lead the fight for *swaraj*.<sup>26</sup> Upon his 2 July arrival in Singapore, Bose proclaimed a Provisional Government of Free India with himself as Head of State, Prime Minister, Minister of War, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Supreme Commander, and declared war on the United States and Britain.<sup>27</sup> "The time has come", he said,

when I can tell the whole world...as to how it is proposed to bring about the national liberation. Indians outside India, particularly in east Asia, are going to organise a fighting force which will be powerful enough to attack the British Army in India. When we do so, a revolution will break out, not only among the civil population at home, but also among the Indian Army which is now standing under the British flag. When the British government is thus attacked from both sides—from inside Indian and from outside—it will collapse, and the Indian people will then regain their liberty.<sup>28</sup>

Bose's reputation and charisma led around 10,000 Indian POWs to rejoin their comrades in a revitalized INA now renamed the *Azad Hind Fauj*, or Free India Army (FIA). From throughout Southeast Asia, 20,000 Indian civilians also enlisted. Their common salute was *Jai Hind* (Victory, or Glory to India) and the FIA battle cry *Chalo Delhi* (On to Delhi).<sup>29</sup>

Like Mohan Singh and his INA, Bose's dream of making the FIA into a full-fledged fighting force of 3,000,000 men the equal of the Indian Army was checked by the Japanese. Although officially recognizing the FIA as an allied army (and the Provisional Government of Free India as a full partner), they agreed only to lightly arm about three-quarters of its 40,000 personnel. Similarly, whereas Bose wanted the FIA to act as

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<sup>26</sup> See Bose, *op.cit.*, p. 213; and Corr, *op.cit.*, pp. 91, 148-149.

<sup>27</sup> See Brecher, *Nehru*, p. 306; and Bose, *op.cit.*, p. 215.

<sup>28</sup> From a speech at a mass rally in Singapore, 9 July 1943, as used in Bose, *op.cit.*, p. 163.

<sup>29</sup> See Mason, *op.cit.*, p. 571; Connell, *op.cit.*, p. 797; Corr, *op.cit.*, p. 148; and Fay, *op.cit.*, pp. 525-526.

the vanguard in the Japanese Army's forthcoming Imphal campaign, his hosts agreed only to accept small groups of men seconded to various formations for propaganda and espionage functions, and not to split the FIA's most potent force, the 3,000-strong 1st Guerilla Regiment, into units of less than battalion size. Although a FIA unit briefly took Indian soil during the Japanese Army's Arakan operation,<sup>30</sup> the Imphal campaign proved disastrous.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, Bose's belief that a British-led Indian Army personnel would not only desist from firing upon their countrymen in the FIA but throw their lot in with the national force was proved false. Although an intelligence/reconnaissance unit under FIA Major L.S. Misra subverted a picket of the ISF Gwailor Lancers on 4 February 1944, no regular Indian Army troops switched allegiance during the Imphal offensive.<sup>32</sup>

The opportunity for the FIA to make a difference as an Axis fighting force had passed long before the Imphal campaign. Now, the Allied counter-offensive was in full swing and the Japanese were pressed to help themselves, much less the FIA. While some FIA units continued to fight, the battle now was for the defence of Burma and not the liberation of India; eventually, most quit the field, were captured or surrendered.<sup>33</sup> Those that remained lost their leader when Bose, while

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<sup>30</sup> See Corr, op.cit., pp. 159-160. The Japanese had previously transferred the Andaman and Nicobar Islands to the Provisional Government of *Azad Hind*. These reverted to the British at the end of WWII. See Bose, op.cit., pp. 212, 220-221; and Palta, op.cit., p. 90.

<sup>31</sup> Of the 6,000 FIA men involved, 400 were killed, 1,500 died of disease and starvation, 715 deserted or went missing in action, and 800 surrendered. Of the 2,600 who returned, 2,000 had to be hospitalized. See A.J. Barker, The March on Delhi as used in Corr, op.cit., pp. 163; and Mason, op.cit., p. 517.

<sup>32</sup> Misra had been a captain in the Indian Army's 5/17th Dogra Regiment. See Corr, op.cit., p. 159; Fay, op.cit., pp. 292-296; and Mason, op.cit., p. 513.

<sup>33</sup> According to the British, in WWII the INA and FIA combined suffered

trying to reach the Soviet Union from where he planned to carry on the struggle against the imperialist Raj, died of burns suffered during the Taipei stopover on 17 August 1945.<sup>34</sup>

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#### II.A.1. Reasons for Joining: Jawans

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Indian Army jawans joined the various Indian national armies for an assortment of reasons. FIL recruiters found that while some Indian troops expressed anti-British sentiments after their British officers had been taken away, the vast majority were unaware of their potential propaganda value to the nationalist struggle. Not until Bose ordered that the men be cut off from those NCOs championing the military discipline of loyalty did many consider his argument that to join the Legion was to fight as patriots rather than remain as captive British mercenaries. Nonetheless, the FIL's most effective recruiting method was promises of "more money, more food, Red Cross parcels and access to women".<sup>35</sup> The *Centro Militare India* may be assumed to have followed the same pattern in recruiting volunteer rank-and-file POWs.

Unlike their counterparts held by the European Axis powers, many of the jawans captured by the Japanese were recent wartime recruits, unused to combat and bewildered by their sudden change of circumstances. Indian Army Lieut.-General Sir Francis Tuker thought these men

had ceased to believe in these people [the British] or in their capacity to win the war. The battlefield and victory had receded from them; they were alone with the Japanese conqueror. They had joined him, not willingly but because there was no one else and

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715 killed, 1500 dead from disease or starvation, 2,000 escapees to Siam, 3,000 surrendered or deserted, and 9,000 captured. See Connell, op.cit., p. 797.

<sup>34</sup> See Bose, op.cit., pp. 176-177; Corr, op.cit., pp. 170; and Fay, op.cit., pp. 376-385.

<sup>35</sup> Bose, op.cit., pp. 186-187.

would be no one else they could join and, with him, perhaps they would once more see their homes.<sup>36</sup>

Though never one himself, Lieut.-General Verma describes how many Indian POWs had also seen or heard first-hand accounts of

Cpts. [K.P.] Dhargalkar and [H.] Badhwar...beaten up and hung up in cages for weeks on end because they would not cooperate. Capt. Ghanshayam Singh...was taken out blindfolded, with hands tied behind his back, and ordered to assume the position for beheading...Three times in a few days he was put through this ordeal, but refused to give in.<sup>37</sup>

Many jawans therefore enlisted in the INA/FIA as a last resort and/or to avoid the cruelty of their Japanese captors.

Most Indian rank-and-file POWs, however, simply enlisted in the INA/FIA if and when their officers did. As described above, though jawans took an oath of loyalty to the King-Emperor upon joining the Indian Army, their real trust extended only to their immediate outfit and its officers. After their British officers had been separated from them, the rank-and-file relied on the example of their Indian officers when deciding whether or not to enlist in the INA/FIA. As a result, several units--such as 1/14th Punjab and the Garhwali Regiment--went over virtually *en bloc*;<sup>38</sup> the men replacing their oath to the King-Emperor with one sworn to the INA of General Singh.

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## II.A.2. Reasons for Joining: Commissioned Indian Officers

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<sup>36</sup> Taker, *op.cit.*, p. 57.

<sup>37</sup> Verma, *To Serve with Honour*, p. 45. Captains K.P. Dhargalkar and H. Badhwar were both KCIOs. I assume that Captain Ghanshayam Singh was an ICO. See Ghosh, *op.cit.*, p. 63.

<sup>38</sup> This was not always the case; while all three ICOs of the 2/10th Baluch Regiment--Captain Prem Kumar Sahgal, Captain Burhan ud-Din and Captain?/Major? K.P. Thimayya--switched sides, the men did not. See Corr, *op.cit.*, pp. 121-122; Fay, *op.cit.*, p. 454; and Ghosh, *op.cit.*, p. 60.

Commissioned Indian officer POWs needed more convincing to switch allegiances. Neither Captain Dhargalkar nor Captain Badhwar (nor Captain Ghanshayam Singh?) succumbed to Japanese pressure to join the INA.<sup>39</sup>

Initially, many commissioned officers were unconvinced of Mohan Singh's suitability as an army commander. Captain Shah Nawaz, also of the 1/14th Punjab Regiment, stated he had known Singh for 10 years and

with all due regards...he had always been a very efficient, but very average officer...among the Indian prisoners of war there were some very senior and brilliant officers like [Lieut.-] Col. [N.S.] Gill and [Lieut.-] Col. [J.K.] Bhonsle with at least 15 to 20 years service in the army, whereas Capt. Mohan Singh had only 8 to 9 years' service.<sup>40</sup>

Finally, having seen the harsh treatment meted out to Allied soldiers and civilians in Malaya before their own capture, Indian officer POWs were suspicious of Japanese intentions, both towards the INA and India.

A variety of factors eventually combined to push Indian commissioned officers into joining the INA and then FIA. Singh won over his sceptics by replacing Indian officers' long-standing grievances with the Indian Army's racial discrimination, slow pace of Indianization, and differentiation of pay and allowances between a over-complex hierarchy of officers<sup>41</sup> with non-communal practices (described above), one class of officer, one scale of pay, and a liberal promotion policy. A "very

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<sup>39</sup> Ghosh, op.cit., p. 63.

<sup>40</sup> Moti Ram, ed., Two Historic Trials in Red Fort An Authentic Account of the Trial of Captain Shah Nawaz Khan, Captain P.K. Sahgal and Lt. G.S. Dhillon and the Trial by a European Military Commission of Emperor Bahadur Sha [sic] (n.p.: Moti Ram, n.d.), p. 105. 4/19th Hyderabad Regiment Lieut.-Colonel N.S. Gill and 5/5th Mahratta Regiment Lieut.-Colonel J.K. (or J.R.) Bhonsle were KCIOs. See Connell, op.cit., p. 800; Corr, op.cit., pp. 103-104, 139; Ghosh, op.cit., p. 63; and Toker, op.cit., p. 560.

<sup>41</sup> In WWII, there were KCOs, KCIOs, ICOs, British and Indian ECOs, VCOs, ISF Officers, Warrant Officers (WOs; introduced as replacements for VCOs, they were withdrawn by the end of the war) and NCOs. See Praval, op.cit., p. 20; and Thorat, op.cit., p. 40.

large number",<sup>42</sup> of officers switched allegiances to protect their men—and themselves—from Japanese tortures. "All my people", said Major Rawat, "preferred to be in the INA than to fall into the hands of [the] Japanese".<sup>43</sup> The scope and suddenness of Japanese victories and the paucity of British-led forces left to defend the subcontinent led many officers to enlist in the INA/FIA to help protect Indian civilians from the invasion they believed was imminent. Any remaining reluctance to break their oath ended after officers learned of nationalist calls to Quit India. "I joined the I.N.A. from purely patriotic motives", said Captain P.K. Sahgal, "I wanted freedom for my motherland and was ready to shed blood for it".<sup>44</sup>

After the removal of British officers, there had remained only about 250 Indian officers—KCIOs, ICOs, Indian ECOs, VCOs and those seconded from the ISF—among the 55,000 Indian POWs at Singapore. Approximately 150 of these officers eventually enlisted with the INA and/or FIA (along with a large number of IMS officers, many of whom joined so as to care for the men). The vast majority consisted of VCOs who, because of the great shortage of experienced officers in the INA and FIA, were promoted to fill positions normally held by commissioned officers (both the INA and FIA then abolished this intermediate class of officers). These armies' remaining staff and higher command positions were then filled by a "handful" of KCIO majors and lieutenant colonels and "score" of ICO and Indian ECO lieutenants and captains. ISF officers also accounted for

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<sup>42</sup> Ghosh, *op.cit.*, p. 69.

<sup>43</sup> From the statement of [Indian Army Garhwali Regiment ICO] Major Rawat before the Defence Counsel of the first I.N.A. court martial, I.N.A. Defence Papers, as used in *ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>44</sup> Ram, *op.cit.*, p. 115.



a number of commissioned officers. Fifteen captured commissioned Indian officers who did not switch allegiance remained POWs for the duration.<sup>45</sup>

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## II.B. Courts-Martial

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After the surrender of the Axis powers, the Government of India had to decide what to do with the Indian military personnel who had joined the various Indian national armies. Although all were guilty of "mutiny, desertion and waging war against the King-Emperor" for which the Indian Penal Code prescribed the death penalty, the authorities could hardly execute tens of thousands of men.<sup>46</sup> Yet the steadfastness of the almost equal number of Indian military personnel who "took unflinchingly the road of hardship, privation, humiliation, torture and death rather than betray the standards of their own honour and loyalty"<sup>47</sup> had to be shown to be respected.<sup>48</sup> "How can we", asked General O'Connor in a question

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<sup>45</sup> See Cohen, op.cit., p. 155; Fay, op.cit., pp. 81, 140, 208-209; and Ghosh, op.cit., p. 59.

<sup>46</sup> The huge numbers of Indian national armies' personnel who surrendered and/or were captured before the end of WWII dissuaded the Indian Army from giving them the maximum punishment. Nonetheless, 30 such men, captured in battle or trying to enter India by parachute or submarine during the war were court-martialled, and nine, found guilty of espionage or sabotage activities, were executed. See Connell, op.cit., p. 797; Corr, op.cit., p. 190; Mason, op.cit., p. 519; and P. Mason, *A Shaft of Sunlight: Memories of a Varied Life* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1978), p. 192.

<sup>47</sup> Connell, op.cit., p. 794.

<sup>48</sup> According to Viceroy Wavell, the 25% casualty rate for Indian POWs was almost four times that of Indian national armies' personnel. The figures are based on a Wavell address in Calcutta: "The 45,000 Indian prisoners of war [held throughout Southeast Asia] who stood firm are estimated to have lost about 11,000 or one quarter of their numbers, from disease, starvation and murder; the 20,000 who went over to our enemy's side lost only 1,500 or 7½ percent". While the figures may be contested the point of the argument is obvious. Note that fully 11,000 of the 15,000 Indian POWs in the Western Theatre did not join the IIL. See Bose, op.cit., p. 187; and Connell, op.cit., p. 794; Farwell, op.cit., p. 335; Fay, op.cit., pp. 525-526; and Taker, op.cit., p. 564.

pertinent to both the British-led and future independent Indian armed forces, "expect to keep loyalty if we don't condemn disloyalty?"<sup>49</sup>

In the end, the various Indian national armies' personnel were divided into three categories depending on their degree of guilt:

The White were those who joined the I.N.A. but whose conduct thereafter was such as to clear them of any act of disloyalty beyond the simple fact of joining that army; the Grey were lukewarm members of the I.N.A. who had done enough to display disloyalty; the Black were those who had taken an active and evil part on the side of the Japanese [i.e., the leaders and those who had committed atrocities].<sup>50</sup>

While the 3,880 Whites were reinstated in the Indian Army without loss of seniority, and the 13,211 Greys discharged with the loss of pay and allowances due during their period of captivity but with the retention of their pension, the 6,177 Blacks were scheduled for courts-martial.<sup>51</sup>

(In a reflection of the British authorities' high ideal of military loyalty, the Indian Indian Army personnel who refused to join the Indian national armies were never awarded special recognition.)

Although nationalist politicians and the Indian press initially accepted the above punishments as fair on enemy collaborators,<sup>52</sup> the Indian public soon perceived Indian national armies' personnel to be patriots.<sup>53</sup> Numerous public relations' blunders during the first post-war courts-martial of three designated Blacks--(Indian Army Captain) INA/FIA division commander Major-General Shah Nawaz and two of his battalion commanders, (Captain) Lieut.-Colonel Prem Kumar Sahgal and (Lieutenant) Lieut.-Colonel Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon--at the Red Fort only

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<sup>49</sup> As used in Connell, op.cit., p. 805.

<sup>50</sup> Toker, op.cit., p. 70.

<sup>51</sup> Farwell, op.cit., pp. 339-340.

<sup>52</sup> See Mason, A Matter of Honour, p. 521, and A Shaft of Sunlight, p. 193; and Toker, op.cit., p. 67.

<sup>53</sup> See Connell, op.cit., pp. 813, 817-819, 945; and Kaul, op.cit., pp. 94-95.

further increased public sympathy for Indian national armies' personnel.<sup>54</sup>

The public's change of attitude quickly altered the behaviour of Indian politicians—especially as the Red Fort courts-martial ran concurrently with post-war elections to the provincial and legislative assemblies. While Congress had opposed the Indian national armies during wartime,<sup>55</sup> and notwithstanding Nehru's protest that "there was no desire or even thought of exploiting the INA issue for political purposes",<sup>56</sup> the party now provided the "Red Fort Three" with a high-powered defence team led by Bhulabhbhai Desai and including Nehru.<sup>57</sup> Similarly, whereas the Muslim League had opposed the Indian national armies on the basis that the indiscipline necessary to their recruitment efforts undermined

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<sup>54</sup> Nawaz had been an Indian Army 1/14th Punjab Regiment ICO captain (and former winner of the Sir Pratap Memorial Prize for best IMA cadet), Sahgal a 2/10th Baluch Regiment ICO captain and Dhillon a 1/14th Punjab Regiment ICO lieutenant. Besides the charge of waging war against the King-Emperor, Khan was accused of abetment in the murder of three comrades, Dhillon of four counts of murder and Sahgal of abetting the four murders. All of these charges, however, stemmed from the officers' carrying out, or passing on, the orders of their superiors according INA/FIA procedures. (The authorities' first choice to face a post-war court-martial, [Indian Army 2/10th Baluch Regiment ICO Captain] INA/FIA Lieut.-Colonel Burhan ud-Din, was charged with arbitrarily ordering two men attempting to desert "to be hung up by their arms and flogged by a whole battalion" resulting in the death of one but his trial was postponed on a late technicality. He was eventually sentenced to seven years rigorous imprisonment.) Selecting a Muslim, Hindu and Sikh defendant, respectively, to show religious impartiality only served to unify Indians of all faiths behind the defendants. Picking Delhi's Red Fort—the historical seat of Mughul rule and the prize of the mutineers of 1857—as the courts-martial site was seen as a deliberate provocation to nationalist sensibilities. Finally, opening the trial to the public ended any hopes of a non-contentious resolution. See Connell, op.cit., pp. 800, 813, 817, 855; Farwell, op.cit., p. 341; Mason, A Matter of Honour, pp. 520-521; Palta, op.cit., p. 67; Ram, op.cit.; M. Singh, op.cit., p. 54; and Taker, op.cit., pp. 560-561.

<sup>55</sup> See Akbar, op.cit., p. 339; and Connell, op.cit., p. 798.

<sup>56</sup> See Connell, op.cit., pp. 817-819. The Red Fort trial began in November 1945 and ended in February 1946; the elections were held in January 1946.

<sup>57</sup> Brecher, Nehru, p. 307.

the League's bargaining position as the self-styled representative of the Indian Army's large number of Muslims, it too stepped in on the defendants' side.<sup>58</sup> Although voicing reservations about the FIA's size, efficiency and ill-treatment of the Burmese, leading Socialist Jayaprakash Narayan also supported Bose and the Indian national armies for their patriotic motivation.<sup>59</sup> Even the CPI modified its wartime shunning of Bose as fascism's ally by admitting that his forces had had some positive influence on the struggle for *swaraj*.<sup>60</sup>

At the Red Fort courts-martial, Bhulabhbhai Desai countered the prosecution's charge that the accused had broken their oath to the King-Emperor by pointing to higher motives: "Unless you sell your soul...how can you ever say, when you are fighting to liberate your country, that there is some other allegiance which prevents you from doing so? If that were so, there would be nothing but permanent slavery".<sup>61</sup> Moreover, added Nehru, the Indian national armies had not fought for fascism; "their dominating motive was love for India's freedom".<sup>62</sup>

Although C-in-C Auchinlek understood the patriotic nature of the Indian national armies' "disloyalty", he had to measure any leniency towards the Red Fort Three against its effect on the military.<sup>63</sup> Many

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<sup>58</sup> See Akbar, *op.cit.*, pp. 321-322; Bose, *op.cit.*, p. 246, pp. 261-262; Cohen, *op.cit.*, pp. 157-158; and P. Ziegler, *Mountbatten*, Pbk. ed. (1985, New York: Perennial Library Harper & Row, 1986), p. 308.

<sup>59</sup> Cohen, *op.cit.*, p. 158.

<sup>60</sup> Apparently, the CPI played a "double-game" of publicly attacking Bose while privately co-operating with him in order to keep informed on the movements of the fascist powers. See Bose, *op.cit.*, pp. 177-181; and Cohen, *op.cit.*, p. 157.

<sup>61</sup> As used in F. Moraes, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956), p. 312.

<sup>62</sup> From J.S. Bright, *The Great Nehrus*, p. 115 as used in Brecher, *Nehru*, p. 306.

<sup>63</sup> For Auchinlek, the "overriding object is to maintain the stability, reliability and efficiency of the Indian Army so that it may remain in the future a trustworthy weapon in the defence of India and...the

British officers agreed with Lieut.-General Toker's belief that jawans, NCOs and VCOs were "in the main set against the three accused...[as] untrue to the man whose salt you ate".<sup>64</sup> Auchinlek, however, thought these men perceived "the whole episode [of the Indian national armies]...unpleasant and discreditable to them as a class and to the Army as a whole, and would wish it forgotten and decently buried as soon as possible".<sup>65</sup> Moreover, he recognized that the future cohesiveness and effectiveness of the Indian armed forces depended not on British officers nor the rank-and-file, but on those Indians who by the end of WWII formed the majority of the Indian Army's commissioned officer corps. For Auchinlek, *"Every Indian commissioned officer is a Nationalist and rightly so, provided he hopes to attain independence for India by constitutional means...their feelings are much the same as those of the public at large"*. [My italics.]<sup>66</sup> And the public saw the men of the Indian national armies as patriots.

Public sympathy, nationalist defence arguments, and the perceived pro-swaraj sentiments of commissioned Indian officers effectively guaranteed a compromise punishment of the Red Fort Three. All were found guilty of waging war against the King-Emperor (and INA/FIA Major-General Khan of the additional charge of abetment to murder), cashiered, ordered to forfeit all pay and allowances, and sentenced to transportation for life. While confirming the guilty verdicts and other punishments, C-in-C

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Commonwealth as a whole". See Connell, op.cit., p. 949.

<sup>64</sup> Toker, op.cit., p. 53. See also pp. 56-57, 562; and Connell, op.cit., pp. 794-795, 803-805.

<sup>65</sup> See Connell op.cit., pp. 813, 946.

<sup>66</sup> See Connell *Auchinlek*, pp. 813, 946. Yet many Indian Indian Army personnel who refused to break their oath and thus remained in Axis POW camps for the duration of the war felt Indian national armies' personnel should not be shown any leniency. See Cohen, op.cit., pp. 156-157.

Auchinlek freed the three by remitting the transportation order. He appears to have had little choice; later describing how the majority of commissioned Indian officers "are sure that *any attempt to enforce the sentence [of transportation] would have led to chaos in the country at large and probably to mutiny and dissension in the Army culminating in its dissolution, probably on communal lines*". [My italics.]<sup>67</sup>

Fears of a national and army uprising convinced the military authorities to court-martial only those Indian national armies' personnel suspected of atrocities and to commute any death sentences to rigorous imprisonment. Only 15 such men—two commissioned officers, four VCOs and nine other ranks—were tried and sentenced before C-in-C Auchinlek ended the operation altogether.<sup>68</sup> Though he spent six months in British custody (after two years and eleven months under Japanese arrest), and came up before a Court of Inquiry, INA General Mohan Singh himself never faced a court-martial.<sup>69</sup>

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## II.B.1. KCIOs

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Were KCIOs, like C-in-C Auchinlek, willing to prescribe leniency for the men joining the FIL, *Centro Militare India*, INA and FIA? Or were they like the majority of the Indian Army's British officers in demanding the full punishment of death for traitors? The recorded experiences of the KCIOs used above show these officers most circumspect in revealing their opinions of the Indian national armies. In the

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<sup>67</sup> See Connell, op.cit., pp. 813, 946.

<sup>68</sup> See Connell, op.cit., pp. 813, 817, 855; Fay, op.cit., pp. 106, 454-455, 461, 481-482, 497-498; M. Singh, op.cit., pp. 54, 58-59; and Taker, op.cit., p. 561.

<sup>69</sup> Singh was eventually freed on 4 May 1946 without giving his signature. See Corr, op.cit., p. 138; and M. Singh, op.cit., pp. 13, 31, 88-91.

respective (auto)biographies of President Khan, Generals Cariappa and Chaudhuri, and Ambassador Baig there are no more than passing references to these forces despite, in the respective cases of the first two, personal involvement in the battle theatres in which the national armies were active.<sup>70</sup> The remaining KCIOs—General Thimayya, Lieut.-Generals Kaul, Thorat and Verma—approach the issue from very different angles.

Thimayya's main concern was the pull of opposite loyalties created by the mere existence of the Indian national armies. In hindsight, Thimayya believes officers joined these forces partly to protect their men from Japanese cruelty. In 1942, however, the first rumours told of "many Indian P.O.W.s...[were] joining the Japanese in order to help drive the British out of the subcontinent".<sup>71</sup> "It was difficult", he continues, "for us [Indian officers]...to view this action as anything but patriotic...If we accepted the I.N.A. men as patriotic, however, then we who served with the British must be traitors".<sup>72</sup> Yet any sympathy which commissioned Indian officers may have had for the Indian

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<sup>70</sup> While Khan saw action in the Burma Campaign, he did not come up against any Indian national forces. He notes only that some officers of his old battalion, the 1/14th Punjab, "joined the Indian National Army, a Japanese-inspired force". Chaudhuri, also in Burma and usually expansive on matters concerning the professionalism of the Indian Army, offers no comment on the Indian national armies. Although Baig resigned from the army in 1930, he describes meeting Mrs. Ammu Swaminadhan whose daughter Laxmi (aka Lakshmi) "won great renown as the Commander of the [FIA's] Ranee of Jhansi Brigade" (see text below), and briefly describes the career of Bose's ADC, Abid Safrani. Cariappa's biographer mentions but does not elaborate on Cariappa's service as one of the Red Fort courts-martial "Presidents". See Baig, In Different Saddles, pp. 78-79, 102; Chaudhuri, General J.N. Chaudhuri; Muthanna, op.cit., p. 33; and Khan, Friends Not Masters, pp. 13-14.

<sup>71</sup> Evans, op.cit., p. 180.

<sup>72</sup> ibid., pp. 180-181. Knowing that the older of his two brothers in the Indian Army, Captain?/Major? K.P. Thimayya (called up from the Reserve Officers Training Corps to 2/10th Baluch Regiment), had joined the INA exacerbated Thimayya's inner conflict. See Evans, op.cit., pp. 173-174, 181, 226; Fay, op.cit., p. 106; Muthanna, op.cit., p. 39; and Palta, op.cit., p. 65.

national armies soon was tempered by a growing scepticism about Japan's future plans for the subcontinent. Better to stick with the ruler they knew, at least until the war was over.<sup>73</sup>

Professional and personal loyalties also came to the fore for Thimayya: "to sign with the British, to learn from them, and then to go over to the enemy was reprehensible; I doubt if I could have done it".<sup>74</sup> When the authorities demanded commissioned Indian officers sign a paper attesting that they were "not in sympathy with the Congress Party and would support the British with force",<sup>75</sup> Thimayya convinced his "incensed"<sup>76</sup> comrades to acquiesce. He echoed Motilal Nehru's advice to resist nationalist-motivated temptations to resign:

Refusing to sign it would have had little political significance. But signing the paper, carrying on with our duties, and supporting the British by force meant that we could learn the proper use of force. Who else could teach us? And when the time came to fight for our country, we would be able to fight effectively.<sup>77</sup>

A scepticism of Japanese aims, professional and personal loyalties, and concern for independent India's fighting effectiveness combined to convince Thimayya and other KCIOs to remain loyal to the Raj.

As two of the battalion commanders in the famous "All-Indian Brigade" operating in the Arakan,<sup>78</sup> Thimayya and Thorat had to deal with the possibility of fighting fellow Indians in Bose's national army. Thimayya recalls how FIA propaganda efforts—tapping telephone lines, cutting in on radio communications—came to nought since those targeted

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<sup>73</sup> Evans, op.cit., pp. 180-181.

<sup>74</sup> ibid., p. 181.

<sup>75</sup> ibid., p. 181.

<sup>76</sup> ibid., p. 181.

<sup>77</sup> ibid., p. 181.

<sup>78</sup> See Evans, op.cit., pp. 190-228; and Thorat, op.cit., pp. 49-51, 53-80.



were Allied officers who, knowing more than the enemy about the war situation, could shrug off such actions. When, however, intelligence reports warned him that the Japanese were set to deploy FIA combat forces against his battalion, Thimayya became worried that, at the least, his men would be demoralized. Unsure of whether to warn his men, he said nothing in the hope that the situation would not arise. It did not, and Thimayya was spared having to lead his men against fellow Indians.<sup>79</sup> Thorat just mentions his plan to say that he was a FIA man escaping from Indian Army captivity if caught by the enemy while out on a two-man reconnaissance patrol.<sup>80</sup>

Thorat does, however, offer an apology for those joining the Indian national armies. Saddened that his former regiment, the 1/14th Punjab, went over to the INA *en masse*, Thorat points out that

the officers and men whose loyalty had failed or quailed [sic] under the Japanese heel...and what they did or did not do, had no connection with their fine record of duty in the Malayan campaign until it was lost. Prior to their capture 1/14 Punjab had lost three officers, five VCOs and one hundred and thirty-eight men killed in action. Thereafter a further one hundred and twenty men died in captivity.<sup>81</sup>

For Thorat, the men of the 1/14th Punjab Regiment may be partly excused their switch of allegiance after having been reduced to a state of utter bewilderment by the time of their surrender.

Verma, who also saw action in the Eastern Theatre, has little sympathy for those enlisting in the various Indian national armies and none for the politicians defending the Red Fort Three. Although Verma allows that many who broke their oath might have done so as a result of

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<sup>79</sup> Evans, *op.cit.*, p. 205.

<sup>80</sup> Thorat, *op.cit.*, p. 56.

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*, p. 84. Thorat also mentions that both Mohan Singh and Shah Nawaz of the 1/14 Punjab Regiment joined the INA. See *ibid.*, p. 39.

being told of the imminent defeat of the British worldwide, while "perhaps some"<sup>2</sup> were motivated by patriotism, "by and large the majority gave in to avoid harsh treatment and to have an easier, more comfortable life".<sup>3</sup> He backs this up by pointing out the discrepancy between the words and deeds of the national armies:

If they had put up even one good fight one would have readily agreed to their bona fides. But at the slightest opportunity they surrendered...Yet whilst strutting about Rangoon, Bangkok and other places they lived a life of ease with plenty of money, wine, women and song. The Indian trading community in these towns was bitter about the money, valuables and jewellery, etc., these heroes had "liberated" from them.<sup>4</sup>

Verma also believes staging the courts-martial of Khan, Sahgal and Dhillon at so public a venue as the Red Fort was a mistake:

The atmosphere at the time was such that every little episode was grabbed to get political mileage out of it. The trial of the I.N.A. "heroes" was exploited to the full and all the national leaders vied with one another to defend them. As a result they were all let off and put on a pedestal.<sup>5</sup>

For Verma, neither the Indian national armies nor their politician defenders emerge with any credit.

In contrast, Kaul believes those joining the Indian national armies were, with some exceptions, true nationalists:

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<sup>2</sup> Verma, op.cit., p. 45.

<sup>3</sup> ibid., p. 45.

<sup>4</sup> ibid., p. 45. Verma's belief in the unprofessionalism of the Indian national armies was confirmed during a postwar encounter with the captured INA/FIA Major-General Bhonsle during which

he handed me a large packet and asked me to keep it for him and return it if he ever got out alive. I agreed to do so and discovered it was wad of new Thai currency notes stapled together. He kept moaning about all the gold and jewellery he had in Bangkok, which the British officers who had captured him had relieved him of...About two years later, when he had become a deputy minister, I returned the packet to him and felt better for having kept my promise.

See ibid., pp. 45-46.

<sup>5</sup> ibid., p. 46.

No Indian worth his salt could ever have any doubt about Bose and his patriotism...[the national forces had] broadcast many messages—with telling effect—accusing us of fighting under a British flag whilst they were laying down their lives under the Indian tricolour and for Indian Independence.”<sup>66</sup>

Kaul stoutly defends the Red Fort Three's switch of allegiance:

It was alleged...that the accused had violated the army oath they had taken. In point of fact, however, they had superseded that oath by the pledge they had taken to fight for the liberty of their country a cause which transcends all other considerations in life. It was alleged they had fought against their King. How could the British King, a foreigner, who was keeping their country enslaved, be their King? In fact, they were patriotic men, like De Gaulle and others who had led open revolt for freedom in Europe and elsewhere.”<sup>67</sup>

Kaul also discounts those like C-in-C Auchinleck and "some senior Indian officers"<sup>68</sup> who thought that freeing designated Indian national armies' Blacks (see below) would damage Indian Army discipline. He advised Nehru

that the British anticipation was wrong and that if the INA personnel under trial then, who had fought under an Indian flag, were released, it would in fact be generally welcomed. As for those Indians who echoed British sentiments, I said they were merely their Master's Voice and should be ignored.”<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Kaul, *The Untold Story*, p. 72.

<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*, p. 73. To the authorities' displeasure, Kaul once attended the Red Fort trial. He claims to have helped in the defence of the Red Fort Three by acceding to Bhulabhai Desai's request

to try and procure...a document, in possession of the British Intelligence authorities, which could prove valuable to the defence of these men. I must to the credit of Colonel Rudra, a senior Indian officer, at the Army Headquarters then, that he assisted me to extract this paper, for a few hours, to read, from the right quarters by great ingenuity. I was thus able to convey its contents to Bulabhai Desai, as promised.

Kaul also describes helping Colonel M.S. Himmatsinhji, a newly nominated member representing the military in the Legislative Assembly, to draft a speech on the Indian national armies. See *ibid.* pp. 74-75.

<sup>68</sup> *ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>69</sup> *ibid.*, p. 74. Kaul writes that Nehru had "been visibly moved" to hear his account in late 1945 of FIA efforts in Burma and the Arakan. See *ibid.*, pp. 70-71.

As with his strongly pro-independence sentiments and activities described earlier, Kaul's views on the Indian national armies appear indistinguishable from those of nationalist politicians.

The differences in the four above officers' respective approaches to the Indian national armies are reflected in the actions of the "about...half a dozen"<sup>90</sup> KCIOs surrendering in Singapore. As described above, two of these six, Captain Dhargalkar and Captain Badhwar, refused to switch allegiances. The four who did were hardly fervent converts. Captain Gurdip Singh Dhillon, for example, enlisted in the INA with the express—and later realized—purpose of getting closer to the front lines from where he could re-defect to the Indian Army.<sup>91</sup> Major N.S. Bhagat refused to join the INA as he "did not trust the Japanese at all". Though he later enlisted in the FIA to escape the deprivations of captive life in Borneo and make himself "more useful in resisting the Japanese" (he rose to command the FIA's second division), his insistence on opposing the Japanese whenever possible pushed Bose to dismiss him in 1944 for "insubordination and disloyalty".<sup>92</sup> Lieut.-Colonel Nirranjan Singh Gill, the highest-ranking Indian officer POW, enlisted in the INA after "just drifting along":<sup>93</sup>

I was puzzled and confused, unprepared to meet the circumstances that suddenly faced me. On the one hand there was the attraction of doing something for one's country. And my attachment to the

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<sup>90</sup> Ghosh, op.cit., p. 63.

<sup>91</sup> The information Dhillon gained as head of an INA infiltration unit and later revealed to the British is thought to have compromised the force's entire covert infiltration programme. See Cohen, op.cit., p. 153; Corr, op.cit., p. 131; Thorat, op.cit., p. 20; and Taker, op.cit., p. 561.

<sup>92</sup> From [FIA] Col. Bhagat's statement to the defence Counsel of the first I.N.A. court martial, I.N.A. Defence papers, as used in Ghosh, op.cit., p. 63.

<sup>93</sup> As used in Corr, op.cit., p. 103. Gill was the highest-ranking combat officer (there were some IMS Indian officer POWs of higher rank). See ibid., p. 103.

British was not strong enough to prevent me trying. On the other hand all my life had been spent in a pro-British atmosphere, the effects of which still remain with me. I could not suddenly get away from it and start hating the British as Premier Tojo said we must do...Again, there was the question of safeguarding the lives and interests of the Indian soldiers and civilians...''

Later, Gill testified "that this I.N.A. was not genuine and I could not believe that this will [sic] result in [the] freedom of the country".''

Lieut.-Colonel Rhonsle's motives for joining the INA are unclear.''

KCIOs, then, constituted a far from monolithic bloc on the issue of the Indian national armies. Thimayya concentrates on these forces' effect on Indian officers' loyalties, Thorat looks to post-war reconciliation efforts, Verma unhesitatingly condemns both those switching their allegiances and the politicians defending them after the war, while Kaul commends the motivation of national armies and the efforts to lessen their personnel's punishments. Yet the almost unanimous reluctance of those six KCIOs surrendering at Singapore to switch allegiances points to Thimayya's understanding of the paramountcy of personal and professional loyalties, scepticism of Japanese aims, and patience for the future good of independent India's armed forces as the most widely held view of KCIOs. Certainly, the highly individualistic responses to the national armies of all the officers described above, especially those with the opportunity to join them, suggest the British had little reason to question the loyalty of KCIOs.

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## II.B.2. ICOs and Indian ECOs, or Questionnaire Respondents

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'' As used in Corr, op.cit., p. 103.

'' As used in Ghosh, op.cit., p. 64.

'' Ghosh, op.cit., p. 64.

That the majority of commissioned Indian officers joining the INA/FIA were IOOs and/or Indian ECOs suggests the latter two did not share their KCIO predecessors' general disapproval of the Indian national armies. Lieut.-General Toker saw the loyalty of Indian officers as a function of their respective contact with the British. Thus, while

the older regular [Indian officer] had been to English public schools and had maintained their contact with English ways of life and thought, [and] now held precisely the same [conservative] view as the British officer...those whose sole contact with the British had been with the instructors in the Indian Military Academy in Dehra Dun and who, for racial reasons, had avoided further contact...maintained that the I.N.A. were patriots and much to be praised.<sup>97</sup>

Toker's proof lay in the fact that the 1/14th Punjab, one of the Indian Army's original eight Indianized units which by the time of the British surrender at Singapore was almost fully staffed by commissioned Indian officers, provided the bulk of the INA/FIA's leadership.<sup>98</sup>

Yet what of the thousands of IOOs, Indian ECOs, VOOs and ISF officers in the Indian armed forces who remained loyal to the British throughout WWII? Did they keep their allegiance only because they lacked an opportunity to join the Indian national armies? See Table 4.1. As above, in Table 4.1 respondents are divided into the four groups of "All", "Pre-1945", "Post-1945" and "Unknown" according to their date of joining. KCIO Lieut.-General 92 is omitted. The examination below focuses on the views of the two IOOs and 33 Indian ECOs constituting the "Pre-1945" group of respondents.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Toker, op.cit., p. 64.

<sup>98</sup> INA/FIA officers drawn from 1/14th Punjab include (Indian Army KCIO Captain) Gurdip Singh Dhillon, (IOO Captain) General Mohan Singh, (IOO Captain) Major-General Shah Nawaz (IOO Adjutant GSO 3 Intelligence) Major-General Zaman Kiani (aka Mohammed Ziani Kiani), (Indian ECO Captain) Major Abdul Rashid, and (IOO Lieutenant) Lieut.-Colonel Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon. See above and Palta, op.cit., pp. 65-67; and Toker, op.cit., pp. 52-53, 55.

<sup>99</sup> After excluding KCIO Lieut.-General 92, the "Pre-1945" respondents

TABLE 4.1

During WWII, what was the attitude of Indian officers towards those who joined the Indian national armies?

Respondents	All	Pre-1945	Post-1945	Unknown
	Percent(No.)			
Negative	24.21 (23)	37.14 (13)	17.07 (7)	15.79 (3)
Indifferent	16.84 (16)	22.86 (8)	12.20 (5)	15.79 (3)
Sympathetic	20.00 (19)	20.00 (7)	24.39 (10)	10.53 (2)
Supportive	13.68 (13)	14.29 (5)	14.63 (6)	10.53 (2)
No Answer	25.26 (24)	5.71 (2)	31.71 (13)	47.37 (9)
Total	99.99 (95)	100.00 (35)	100.00 (41)	100.01 (19)

Almost two-fifths (37.14%) of "Pre-1945" respondents feel Indian officers during WWII had a "Negative" attitude towards those who joined the Indian national armies, making this the most popular choice.

"Practically the entire officer class considered the INA as an absolute sham", writes Brigadier 29, since those who switched allegiances did so only because they "could not stand the rigours of life under the Japanese in a PoW camp". Though some respondents, like Major-General 72, believe "the majority of serving officers did not approve of the change of loyalty and abrogation of oath", most cite the PoWs' submission to coercive recruitment methods as their prime failing. Respondents fighting in theatres where the national armies were active saw them as the enemy. "In the Central Burma front", writes Lieut.-General 16,

we came in contact with INA personnel acting as 'jitter parties' or tapping our telephone cables...they were termed JIFFS (Japanese Indian Fifth Columnists). The jitter parties used to fire into our defences to draw our fire and the line tappers sought information from the exchange operator. So we saw them rather in the role of an adversary snooping around. In my experience the INA was not seen as a liberation force.

consist of two ICOs commissioned in 1932 and 1938, respectively, and 33 Indian ECOs commissioned as follows: five in 1940, three in 1941, eight in 1942, seven in 1943, five in 1944, and five in 1945.

During and after the Red Fort courts-martial, neither tales of hardship nor declarations of patriotic motives altered these respondents' minds. "While I sympathised with them at the hard choice they had had to make in those trying conditions of captivity and Japanese brutality", writes Brigadier 70, "I could not, then and now, condone it". "You don't become a patriot at the end of a gun", concludes Colonel 97.

Just over a fifth (22.86%) of "Pre-1945" respondents remember an "Indifferent" attitude towards the Indian national armies. During the war, Indian officers were simply too busy with professional duties to ponder the political issues raised by the national forces' existence. "Servicemen", recalls Air Chief Marshal 1, "just wanted to fight...to prove [to] themselves, their units and their countrymen that Indians could fight as well as the British, Australians or the Japanese..." Afterwards, however, many respondents' eyes were opened by the Red Fort courts-martial. Lieut.-General 49 describes the change:

during the war we did not have sympathy with them—they were shooting at us. Also, we suspected that many had joined the INA to find a life easier than that of a PoW. As time passed we found they were poorly motivated at the soldier's level and tended to desert from the INA to the Indian side at the first opportunity. They never fought well as a cohesive team...[after the war] we individually contributed towards their legal defence. In 1948 many rejoined the army and performed well. There was no stigma but also no credit for INA service.

Lieut.-General 93 was similarly converted. Whereas during the war, he feels Indian officers saw national armies' personnel "as traitors whose loyalty was very flimsy...this attitude started changing and [officers began] showing some sympathy when Pandit Nehru, Bhulabhbhai Desai and other top leaders came to their defence".

A fifth (20.00%) of "Pre-1945" respondents recall a "Sympathetic" attitude towards those who enlisted in the Indian national armies, not



because they agreed with the forces' motives or methods, but because they identified with the predicament of those captured. Lieut.-Colonel 11 "did not believe that a person who took the oath to the English Crown voluntarily would renounce it except by propoganda and reverse motivation". Again, some respondents' attitudes began to change after peace had been secured. Lieut.-General 17, put in charge of rebuilding the Rangoon docks where former national armies' personnel were being used as hard labour, saw these men as "a disciplined body" with "an aura about them that they were fighting for a cause...a cause with which I later began to identify with".<sup>100</sup> For these respondents the Red Fort courts-martial was, in the words of Colonel 79, "exemplary" in its strict prosecution but eventual leniency. "Senior Indian officers", writes Air Chief Marshal 18, "supported the trial of the INA personnel followed by clemency at the highest level of government. Those against whom action was taken were after the trial neither shunned nor rejected by the officer cadres of the armed forces".

Finally, a seventh (14.29%) of "Pre-1945" respondents recall a "Supportive" attitude towards those who joined the Indian national armies. "Heart in heart", says Brigadier 65, "we were all for the officers and jawans who formed the INA, though we remained loyal to the British Army...these hidden feelings did come out openly and this affected the trial". Lieut.-General 10, who saw action in the Burma theatre, adds that

During the war little was known about the INA. However, there was no feeling of hostility towards the INA. In fact we admired them for what they had done...The post-war trials made the INA greater heroes, notwithstanding allegations against some for having maltreated Indian prisoners who had not joined the INA.

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<sup>100</sup> From a follow-up interview with Lieut.-General 17; London, 26 November 1987.

Other officers are unequivocal in their support. "Those Indian officers who were in the Japanese prison [camps]", says Brigadier 55, "and didn't join [the] I.N.A.—[I] didn't like them". "If I had an opportunity", recalls Lieut.-General 10, "I would have joined the INA".

In the end, however, "Pre-1945" respondents disapprove of their comrades who enlisted in the various Indian national armies by almost two-to-one (37.14% "Negative" plus 22.86% "Indifferent" versus 20.00% "Sympathetic" and 14.92% "Supportive"). Even though Indianized units like the 1/14th Punjab could be expected to contain higher concentrations of disgruntled Indian officers prepared to reconsider their ultimate personal and professional responsibilities when circumstances allowed, most ICOs and Indian ECOs agree with the anti-national forces sentiments held by KCIOs. C-in-C Auchinlek need not have been so concerned with commissioned Indian officers equating their own pro-nationalist sentiments with the the necessity of leniently treating the national armies' designated Blacks.

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## II.E. Aftermath

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The question of what to do with former Indian national armies' personnel continued to vex the authorities. The Interim Government, formed on 2 September 1946,<sup>101</sup> met demands that the 15 imprisoned for committing atrocities be freed by referring each case to the Federal Court.<sup>102</sup> After independence on 15 August 1947,<sup>103</sup> the government

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<sup>101</sup> Connell, *op.cit.*, p. 849.

<sup>102</sup> See Connell, *op.cit.*, pp. 857-858 and p. 869-871; S. Gopal, ed., Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru: Volume 1 (Series 2. New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1984), pp. 347-351, 357-358; and Ziegler, *op.cit.*, p. 372.

<sup>103</sup> Collins and Lapierre, Freedom at Midnight, pp. 284-295.

released all national armies' personnel still in prison and offered them reinstatement into the Indian Army at the respective levels at which they had left. (As this meant forfeiting up to three ranks relative to those Indian military personnel who had remained true to their oath, only one man took up this offer.)<sup>104</sup> Yet both Army HQ and the Defence Ministry continued to oppose the "persistent pressure" to reinstate Indian national armies' personnel of all "colour" designations.<sup>105</sup>

This opposition had a sound basis. The third military intervention theory views coups as a result of officers' corporate grievances such as, writes Thompson, a perceived threat to the army's "monopoly...[or] functional claim to existence as the nation-state's principal, legitimate organization of armed force".<sup>106</sup> Might Indian Army officers see the resurrection of FIL, *Centro Militare India*, INA and FIA units as just such a threat? Welch and Smith warn that "a mission that differentiates between service to 'the government' and service to 'the nation' encourages the armed forces to move directly into politics".<sup>107</sup> Bose, Schedai and Singh recruited men into their forces with the "patriotic" argument that the Indian Army was serving the interests of the Raj and not Indians themselves. Might re-admitted Indian national armies' personnel again differentiate between loyalty to a government and loyalty to the nation? In the fourth theory of military intervention, Decalo argues that coups are a result of clientelist motives. With their unique shared experience, might the more committed

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<sup>104</sup> See Cohen, *op.cit.*, p. 157; and Farwell, *op.cit.*, p. 343.

<sup>105</sup> See P.V.R. Rao, India's Defence Policy and Organisation Since Independence, USI National Security Lectures (New Delhi: The United Service Institution of India, 1977), pp. 3-5.

<sup>106</sup> Thompson, The Grievances of Military Coup-Makers, p. 15.

<sup>107</sup> Welch and Smith, Military Role and Rule, pp. 12-13.

Greys and Blacks of the Indian national armies be more ready to find occasion to organize themselves into a cohesive clique(s) than other Indian Army personnel?

Despite his personal sympathies, Prime Minister (PM) Nehru was aware that re-admitting Indian national armies' personnel into the regular army might create problems for civil supremacy-of-rule. At a 1948 meeting, (future) Defence Secretary P.V.R. Rao recalls that

The Prime Minister...patiently listened while we [Rao and senior military officers advised him] that the Indian National Army personnel should not be reinstated and may be compensated otherwise. After a few minutes silence, [the] Prime Minister suddenly observed—these were not his exact words but in effect—"I do not agree with your arguments but I agree that the Indian National Army should not be reinstated. Do you know why? I do not want politics to enter the Services, which will be the result if these men are reinstated. The day politics enters the army, it will be a sad day!"<sup>108</sup>

Nehru could not have articulated better the military's own fears and the Indian national armies soon faded from public consciousness as their Grey and Black rank-and-file returned to village life (and other members found a future in public service).<sup>109</sup>

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## II.F. A Fifth Military Intervention Theory?

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Mohan Singh's INA and Bose's FIA may be argued to fit into a fifth theory of military intervention which uses Marxist analysis to argue that true military professionalism should positively push officers into politics on the side of those societal forces demanding radical social

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<sup>108</sup> Rao, op.cit., pp. 4-5.

<sup>109</sup> In 1974, Mohan Singh and others convinced PM Indira Gandhi to award a state pension to the approximately 16,000 surviving members of the various Indian national armies. See Baig, op.cit., pp. 78-79; Chaudhuri, op.cit., p. 63; Cohen, op.cit., p. 163; Corr, op.cit., pp. 103-104, 139, 184-185, 190; Farwell, op.cit., p. 343; Kaul, The Untold Story, p. 97; Palta, op.cit., p. 91; Taker, op.cit., p. 561; and Verma, op.cit., pp. 45-46.

change.<sup>110</sup> M. Wolpin argues that in developing societies where socio-economic and political inequalities are usually extreme, and where

the repeated failure of attempts to alter highly inegalitarian and exploitative socioeconomic structures in those systems by adopting policies of incremental reform suggests that radical social change and economic nationalism (the defence of national resources) is the most likely route for those who want to 'catch up', even slowly, with the north,<sup>111</sup>

officers should actively support "socially radical and economically nationalistic civilian political movements".<sup>112</sup> Only then will the general socioeconomic welfare and status of the masses from which the military draws its personnel be able to provide the fit, intelligent, educated and highly motivated soldiers and officers capable of maintaining and using ever more sophisticated weaponry. Additionally, while Wolpin advises against officers resorting to the extreme measure of the military coup—since "most well-intentioned radical military regimes...[offer] poor performance"<sup>113</sup>—he does suggest they refuse orders to repress socialist insurrectionary movements, expose themselves to socialist thought and criticisms of the existing regime and, when possible, become members of such revolutionary movements.

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<sup>110</sup> M. Wolpin, "Marx and Radical Militarism in the Developing Nations", Armed Forces and Society 4:2 February 1978, and "Sociopolitical Radicalism and Military Professionalism in the Third World", Comparative Politics 15:2 January 1983.

<sup>111</sup> Wolpin, "Sociopolitical Radicalism and Military Professionalism in the Third World", p. 209.

<sup>112</sup> By this, Wolpin means movements entailing the

redistribution of wealth, income and status as well as the diffusion of previously restricted sociocultural benefits such as medical care, education, unemployment insurance, and so on. The concomitant structural institutional changes involve nationalization, democratization and mass participatory organization.

See *ibid.*, pp. 203, 216.

<sup>113</sup> *ibid.*, p. 215.

Singh's INA and Bose's FIA were socially radical. By banning casteism, creating a non-communal kitchens for the men, a common mess for officers, one officer class and one scale of pay, Singh attempted to unite all the various races and classes of the Indian Army POWs into a liberation army based on "nationalism, social idealism, and equalitarianism".<sup>114</sup> Bose's FIA carried on with these radical reforms; for instance, raising a unit of women soldiers known as the Rani of Jhansi Regiment after the heroine of the 1857 Great Mutiny.<sup>115</sup> Moreover, not only Singh and Bose, but many senior Indian armed forces' commanders and Indian nationalists believed officers joined the Indian national armies expressly to promote revolution on the subcontinent.

It is, however, difficult to envision how armed forces' officers are expected to draw the line between participating in the highly charged political activities described above and executing a coup when they are personally committed to revolutionary change. While some military coup executors do overthrow governments with promises of radical social reform, most are content to justify their actions as straightforward and necessary remedies to readily identifiable problems such as regime corruption, widespread lawlessness in society, and government sloth or inefficiency in instituting modernization. It remains highly unlikely that any traditionally conservative professional military officers would justify their coup in blatantly revolutionary socialist terminology, much less carry out such actions when in power. Short of a successful conquest of the Raj, even the INA and FIA could only provide Indian

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<sup>114</sup> Cohen, *op.cit.*, p. 151.

<sup>115</sup> See Bose, *op.cit.*, p. 209; Corr, *op.cit.*, p. 151; Fay, *op.cit.*, pp. 215-222; and Palta, *op.cit.*, pp. 60, 91-97.

civilian society with an outside (and distant) example of a successful radical reform organization.

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## Conclusion

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While most Indian nationalists demanded the termination of the Raj before participating in Britain's WWII effort, Indian military personnel fought for the King-Emperor all over the globe. IMS Lieut.-General Thapar describes how this stark difference was possible:

My [British] brigadier asked me what my mental reaction and that of the average Indian officer would be if suddenly we found Congressmen bossing over us. As I hesitated a bit, he said he wanted to know the real feelings and did not want a sophisticated answer. *I told him that our loyalty was to the government in power and not to any particular people or party. We had been trained from the very beginning to keep out of politics and have only one loyalty.* [My italics.]<sup>116</sup>

What if there was an alternative claim to governing legitimacy?

The creation of the FIL, *Centro Militare India*, INA and FIA tested the loyalty of the British-led Indian armed forces' Indian men and officers. By defecting to the Indian national armies, argued Mohan Singh and then Subhas Chandra Bose, Indian military personnel would hasten an Axis invasion of the subcontinent and thus *swaraj*. Although some tens of thousands of Indian POWs, including the great majority of Japanese-held commissioned Indian officers, did eventually switch their allegiance, almost as many chose to endure the harsh regime of Axis prison camps.

More importantly, those jawans and commissioned Indian officers on active duty with the British-led Indian armed forces remained loyal to the Raj, believing their allegiance to the government in power and efforts during the war would have to be rewarded by independence.

General Thimayya describes how, after the peace had been won,

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<sup>116</sup> Thapar, *op.cit.*, p. 179.

We Indian officers felt the excitement of great expectations... We knew that we had made a good showing in the war. We no longer lacked confidence. We knew, also, that the British Raj was irrevocably finished. We were impatient for the day when the Indian Army would serve its own country under its own leaders.<sup>117</sup>

The feeling that *swaraj* would not be long in coming buried post-war qualms about those who had joined the various Indian national armies. So long as this "clique" of ostensibly politicized men were not allowed back into the armed forces—and they were not—even commissioned Indian officers could agree with the public and nationalist politicians that such men had been true, if misguided, Indian patriots.

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<sup>117</sup> Evans, *op.cit.*, p. 230.



Civil-Military Relations in British and Independent India, 1918-1962,  
and Coup Prediction Theory

CHAPTER 5

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## CHAPTER 5

### Test Two: the Transfer of Power

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#### Introduction

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After the test of the Indian national armies came the challenges of independence: immediate post-war strikes and mutinies, the division of the armed forces between India and Pakistan, the departure of British military personnel, and immediate actions in Punjab, Junagadh, Hyderabad, and Jammu & Kashmir. Swaraj also saw the transfer of power to an Indian political and administrative elite. This chapter will examine commissioned Indian officers' confidence in their own personal and professional abilities to meet these challenges, and in the capabilities of the new governing elite. Would independence necessitate any changes to the country's established civil-military relationship boundaries?

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#### I. The Armed Forces

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##### I.A. Mutinies and Strikes

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On 18 February 1946, Indian ratings of the RIN Training Ship HMS Talwar began a mutiny which in days encompassed nearly 3,000 sailors on naval ships in Bombay harbour. While its flashpoint was Talwar Commander F.W. King's mendacious denial of having used abusive language towards the ratings, the sailors had long-standing grievances over their food, pay and conditions. The mutiny took on a nationalist character and three days of unprecedented violence swept Bombay as sailors and protesters

shouting "Jai Hind" and "Quit India" fought running battles with British Army troops. Seamen on vessels and in shore installations in Karachi, Madras, Vizagapatam, Calcutta, Cochin, and the Andamans also committed acts of indiscipline.<sup>1</sup>

The ratings' mutiny led other units of the Indian armed forces to vent their own grievances. Indian airmen of RIAF Kohat refused to obey a supposed order to take aerial action against Bombay's naval mutineers, and less serious strikes occurred at Secunderabad and at Delhi's Factory Road Camp and Palam air base. The Indian Army also experienced minor acts of indiscipline.<sup>2</sup>

Yet the British nightmare of a general Indian Army uprising never appeared likely. Some thought the simple jawan had less time for indiscipline than their more educated and politically aware counterparts in the RIN and RIAF.<sup>3</sup> Others, like IMS Lieut.-General Thapar, felt "it was the sense of loyalty to the army on the part of the Indian officers that was keeping the sepoy in check..."<sup>4</sup> Indeed, commissioned Indian officers of all three defence services understood that unchecked

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<sup>1</sup> While there are any number of books which describe the 1946 strikes and mutinies, those used as principle references for this chapter are Akbar, Nehru, p. 369; Bose, The Lost Hero, pp. 262-264; Brecher, Nehru, p. 308; Cohen, The Indian Army, p. 98; Gopal, Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography, Volume I, pp. 311-312; Katari, A Sailor Remembers, p. 45-46; Longer, Red Coats to Olive Green, pp. 248-250; Moraes, Jawaharlal Nehru, pp. 313-315; Royle, The Last Days of the Raj, pp. 126-132; and Toker, While Memory Serves, pp. 80-98.

<sup>2</sup> In Calcutta, two units of Pioneers refused orders and assaulted their officers. In Jabalapur, the men of the Signal Training Centre staged a city-centre protest; in Santa Cruz, Bombay, an infantry battalion vociferously complained of bad food and the over-zealous customs examination to which it had been subjected to on its return from active service. In addition, large numbers of ex-Middle East and Central Mediterranean Forces personnel grumbled about returning to markedly inferior living conditions. See Longer, op.cit., p. 250; Singh, Birth of an Air Force, pp. 218-220; and Toker, op.cit., p. 87, 89, 92-95.

<sup>3</sup> Toker, op.cit., p. 92.

<sup>4</sup> Thapar, The Morale Builders, p. 244.

indiscipline, whatever its cause, endangered the effectiveness and efficiency of their units.<sup>5</sup> That the RIN's Indian Chief Petty and Petty Officers (equivalent to Indian Army VCOs) shared their superiors' feelings may be seen from their refusal to join in the ratings' mutiny.<sup>6</sup> Discipline was also evident in the use of Indian Army units in often bloody actions against mutinous naval personnel in Bombay, Karachi and Calcutta with no breakdown of discipline.<sup>7</sup> As in WWII, Indian officers opposed postwar strikes and mutinies not because they underestimated their men's grievances, but because discipline was—and in an independent subcontinent would be—inviolable if the armed forces' fighting effectiveness was to be maintained.

Most nationalist politicians themselves were unwilling to risk developing the Bombay mutiny into a general revolt against the Raj. The actions of the ratings and their civilian sympathizers, and the reaction of the British authorities occasioned extreme violence anathema to Congress of Nehru and Gandhi. Widening the mutiny would also enhance the power and prestige of those Communists increasingly influential in leading the strikers—unpalatable to both Congress and the Muslim League, neither of whom wanted to endanger the future military discipline of independent India and Pakistan. Though Patel, writes Admiral Katari,

saw that the event could provide a handy weapon in our climatic struggle for independence, he nevertheless realised clearly that any encouragement to, or glorification of, the mutineers would have a seriously deleterious effect on the embryo Navy of an independent India which was to come into being shortly.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Katari, op.cit., pp. 45-46.

<sup>6</sup> Toker, op.cit., p. 88.

<sup>7</sup> See Longer, op.cit., p. 249; Royle, op.cit., pp. 128-129; and Toker, op.cit., p. 87.

<sup>8</sup> Katari, op.cit., p. 45. See also Khan, Leader by Merit, pp. 275-280; and D.V. Tahmankar, Sardar Patel (London: Allen & Unwin, 1970), pp. 191-

When both Nehru and Jinnah joined Patel in advising the ratings to lay down their arms in return for promises that their grievances would be addressed and no retribution taken, the mutiny came to an end.<sup>9</sup>

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### I.B. The Military Splits

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Despite the reluctance of most nationalist politicians to use the mutinies and strikes overtly to hasten the transfer of power, British politicians took the hint.<sup>10</sup> On 18 February 1947, British Prime Minister Clement Attlee told the House of Commons that "His Majesty's Government wished to make it clear that it is their definite intention to take the necessary steps to effect the transference of power into responsible Indian hands by a date not later than June 1948".<sup>11</sup> Attlee's commitment and the work of Mountbatten, Nehru, Gandhi, Jinnah and many others led to the "Partition" of the subcontinent into the independent nations of Pakistan and India on 14 and 15 August 1947, respectively.

Partition meant dividing the personnel, materials, stores, and fixed installations of the British-led Indian military in a general 2/1 ratio between India and Pakistan to form "new" armies, navies and air forces. The Indian Army and Pakistan Army were allocated regiments roughly on a communal basis. In mixed regiments, each man in every unit or training institution was allowed to choose which new nation to serve. Muslims hailing from Pakistani territory could not, however, join the Indian

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<sup>9</sup> Moraes, *op.cit.*, p. 314.

<sup>10</sup> See Akbar, *op.cit.*, pp. 371-389, 395-434; Bose, *op.cit.*, p. 264; Brecher, *op.cit.*, pp. 309-333; Collins and Lapierre, *Freedom at Midnight*, pp. 1-297; Edwardes, *Nehru*, pp. 166-214; Gopal, *op.cit.*, pp. 313-362; Moraes, *op.cit.*, pp. 314-345; Royle, *op.cit.*, pp. 133-178; Ziegler, *Mountbatten*, pp. 372-403.

<sup>11</sup> As used in Collins and Lapierre, *op.cit.*, p. 67.

Army nor could non-Muslims with roots in India opt for the Pakistan Army. The RIN and RIAF were similarly divided, and the ISF (drawn from the now defunct Princely States; see below) integrated into the new forces of India and Pakistan.<sup>12</sup> On 14 August 1947, C-in-C Auchinlek signed the last order of the British-led Indian Army, and in December 1947 the second regular batch of post-war IMA cadets graduated into the army of independent India.<sup>13</sup>

On top of the expected organizational and logistical difficulties<sup>14</sup> came worries that the severe Hindu versus Muslim disturbances sweeping civilian society were beginning to affect the military, especially after it became apparent that two independent nations were to be formed and each serviceman given the choice of which to serve. "When senseless killing started at the time of partition, communal feelings among the ranks did run high", recalls President Ayub Khan. "It was feared at the time that the two [Hindu/Muslim] factions might come to an open fight..."<sup>15</sup> Katari describes similar worries in the RIN.<sup>16</sup> Pressures on Hindu and Muslim servicemen to choose "correctly" became intense. "By inference", remembers Lieut.-General Verma, then a senior instructor at the Staff College, Quetta,

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<sup>12</sup> In a separate agreement, the 20 Gurkha regiments were allotted 12/8 to India and Britain. See "Appendix XII Class Composition of Indian Infantry" in Toker, *op.cit.*, p. 653; Longer, *op.cit.*, pp. 253-268; Praval, Indian Army After Independence, p. 7; India and Pakistan Year Book Including Who's Who, 1950: Volume XXXVI (Bombay: Times of India), pp. 81-89; and Venkateswaran, Defence Organisation in India, pp. 34-49, 52-68, 177-186.

<sup>13</sup> The first post-war regular class of cadets had graduated from the IMA in December 1946. See Chibber, Military Leadership to Prevent Military Coup, p. 33; and Connell, Auchinlek, p. 898.

<sup>14</sup> See Evans, Thimayya of India, pp. 248-249; Thapar, *op.cit.*, pp. 246-247; Venkateswaran, *op.cit.*, pp. 59-65; and Verma, To Serve with Honour, p. 53.

<sup>15</sup> Khan, Friends Not Masters, p. 13.

<sup>16</sup> Katari, *op.cit.*, pp. 48-49.

it was assumed that all Muslim officers would opt for Pakistan. One Muslim captain who was married to a Hindi girl and wanted to opt for the Indian Army was bullied and threatened by the militant element of Muslim officers, and I had to arrange protection for him and his family.<sup>17</sup>

Air Marshal 5, a Muslim with family roots in Lucknow who "always thought of India as home" and opted for the Indian Army "without any hesitation", experienced "some pressure" from fellow Muslim officers. Nothing "heavy-handed", just arguments that he would have better prospects in the Royal Pakistan Air Force.<sup>18</sup>

For all the tensions, however, the break-up of the British-led forces was hard on officers who had served together on the subcontinent and all over the world. Verma recalls that during the Staff College celebration of independence,

Major Yayha Khan (later General Yayha Khan and Pakistan President) came up to me and with tears streaming down his cheeks, he said, "Sir, what are we celebrating? This should be a day of mourning. As a united country we could have been a strong and powerful nation. Now we will be fighting with each other." I consoled him that as soldiers we had to carry out orders.<sup>19</sup>

In the end, the break-up of the British-led Indian armed forces was completed with no major indiscipline, especially as the ever-quickening timetable for independence forced the quick resolution of most problems.

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#### I.B.1. The Shortfall of Commissioned Indian Officers

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The departure of British military personnel upon India's independence exposed the armed forces' lack of experienced commissioned Indian officers.<sup>20</sup> Despite wartime commissions, the Indian Army was left

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<sup>17</sup> Verma, op.cit., p. 51. See also Thapar, op.cit., p. 245.

<sup>18</sup> From a follow-up interview with Air Chief Marshal 5; New Delhi, 17 August 1989.

<sup>19</sup> Verma, op.cit., p. 52. See also Farwell, Armies of the Raj, p. 358; and Katari, op.cit., p. 49.

<sup>20</sup> British troops began leaving on 17 August 1947 and, except for those

with just five substantive and 88 acting/temporary lieut.-colonels.<sup>21</sup>

Note too that Indian ECOs had undergone a short training period geared to producing battlefield commanders, not peacetime "managers", and that the first Indian to hold an army HQ staff appointment, essential for learning the techniques of planning and strategy and the formulation of policy, did not do so until after the commencement of WWII.<sup>22</sup> The pre-Partition RIN had 211 British and 25 commissioned Indian officers (the highest ranking of whom were two Captains with over 10 years'

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officers volunteering to stay on in the new Indian and Pakistani forces (see below), the last British serviceman departed the subcontinent on 28 February 1948. Post-WWII demobilization reduced the Indian Army to approximately 400,000 men of whom about 260,000 went to India and 140,000 to Pakistan. See Times of India, op.cit., p. 82; Farwell, op.cit., p. 359; and Royle, op.cit., pp. 208-222.

<sup>21</sup> For the shortfall in the new army, see Table FT 5.1. Figures adapted from Venkateswaran, op.cit., pp. 164-168.

TABLE FT 5.1

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The shortage of experienced commissioned Indian Army officers at independence

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Rank	Normal Experience	Number of Positions	Officers Available	Officers Appointed
Generals	30-40 years	21	5 substantive Lieut.-Colonels (all KOOs with 13-27 years experience)	6 Major-Generals and 17 Brigadiers appointed from the 93 total substantive/acting/temporary Lieut.-Colonels
Brigadiers and Colonels	20-35 years	51	88 acting/temporary Lieut.-Colonels (all KOOs with 13-27 years experience)	All needed
Lieut.-Colonels	20-30 years	530	560 IOOs and ECOs (90 with 10-15 years experience, the rest with 5-10 years)	All needed

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<sup>22</sup> Immediately after the war, there were only 242 commissioned Indian officers, just 17 of whom had been trained pre-WWII, qualified to fill the undivided Indian Army's approximately 500 graded staff appointments. See *ibid.*, pp. 163-164.



experience), and lost most of its mainly Muslim Indian warrant officers and senior ratings to Pakistan.<sup>23</sup> Although the RIAF was from the outset completely Indianized, wartime expansion had necessitated that 100 RAF officers (and 500 RAF airmen) be loaned to join its 33 commissioned Indian officers (among them one Air Commodore with over 11 years of service).<sup>24</sup> All three services had to deal with acute shortages of qualified technical officers.

India's shortage of experienced senior commanders was met by the loan of British officers formerly in the pre-swaraj Indian armed forces (with the exception of the RIAF which accepted RAF officers),<sup>25</sup> and the rapid promotion of relatively inexperienced, junior Indian officers.<sup>26</sup> Thapar adds that when Partition became inevitable, many Indian officers previously deemed unsuitable were re-examined by the War Services Selection Board:

This resulted in a few geese turning into swans...several previously rejected officers were put on the selected lists and placed in the order of their original seniority; everyone of them became hopeful again of a quick promotion and considered the partition as a god-sent blessing.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> See Katari, *op.cit.*, p. 62; and Venkateswaran, *op.cit.*, p. 168.

<sup>24</sup> Venkateswaran, *op.cit.*, pp. 168, 175.

<sup>25</sup> Initially, 1,200 British officers stayed on in the army, including the new C-in-C, Sir Rob Lockhart. Although almost all the approximately 300 British officers remaining in the army in January 1948 left soon after, a few held technical appointments until 1956. In the RIN, about 60 commissioned and 70 warrant officers stayed on, including Rear Admiral J.T.S. Hall in the new post of RIN C-in-C. Indianization was only complete when the British Chief of Naval Aviation left in 1962. In the air force, Indian officers assumed all senior staff and operational appointments with only a few technical posts given to RAF officers. The RIAF's need for highly specialized knowledge did, however, result in an increase of RAF personnel in some years after 1947. Not until C-in-C Air Marshal Ivelaw Chapman's departure in 1954 was the force completely Indian. See *ibid.*, pp. 172-175.

<sup>26</sup> See Table FT 5.1 above.

<sup>27</sup> Thapar, *op.cit.*, p. 247.

Inevitably, comments Major K.C. Praval, standards were lowered: "Of the several officers who quickly rose to the rank of major-general after independence, one was a censor officer during the war and another was in charge of 'Dilkhush Sabhas', troupes that toured various theatres to entertain the Jawans".<sup>28</sup> Yet most Indian officers rose to the challenge, satisfactorily filling the top command and staff positions in all three services. On 15 January 1949, General Cariappa reached full general rank when appointed the first Indian Indian Army C-in-C; on 1 April 1954 Air Marshal S. Mukerjee became the first Indian head of the air force; and on 22 April 1958 Admiral Katari became the first Indian navy chief.<sup>29</sup>

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#### I.B.2. Questionnaire Respondents

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Did Partition change the lives of commissioned Indian officers? See Table 5.1. In Tables 5.1 to 5.4 and 5.6, respondents are divided into the four categories of "All"; "Pre-1947" (those joining up to 1947 inclusive); "Post-1947" (those enlisting after 1947); and "Unknown" (those with no known date of joining).

TABLE 5.1

Did the break-up of the British-led Indian armed forces into the separate forces of India and Pakistan affect you personally?				
Respondents	All	Pre-1947	Post-1947	Unknown
	Percent(No.)			
No	57.97 (40)	43.33 (13)	69.23 (18)	69.23 (9)
Yes	36.23 (25)	53.33 (16)	19.23 (5)	30.77 (4)
No Answer	5.80 (4)	3.33 (1)	11.54 (3)	0.00 (0)
Total	100.00 (69)	99.99 (30)	100.00 (26)	100.00 (13)

<sup>28</sup> Praval, op.cit., p. 6.

<sup>29</sup> Venkateswaran, op.cit., pp. 173-175.

More than two-fifths (43.33%) of "Pre-1947" respondents say "Yes", the division of the armed forces at Partition affected them personally. "Even today", says Brigadier 90, a Hindu originally from Pakistan, "it is difficult for people like me to reconcile to the loss of some very good friends [choosing to go to Pakistan]". Lieut.-General 94, another Hindu with Pakistani roots, describes a more tragic result:

I belonged to the Baluch Reg't which was allotted to Pakistan. Most of my friends, who were Muslims, went away to Pakistan...I had developed very close ties with my men fighting alongside them in Burma and Malaya. Not only were these ties snapped, I had to fight against some of them in 1947-48 Indo-Pak war in Kashmir.

Several respondents sacrificed more than their regiment. "We became refugees due to Partition", says Brigadier 28, Hindu from Rawalpindi. "I had to move from my original regiment—15 Punjab—to the Jats and lost home and hearth. It affected me in a bad way", adds Major-General 7, a Jat Sikh raised in Pakistan. Others remember Partition's bloodshed affecting their choice. "I hailed from West Pakistan and was in two minds whether to opt for Pakistan or India. However, the communal riots changed my attitude", says Major-General 75, a Sikh from Lahore. Lieut.-General 49, a Hindu Brahmin hailing from Srinagar, describes how

I was in [the Second World] war with Punjabi Mussalmans and Pathans. I nearly stayed with them after Partition was announced, confident that a Hindu soldier would be the same as a Muslim. The unanticipated bloodshed in 1947 (not 1946) changed everything and I came to India in Nov. '47 from Pakistan.

Yet for Major-General 85, a Hindu Brahmin with Calcutta roots, the choice between India and Pakistan was clear:

By joining the Pakistan Army I could have saved my properties, but I clearly saw where my loyalties lay and I decided to continue to remain in India with the Indian Army. In any case, I could not reconcile myself to being a national of a state founded on Islamic fanaticism.

India's constitutional secularism was crucial in convincing many minority officers of their equality in the new nation.

Did the personal difficulties of Partition influence the professionalism of commissioned officers? See Table 5.2. No; "Pre-1947" respondents unanimously (100.00%) reject the suggestion that Partition altered military professionalism.

TABLE 5.2

Did the break-up of the British-led Indian armed forces into the separate forces of India and Pakistan affect the professionalism of the new Indian armed forces?				
Respondents	All	Pre-1947	Post-1947	Unknown
	Percent(No.)			
No	100.00 (27)	100.00 (17)	100.00 (4)	100.00 (6)
Yes	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)
No Answer	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)
Total	100.00 (27)	100.00 (17)	100.00 (4)	100.00 (6)

Of course, there were difficulties. "Reorganisation takes time", says Major-General 13, "We lost much of our cantonments and lived in tents for a long period". "Obviously", adds Air Marshal 3,

various slots had to be filled. Much of the infrastructure of cantonments and training centres was in Pakistan and in particular the Quetta Staff College. Nearly all Air Force stations were in Pakistan—the post '47 build-up of the IAF was sorely affected.

"Certain skills peculiar [sic] to certain castes and sects led to a depletion of talent in those areas which had to be made good at short notice", continues Vice Admiral 6, "for instance, in the Navy large numbers of engine room personnel moved across to Pakistan".

Yet any problems encountered at independence provided an incentive to improve the organization and leadership of the Indian armed forces.

Air Marshal 7 explains:

No doubt [the military's] fighting potential was reduced due to Partition and [the] British withdrawal. [But] The break-up did not affect the professionalism of the new Indian military as everybody [was] imbued with nationalism [and] tried their best to maintain the tradition imbued over centuries to defend efficiency and culture.

Shortages of officers and materials, writes Lieut.-General 17, only "generated more enthusiasm and the will to achieve greater competence".

The respondents focus on professionalism's corporateness, that shared sense of organic unity and consciousness as a group separate from society. They unanimously agree that dividing the British-led Indian military into two separate forces had no negative effect on the armed forces' organizational effectiveness. India's military officer corps would need both their professional corporate and expertise best to face the immediate combat actions thrown up by independence.

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#### I.C. Immediate Actions

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In the midst of partitioning its personnel and resources, the British-led Indian Army was pressed into trying to stem the communal atrocities which killed up to half a million of the refugees moving between the two new nations of India and Pakistan.<sup>30</sup> A Boundary Force of approximately 50,000 men under the British Major-General T.W. Rees was set up in July 1947 to keep peace in the Punjab border area.<sup>31</sup> (On the

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<sup>30</sup> G.P. Khosla's Stern Reckoning puts the figure at 500,000; P. Moon's Divide and Quit and H.V. Hodson's The Great Divide give estimates of 200,000 to 250,000. As used in Collins and Lapierre, op.cit., p. 399.

<sup>31</sup> Rees' staff included the Indians Brigadier Digambar Singh Brar and (then Brigadier) General Thimayya, and the Pakistanis Brigadier Nasir Ahmed and (then Brigadier) President Ayub Khan. While any number of books describe Partition and/or the Boundary Force, those used as principle references for this section are Collins and Lapierre, op.cit., pp. 318-322, 334-400; Cornell, op.cit., pp. 902-911; Evans, op.cit., pp. 249-263; Khan, op.cit., pp. 15-17; Praval, op.cit., pp. 14-18; and Venkateswaran, op.cit., pp. 49-52.

Eastern border Gandhi was just as, if not more effective as a "one-man boundary force".)<sup>32</sup> While the force did much good work, the daily exposure to communal violence began to corrupt its impartiality and on 25 August 1947 Rees told C-in-C Auchinlek that Muslim versus non-Muslim fighting in the ranks could be provoked at any time. Concomitant pressure from both Indian and Pakistani quarters to hand over the Boundary Force's duties to their respective own military forces resulted in just this step on 1 September 1947. Though peace on the borders was slow in coming, it was now completely the responsibility of India and Pakistan.

Military commitments did not end with Partition as immediately after independence India's armed forces were deployed to help integrate the Princely States of Junagadh, Hyderabad and Jammu & Kashmir (J&K).<sup>33</sup> In the first, the ruling Muslim Nawab's decision to opt for Pakistan—despite Junagadh being wholly inside Indian territory and having a population 80% Hindu and Jain—failed when Indian military forces threatened invasion and forced him to flee.<sup>34</sup> In the second, the ruling Muslim Nizam's declaration of independence—despite Hyderabad's size, geographic position and predominantly Hindu population—and failure to control the Razakars (a 200,000-strong militant armed wing of the Ittehad-ul-Musilmeen party of feudal Muslim landowners) led to the Indian Army forcing his surrender in "Operation Polo".<sup>35</sup> In the third,

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<sup>32</sup> Venkateswaran, *op.cit.*, p. 49.

<sup>33</sup> Travancore, the only other Princely State (out of 565) not to have acceded to India or Pakistan by 15 August 1947, accepted Indian rule on 17 August 1947. See Farwell, *op.cit.*, p. 353.

<sup>34</sup> See Edwardes, *op.cit.*, pp. 220-222; Longer, *op.cit.*, p. 291; Praval, *op.cit.*, p. 32; and Venkateswaran, *op.cit.*, pp. 73-74.

<sup>35</sup> While Indian military casualties were light (66 killed or missing and 97 wounded), the Hyderabad Army lost 490 men with 122 wounded, and the Razakars 1,200 killed or wounded. See Chaudhuri, *General J.N. Chaudhuri*,

procrastination by J&K's Hindu Maharaja over which country his strategically located and overwhelmingly Muslim populated state would join led to a bloody 15-month war between Pakistani proxies and Indian military forces, the repercussions of which continue to this day.<sup>36</sup>

The Junagadh, Hyderabad and J&K actions demonstrated officers' ability to meet professional commitments. In Junagadh, they massed forces on the state's borders while awaiting higher political machinations. In Hyderabad, they commanded an operation which overwhelmed the state's army and the Razakars in just 100 hours, and (then Major-General) General Chaudhuri went on to serve a 13-month term as military governor. In J&K, they successfully repelled a proxy-Pakistani invasion in extreme conditions and at very short notice. In October 1947, the Indian Army C-in-C was General Auchinlek and the army commander with responsibility for J&K General Dudley Russell; by the 1 January 1949 cease-fire these posts were filled by General Cariappa and (then Lieut.-General) General S.N. Srinagesh (already the second Indian to command the area army), respectively.<sup>37</sup> Lieut.-General S.K. Sinha, the only staff officer directly involved in the J&K Conflict from the initial despatch of personnel to Srinagar to the post-war peace conference, remembers how

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pp. 145-165; Edwardes, op.cit., pp. 222-225; Longer, op.cit., pp. 317-323; Praval, op.cit., pp. 107-125; Venkateswaran, op.cit., pp. 74-75, 84-85; and Verma, op.cit., pp. 64-73. NOTE: Chaudhuri and Longer report only 10 Indian Army casualties.

<sup>36</sup> The Indian armed forces suffered 1,500 killed, 3,500 wounded and 1,000 missing (mostly PoWs). Pakistan's casualties were estimated at 20,000, including 6,000 dead. See Edwardes, op.cit., pp. 225-227; Longer, op.cit., pp. 292-317; Praval, op.cit., pp. 32-106; Major-General S.K. Sinha, Operation Rescue: Military Operations in Jammu & Kashmir 1947-49 (New Delhi; Vision Books, 1977); and Venkateswaran, op.cit., pp. 75-83.

<sup>37</sup> Sinha, op.cit., pp. 6-7, 59, 66, 88, 130.

Everyone [in the Indian Army] was fully aware of the fact that this was free India's first operation being fought entirely by Indian troops led in the field by their Indian commanders. They knew that the eyes of the Nation were focused on them and that they must shoulder their grave responsibility, both cheerfully and successfully.<sup>38</sup>

The RIAF and RIN also provided a measure of support in J&K, and Major Som Nath Sharma became the first (posthumous) recipient of independent India's supreme gallantry award, the Param Vir Chakra.<sup>39</sup>

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#### I.C.1. Nationally Representative Military Personnel

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These actions also established the reliability of those Muslim personnel who had opted to serve independent India. Most conspicuous was the Muslim CO of 50 Parachute Brigade, Brigadier Mohammed Usman. He was, writes Lieut.-General Sinha, "a patriotic Indian and the Government had very rightly given him a position of trust—the command of one of our forward brigades in the [J&K] fighting line. He amply justified the trust reposed in him and had very deservedly won popular acclaim".<sup>40</sup> Lieut.-General 94 (a Hindu originally from Pakistan who opted for India because he did not feel "prepared to die" for Islamic ideals) says the actions of Usman and other Muslim personnel meant "no more questions as to the loyalty of Muslim Indian Army officers".<sup>41</sup> Henceforth, the armed

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<sup>38</sup> Sinha, op.cit., p. 26.

<sup>39</sup> See Sinha, op.cit., pp. 25-27, 55-56, 62-64, 91, 99, 113; and The Military Year Book: 1974, p. 250.

<sup>40</sup> Sinha, op.cit., p. 80. Sinha adds that Usman's loyalty did not sit well with Pakistan, which "formed on the basis of the two-nation theory sprung from religious intolerance, could not appreciate the role of a Muslim in 'Hindu India'. We used to hear that in Pakistan a prize had been announced for Usman's head. By virtue of serving in the Indian Army he was regarded as a "traitor to the holy fold". When Usman was killed by enemy shelling, the government gave him a state funeral to which "Delhi citizens turned out in their thousands". See Muthanna, General Cariappa, p. 39; and Sinha, op.cit., p. 81.

<sup>41</sup> Lieut.-General 94 also reports how a senior Indian intelligence officer suggested he might best serve India by opting for the Pakistan



forces of independent India could admit and promote to the highest positions a wide mix of minority officers—reflected in the questionnaire respondents/interviewees<sup>42</sup>—free from doubts that personal background might overrule professional behaviour.

This ability to recruit and promote commissioned officers—and men—from all India's communities also has helped ensure civil supremacy-of-rule. While traditional, British-designated martial races' communities continue to be disproportionately represented, India has continually sought to open recruitment to all communities.<sup>43</sup> Remember the fourth military intervention theory's argument that personal/cliq̄ue self-interest can provide sufficient impetus for staging a armed forces' coup. An overdependence on martial races' officers may provide ready-

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Army and then passing on information to the Indian Army. There was, he adds, "no question" of him agreeing to this. From a follow-up interview with Lieut.-General 94; New Delhi, 15 August, 1989.

<sup>42</sup> Among the questionnaire respondents and/or interviewees are the Christians Brigadier 44 and Lieut.-Colonel 80, the Roman Catholics Vice Admiral 6 and Brigadier 83, the Buddhist Major-General 85, the Zoroastrian Brigadier 76, the Jewish Lieut.-General 101, the Muslim Air Marshal 5, and 16 Sikh officers.

<sup>43</sup> As the Indian government refuses to give the specific ethnic or religious origins of its military personnel, the exact numbers of martial versus non-martial men and officers cannot be completely known. However, from independence onwards new Indian Army units such as the Parachute Regiment have been constituted on an all-India basis. In 1949 C-in-C Cariappa formally scrapped the concept of martial and non-martial races, in 1954 a policy (further modified in 1963 by the Cabinet Military Affairs Committee) began which disallowed any one Indian state from having a dominant position in military recruitment and, most recently (despite no official confirmation) it has become common knowledge that the Indian Army is making efforts to ensure that all units reflect a completely mixed and all-India character. From an interview with leading Indian defence journalist Shekar Gupta; London, 21 April 1994; and S. Cohen, "The Military and Indian Democracy" in India's Democracy: An Analysis of Changing State-Society Relations, ed. A. Kohli (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 133; Editorial, "Cooking Kichiri—Army Style", The Sikh Review (Calcutta) Vol. 41:2 No 471 March 1993, 3-4; Longer, op.cit., pp. 288-289; Palit, War in High Himalaya, pp. 12-13; Praval, op.cit., pp. 133-134, 602; and Brigadier H.S. Sodhi, "Punjab: The Trendsetter", India Today August 1993, p. 29.

made, homogenous groups more amenable to unite around by a common grievance and therefore more likely to further their own agenda at the expense of the military, the government, and/or the state.

That the questionnaire respondents recognize the importance of recruitment open to all may be seen in Table 0.1 in which "Nationally representative military personnel" is ranked as the fourth most important factor contributing to India never having experienced a coup. Both Major-General 106 and ex-Governor Mr. C7, an ICS officer for 42 years, stress that the "heterogeneity" of Indian Army officers (who numbered 40,000 in 1990)<sup>44</sup> plays a crucial role in preventing the formation of ethnic, linguistic, regional, and religion-based cliques on a sufficient scale to organize a forcible take-over of government.<sup>45</sup> For example, says Vice Admiral 2, "a Sikh commander wouldn't follow a Bengali coup leader".<sup>46</sup> The "disloyalty" which prevents an officer of one particular ethnicity from obeying the command of a comrade of a different background pertains only to extra-legal orders, and it does not hinder the normal corporate efficiency and effectiveness of the officer corps. Therefore, argues ex-Principal Defence Secretary Mr. C4, "what might be a source of weakness is instead a source of strength"<sup>47</sup> for India's civilian governments.

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#### I.C.2. Questionnaire Respondents

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<sup>44</sup> W.P.S. Sidhu, "Quelling Sordid Affairs", India Today, 31 October, 1990, p. 66.

<sup>45</sup> From interviews with Major-General 106; New Delhi, 12 September 1987; and Mr. C7; New Delhi, 13 August 1989, respectively.

<sup>46</sup> From a follow-up interview with Vice-Admiral 2; Bombay, 7 October 1987.

<sup>47</sup> From an interview with Dr. C4; New Delhi, 4 September 1989.

The performance of the armed forces in Punjab, Junagadh, Hyderabad and J&K and the respondents' unanimous faith in the officer corps' ability to retain a high degree of professionalism does not translate into a universal agreement that the military was ready to meet the challenges of *swaraj*. See Table 5.3.

TABLE 5.3

Were the armed forces properly prepared for independence?				
Respondents	All	Pre-1947	Post-1947	Unknown
	Percent(No.)			
Yes	53.13 (51)	53.19 (25)	53.33 (16)	52.63 (10)
Qualified Yes	18.75 (18)	19.15 (9)	20.00 (6)	15.79 (3)
No	18.75 (18)	23.40 (11)	13.33 (4)	15.79 (3)
No Answer	9.38 (9)	4.26 (2)	13.33 (4)	15.79 (3)
Total	100.01 (96)	100.00 (47)	99.99 (30)	100.00 (19)

Almost a quarter (23.40%) of "Pre-1947" officers say "No", the military was not ready for *swaraj*. Brigadier 63 writes:

One cannot say that the army was properly prepared as there were only a few senior Indian officers of the rank of Colonel and above. Most of the other officers were wartime emergency recruits. After Independence very quick promotions of comparatively junior and inexperienced officers had to be resorted to. Naturally [the] effectiveness and professionalism of the army suffered considerably.

The navy experienced similar difficulties. Before independence, says Vice Admiral 6, commissioned Indian officers were "invariably given limited responsibility in areas outside the direct chain of command. In ships the commanding officer and executive officer were invariably a Britisher". Despite problems occasioned by the rush towards *swaraj*, the timetable set by the political leadership had be obeyed. "[The] armed services were badly prepared for independence and also partition of its

personnel", recalls Brigadier (Dr.) 55, "but, being a disciplined force, [they] had to accept the orders of the then government".

The "No" "Pre-1947" respondents are far outnumbered by the three-quarters (72.34%; or 53.19 "Yes" plus 19.15 "Qualified Yes") of their comrades who feel the Indian armed forces were fully prepared for *swaraj*. Although some express doubts about the lack of experience at senior level, all agree with Air Marshal 3 that "there was a solid foundation to build upon". Any "lack of professional maturity and administrative experience", adds Major-General 72, "was somewhat overcome by keenness and enthusiasm".

The key to the respondents' confidence remains their universal belief that, however poor the military's state of preparedness at independence, professional expertise and corporateness would remain high. "The calibre of Indian Army officers of permanent cadre was good", adds Brigadier 30, "some of them showed excellent performances up to brigade level during World War II". Major-General 96 describes how

the army was subjected to [the] terrible strains of the break-up of units, mass change of personnel, duties in disturbed areas in aid of civil power, non-existent at times, loss of their own homes and [tragic] news of their relatives; this was topped by the conflict in J&K. The army also successfully managed to cope...[indicating] that they were psychologically ready.

Professional expertise and corporateness in isolation, however, may readily endanger for civilian supremacy-of-rule.

The respondents' comments also reveal a belief that independent India's officers retained their professional characteristic of responsibility; that is, using their expertise only at the discretion of their client, society. Although "most of us did not have long experience", says Brigadier 31, "our seniors were top class, devoted

patriots". All officers, adds Brigadier (Justice) 47, "were very well trained, well led and disciplined—and fully dedicated to their new role of guarding the freedom of the country". Brigadier 40 argues that the suitability of the military's new role as guardians of the nation came from their "tradition—like the civil service—of being 'apolitical'. In addition, they had the tradition of being thoroughly professional, in outlook and functioning". The army, agrees Lieut-General 35, was "one group who immediately converted to a national ethos". What remained to be seen was whether independent India's commissioned officer corps understood professional responsibility to mean loyalty to the nation—increasing the chances of an armed forces' coup—or to its legitimate government—decreasing the likelihood of military intervention.

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## II. The Civil Forces

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### II.A. The Political Leadership

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Although the first set of military intervention theorists perceives military officers as reluctantly pulled into staging a coup while the second sees them pushing their way into power, both describe such intervention as taking place in newly emerging states suffering from ineffective and therefore vulnerable civilian rule. In India, however, a core group of nationalist leaders brought to government deeply held, personal beliefs in the moral superiority of democratic rule which they enshrined in the Constitution, and long experience of political responsibility at the provincial and central levels in which the techniques essential to self-rule were absorbed. In addition, mass participation in *satyagraha* had given many people an understanding of

*swaraj* as government by the popular political leaders—and their one, Congress, party—which had led the nationalist movement. Yet, however popular and experienced the nationalist politicians may have been fighting the Raj, India would not long enjoy stable democratic rule if its military officers did not also perceive the political leadership as fully prepared for the challenges of *swaraj*.

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#### II.A.1. Questionnaire Respondents

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Before independence, relations between commissioned Indian officers and politicians was somewhat mixed. In Table 3.6, two-thirds of respondents were "Generally Supportive Though Passive" towards the independence movement and its leaders, while in Table 3.7, they are divided in recalling nationalist politicians as having had a "Positive", "No Particular Notice" or "Negative" attitude regarding the military. How do these contrary views affect officers' understanding of Indian nationalists' readiness to face the challenges of *swaraj*? See Table 5.4.

In view of their opinions described above in Chapter Three, a surprising third (34.04%) of "Pre-1947" officers think "No", the political leadership was not properly prepared for independence. "Going to jail", argues Brigadier 60, "does not train you in administration". Lieut.-Colonel 80 asserts that nationalist leaders had "a lack of trust in the then bureaucrats...[as well as] inexperience in administration... [and] political diplomacy". Brigadier 45 reveals a mounting frustration with politicians: "With the exception of a handful of politicians...[the leadership was unprepared.] The results are there for anyone to see. Within 40 years we are almost back to the medieval times so far as law and order and morality are concerned".

TABLE 5.4

Was the political leadership properly prepared for independence?				
Respondents	All	Pre-1947	Post-1947	Unknown
	Percent(No.)			
Yes	51.04 (49)	44.68 (21)	60.00 (18)	52.63 (10)
Qualified Yes	16.67 (16)	17.02 (8)	20.00 (6)	10.53 (2)
No	21.88 (21)	34.04 (16)	6.67 (2)	15.79 (3)
No Answer	10.42 (10)	4.26 (2)	13.33 (4)	21.05 (4)
Total	100.01 (96)	100.00 (47)	100.00 (30)	100.00 (19)

The "No" respondents cite the inability to avoid Partition as the politicians' greatest failing at independence. "[Our] political leaders," writes Brigadier 55, "betrayed the country in accepting [the] partition of India and played into the hands of the British leadership's policy of 'divide and rule'". "Our leaders", adds Lieut.-General 49, "had no practical concept of exactly what freedom would mean...if they were prepared, Partition would not have taken place". "If the leadership was properly prepared", continues Vice Admiral 2, "Partition could have been avoided. Mountbatten's hustling only impaired the political judgement of Nehru and co. Patel remained one of the few realists. Jinnah did not want Partition [!]" Air Marshal 5 agrees Indian politicians were unprepared for *swaraj*, "otherwise they would have found a way to avoid Partition or if not that, the bitterness that followed".

Yet the "No" "Pre-1947" respondents are greatly outnumbered by the three-fifths (61.70%, or 44.68% "Yes" plus 17.02% "Qualified Yes") of their comrades who feel that politicians were ready for independence. Some "Qualified Yes" respondents do, however, question the politicians' administrative experience. For Lieut.-General 4, the leadership was "prepared—yes, in that the Congress had grass-roots organisation and

wide public support. But they lacked the experience of governing and administration". Brigadier 90 describes how

there was a feeling of relief at being free and the leaders on the stage were great men and so perhaps there was a degree of idolatry by everyone. However, for the sacrifices made by these leaders any mistakes made were overlooked and passed over. Political leadership and agitation is quite different to administering such a large country...

Other respondents, like Major-General 13, feel politicians "had little knowledge of military and strategic considerations". They were prepared, adds Brigadier 51, "except [for] their knowledge of defence problems".

Major-General 85 argues that the political leadership of any newly independent nation could never be described as fully ready:

No dependent country can ever be properly prepared to shoulder the responsibilities of independence. The leaders must necessarily learn through a process of trial and error. Our leaders were much better prepared than others elsewhere in the world.

Major-General 85's final comments and Brigadier 90's opening remarks above show that, despite the "Qualified Yes" respondents' doubts over the leadership's competence in specific areas, all agree on the politicians' all-around quality. "Whilst they had no experience in running governmental machinery, they had the intellect and the will to serve the country", says Air Chief Marshal 18.

Respect for the political leadership's personal qualities is the touchstone of "Yes" respondents. "At that time", says Brigadier 63, "India had a galaxy of great men". Lieut.-Colonel 80 adds that "there was one Indian in whom every serviceman had the utmost faith, Pandit Nehru...all that Pandit Nehru did and stood for was accepted".

Furthermore, the "Yes" "Pre-1947" respondents believe the political leadership did have sufficient administrative experience. Their



preparedness for *swaraj*, argues Lieut.-General 17, came from "adequate exposure and consequent experience gained: (a) during the [independence] struggle; [and] (b) the running of state legislatures... [the leadership was] composed of eminent persons with intellectual honesty and integrity of purpose".

The majority of "Pre-1947" respondents' belief in the personal experience, eminence and integrity of independent India's initial political leadership went a great way to ensuring civil supremacy-of-rule. See Table 0.1 in which the respondents rank "Initial political stability, quality and/or democratic rule", and "Wisdom and stature of national leaders" as the third and joint eighth most important factors, respectively, in India never having experienced a military coup. Commissioned Indian officers' recognition of the political leadership's quality at independence meant their professional sense of responsibility was not limited to loyalty to the state as separate from the government, but embraced the civilian political leadership as well.

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## II.B. The Civil Service

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Unlike the British-led Indian armed forces, the Indian Civil Service (ICS) had always been open to Indians.<sup>48</sup> However, not until the development of widespread Indian educational facilities along British

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<sup>48</sup> Particularly informative and/or interesting histories of the ICS include N.B. Bonarjee, Under Two Masters (London: Oxford University Press, 1970); P. Mason, The Men Who Ruled India (London: Pan Books in association with Jonathan Cape Limited, 1985. First published in two volumes as The Founders [1953] and The Guardians [1954]); D.C. Potter, India's Political Administrators, 1919-1983 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986); R.P. Sikka, The Civil Service in India: Europeanisation and Indianisation Under the East India Company--(1765-1865) (New Delhi: Uppal Publishing House, 1984); and V.D. Sharma, Through Two Systems Encounters and Experiences of an I.A.S. Officer (New Delhi: Associated Publishing House, 1982).

public school-lines and the passage of the Government of India Act of 1919 (allowing ICS examinations to be held in India and Burma as well as in London) did Indian candidates begin to win a significant proportion of ICS places.<sup>49</sup> Indian representation in the ICS further increased with the suspension—never to be rescinded—of British recruitment in 1939.<sup>50</sup> (From 1942 to the end of WWII Indian recruitment into the ICS was also stopped in an effort to get educated young men to join the military.)<sup>51</sup>

Like commissioned Indian officers, however, Indian ICS officers had to deal with the complexities of representing the British ruling elite while their countrymen struggled for *swaraj*. At "a personal level the relationships between the ICS officers of Indian origin and the ICS officers of British origin were good",<sup>52</sup> recalls ICS officer Govind Narain. Yet his colleague Dharma Vira describes how Indian ICS officers was stranded between the ruling and the ruled:

<sup>49</sup> See Farwell, *op.cit.*, p. 63; G. Moorhouse, *India Britannica Pbk.*, (London: Paladin Books, 1984. First published by Harvill Press, 1983), p. 198; and Royle, *op.cit.*, pp. 31, 57. See also Table FT 5.2. Compiled from Royle, *op.cit.*, p. 31; Venkateswaran, *op.cit.*, pp. 162-163; and J.E. Woolacott, *India: The Truth* (London: Philip Allan & Co. Ltd., 1930), p. 27.

TABLE FT 5.2

Ratio of Indian to British ICS Officers (1909-1947)				
Year	Indian	British <sup>a</sup>	(Total)	Ratio
1909	60	1082	(1142)	1/18.03
1922	208	1179	(1387)	1/ 5.67
1929	367	894	(1261)	1/ 2.44
1939	540	689	(1229)	1/ 1.28
1947 (1 August)	128	98	(226)	1/ 0.77

<sup>a</sup> Includes all European officers.

<sup>50</sup> Moorhouse, *op.cit.*, p. 198.

<sup>51</sup> Kaul, *Reminiscences Discreet and Indiscreet*, p. 105.

<sup>52</sup> As used in Royle, *op.cit.*, p. 272.

The Indians compared him with his British colleagues in regard to competence and dignity while the British closely watched his loyalty to the Crown. To them he was the Trojan Horse in the outfit. The Indian nationalists, on the other hand, while happy at the advent of Indians on the high administrative scene, did not quite know what to make of these highly-paid minions of the government.<sup>53</sup>

Ex-ICS officer and ex-Defence Secretary Mr. C5 recalls how the famously impartial ICS officers began "modifying their behaviour in anticipation of independence". While serving as a senior magistrate, he himself freed Indians jailed for the "petty" crimes of hoisting Congress and Indian flags and shouting nationalist slogans. In "an exception to the norm", his British superior not only understood but condoned his actions.<sup>54</sup>

Whatever their personal working relationships and/or opinions of the freedom struggle, at independence Indian ICS officers provided their new nation with an invaluable cadre of top administrative experience in the new Indian Administrative Service (IAS).<sup>55</sup> Indian representation in the provincial civil services was even more numerous and experienced. Still, as in the case of the political leadership above, Indian democracy would not long endure if military officers themselves remained unconvinced of the civil service's readiness for independence.

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## II.B.1. Questionnaire Respondents

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<sup>53</sup> D. Vira, *Memories of a Civil Servant* (Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd, 1975), p. 17.

<sup>54</sup> From an interview with Mr. C5; New Delhi, 14 August 1989. See also Mason, *op.cit.*, pp. 315-316.

<sup>55</sup> By 1 August 1947, 43 Indian ICS officers were Secretaries, Joint Secretaries or their equivalent in the Government of India Secretariat compared to 14 British (and European) counterparts (with 13 others on leave). These numbers do not include European and Indian officers serving in the Indian Political Service (IPS). See Moorhouse, *op.cit.*, p. 198; and Venkateswaran, *op.cit.*, pp. 162-163.

Did commissioned Indian officers regard the country's administrators as ready for *swaraj*? See Table 5.5. The focus below will be on "Pre-1947" respondents.

TABLE 5.5

Was the civil service was properly prepared for independence?				
Respondents	All	Pre-1947	Post-1947	Unknown
	Percent(No.)			
Yes	52.08 (50)	57.45 (27)	56.67 (17)	31.58 (6)
Qualified Yes	20.83 (20)	21.28 (10)	16.67 (5)	26.32 (5)
No	17.71 (17)	12.77 (6)	20.00 (6)	26.32 (5)
No Answer	9.38 (9)	8.51 (4)	6.67 (2)	15.79 (3)
Total	100.00 (96)	100.01 (47)	100.01 (30)	100.01 (19)

The just over a tenth (12.77%) of "Pre-1947" respondents who say "No", civilian administrators were not ready for *swaraj*, use arguments equally applicable to the armed forces. Lieut.-Colonel 81 says "independence came too soon and too suddenly" for Indian administrators who Major-General describes as "trained to run a colonial system only". Major-General 86 criticizes these former servants of the Raj as "sycophants", Brigadier 22 argues that they "did not really know—and could not know—what was in store for them", and Brigadier 60 points out that "after independence everyone got accelerated promotions. For higher rank, they did not have enough experience".

Despite such sentiments, over three-quarters (78.83%, or 57.45% "Yes" plus 21.28% "Qualified Yes") of "Pre-1947" respondents believe the country's administrators were ready for independence. There are some reservations. Brigadier 29 saw the civil service as "handicapped because of the void created by the British leaving...there were inadequate numbers left to fill the vacancies". Brigadier 51 felt the ICS was

prepared "except [for] their lack of experience of welfare problems of common people". While "this attitude of 'carry on as before' added stability", continues Lieut.-General 49, it "deprived independence of a physical impact on the common Indian. It took some years to grow into our social system". Yet most have nothing but praise for a civil service composed, recalls Air Marshal 3, of "well trained and experienced men of integrity and administrative capability". For Vice Admiral 6, the ICS constituted the cream of our intelligentsia. Having been closely associated with their British counterparts in various administrative functions they soon gained confidence in managing their tasks independently and efficiently".

Most respondents are confident of the respective preparedness of the political leadership and senior civil service to meet the challenges of *swaraj*. Moreover, they are fully aware of the importance of competent administration in a democracy; ranking "Administrative efficiency" in Table 0.1 as the joint eighth most crucial factor contributing to India never having had a military coup. Indian military officers' confidence in the respective abilities of their politicians and civil service at independence goes some way in negating the first and second set of coup theorists' shared characterization of newly independent nations struggling to modernize because of ineffective governmental leadership. However, it remains to be seen whether civilian politicians and bureaucrats would fulfil the armed forces' high expectations—failing to do so might certainly endanger the democratic civil-military relationship (see Chapter Six).

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### III. Civil-Military Relations

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### III.A. What Type of Armed Forces?

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The Transfer of Power raised questions as to the role of the armed forces in an independent India. Gandhi saw no use for conventional armed forces: "if I could carry India with me, I would want nothing beyond a police force for protection against dacoits and the like. But so far as Defence is concerned unarmed peaceful India would rely upon the goodwill of the whole world".<sup>56</sup> However much other nationalist leaders might have shared Gandhi's disdain for military might, the AICC in July 1940 resolved that non-violent methods were insufficient as a means of external defence.<sup>57</sup> Undeterred, Gandhi then sought to harness the organizational skills and manpower of the armed forces:

If *Swaraj* is round the bend, we can now look upon the military as ours and need to have no hesitation in taking all the constructive work we can from them. Up till now they have only been employed in indiscriminate firing on us. Today they must plough the land, dig wells, clean latrines and do every other constructive work that they can, and thus turn the people's hatred of them into love.<sup>58</sup>

While aid-to-the-civil duties were vital, nationalist leaders were well aware that India's defence resting on the military's organizational efficiency and effectiveness in its primary role as the nation's defender must be kept to a minimum.<sup>59</sup> For all his talk of transforming independent India's military into "a truly national army, with a national purpose and a national outlook",<sup>60</sup> and belief that "all

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<sup>56</sup> M. Gandhi, Editorial, Harijan, 10 February 1940.

<sup>57</sup> Edwardes, *op.cit.*, p. 133.

<sup>58</sup> From Harijan, 21 April 1946 as used in Cohen, The Indian Army, p. 103.

<sup>59</sup> K.F. Rustomji, Chairman, "Part III Aid to the Civil Authority", in USI Seminar (Number Twelve) Military and Society (New Delhi: United Services Institution of India, 1986), p. 35.

<sup>60</sup> Nehru, "The Defence of India", p. 284.

barriers between the armed forces and the civilian population must disappear",<sup>61</sup> Nehru left the services virtually unchanged, allowing officers to get on with perfecting their professional expertise in the management of violence.<sup>62</sup>

Nonetheless, there were some scares as to the future intentions of commissioned Indian officers in the run up to the Transfer of Power. As a member of the postwar Armed Forces Nationalization Committee, General Thimayya recalls British colleagues warning nationalist leaders that Indian officers "were getting too ambitious", that the Indian Army was a powerful organization capable of taking control of the country", and that "in Burma army officers had assassinated the new premier". Thimayya and other Indian officers had to "convince their own leaders that they were without political ambitions"—partly by pointing out that the above arguments were made by British officers who "merely wanted to keep their jobs until retirement age".<sup>63</sup> British officers were not alone in suggesting unusual potential scenarios. Lord Ismay, Viceroy Mounbatten's closest advisor, recalls how

[then Brigadier, later Field Marshal] Cariappa came to see me yesterday [9 May 1947] and volunteered the amazing suggestion that [the] Indian Army with either Nehru or Jinnah as commander-in-chief should take over power when we left in June 1948.

I at once said that the proposal was dangerous, that throughout history the rule of an army had always proved

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<sup>61</sup> Gopal, Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru: Volume 1, p. 412.

<sup>62</sup> Nehru's only suggestions concerned Indianizing the armed forces' officer corps as soon as possible, opening military recruitment to all segments of the population, and ensuring that the military received sufficient praise and recognition of their performance in the J&K Conflict. See Gopal, Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru: Volume 1, pp. 363-368, 370-372, 380-381; and S. Gopal, ed., Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru: Volume 3 (Series 2. New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1984), pp. 47-48, 307-308, 488-492; and Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru: Volume 4 (Series 2. New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1984), pp. 327-328, 340-345, 375-378, 486-487.

<sup>63</sup> Evans, op.cit., p. 246. See also Kaul, The Untold Story, pp. 81-83; and Muthanna, op.cit., p. 35.

tyrannical and incompetent, and that the army must always be servants and not masters. I added that the Indian Army, by remaining united and refusing to choose sides, could wield a tremendous influence for good in disturbed days that lie ahead but that they must always be subservient to civil power. I concluded by begging him to put the idea right out of his mind and never to mention it again even in the strictest secrecy...

*It is hard to know whether Cariappa in putting forward this idea was ingenuous and ignorant or ingenuous and dangerous. [My indents, my italics.]*<sup>64</sup>

"Ingenuous and ignorant" is the more likely characterization; Cariappa's suggestion was just the most extreme manifestation of the frustration he (and many of the respondents in Table 5.4 above) felt at the impending partition of both the subcontinent and the armed forces.<sup>65</sup>

Crucially, this frustration was not allowed to interfere with the Indian military retaining virtually all its British organization and traditions come *swaraj*. For Lieut.-General Thimayya, those wanting to do away with everything British simply because it was not Indian were denying history's effect on shaping the armed forces:

The regiments were now completely Indian, and no less so because of the old traditions. The fact that they were entirely Indian gave Indians the chance to add even greater glory to the proud records of each unit. Thus the attitude of the Indian officers was that we should show our patriotism, not by rejecting the past, but by making [an] improvement on it.<sup>66</sup>

Keeping old regimental practices, including the mess and other trappings of the British officer and gentleman, reinforced commissioned Indian officers' historical understanding of themselves as apolitical servants

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<sup>64</sup> As used in Akbar, *op.cit.*, p. 407. Ayub Khan also heard Cariappa's plan; see Khan, *op.cit.*, pp. 19-20. On 25 April 1947, Cariappa wrote to Nehru urging the retention "at any cost" of an undivided British-led Indian Army for the "good of the country". See S. Gopal, ed., Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru: Volume 2 (Series 2. New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1984), p. 376.

<sup>65</sup> Gopal, Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru: Volume 2, p. 376-377.

<sup>66</sup> Evans, Thimayya, p. 284. See also pp. 283-285. Nonetheless, the debate over British traditions' relevance to independent India continues. See, for example, Lt. Gen. S.K. Sinha, Of Matters Military (New Delhi, Vision Books, 1980), pp. 120-134.



of the ruling civilian government during the awkward transfer of power.<sup>67</sup> As the first Indian Indian Army C-in-C, Cariappa constantly sought to reinforce his British predecessors' avoidance of "politics in the mess" while at the same time promoting a new nationalism, saying:

Politics in the Army is a poison. Keep off it. But as citizens of India you must know, only know, about it.

Army is there to serve the Government of the day, and we should make sure that it does not get mixed up with party politics.

A soldier is above all politics and should not believe in caste or creed. As to myself, I am an Indian, and to the last breath would remain an Indian. For me there are only two *SIHANS*, Hindusthan and Foujistan (the Army).

At all times, in everything you do and say, be an INDIAN first and Indian always. DO NOT disintegrate the country into little 'penny-packets' of your own class, your community or your religion.<sup>68</sup>

Thus, the traditional British ideal of military professionalism would continue to be the guiding ethos for independent India's officer corps.

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### III.B. Civil-Military Hierarchy Modifications

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Like the British ideal of officer and gentleman, the established civil-military hierarchy of the Raj—with certain modifications—continued as the model for independent India. After assuming formal control of the East India Company's holdings on the subcontinent, the Crown had set up a governing structure—from Monarch (later Emperor) to Prime Minister, Cabinet and Secretary of State for India to Governor-

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<sup>67</sup> Worldwide, only the respective armies of India and Pakistan retain an intermediate officer class—ex-VCOs re-designated after independence as Junior Commissioned Officers—to serve as a buffer between commissioned officers (former KCIOs, IOs and Indian EOs) and troops. See S. Ali, "The Raj is dead but the Sahibs live on" *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 31 May 1984, pp. 28-30; and Venkateswaran, *Defence*, p. 145.

<sup>68</sup> Muthanna, *op.cit.*, pp. 47-50. See also Cariappa's speech to Indian officers, October 8, 1948. Reprinted in U.S.I. *Journal*, LXXVIII (January, 1948), 4 as used in Cohen, *The Indian Army*, p. 166.

DIAGRAM 5.1

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Explanation of abbreviations  
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H.M.	=	His Majesty
FOC RIN	=	Flag Officer Commanding, Royal Indian Navy
CGS	=	Chief of the General Staff
AG	=	Adjutant General
QMG	=	Quarter-Master General
MGO	=	Master-General of Ordnance
E-in-C	=	Engineer-in-Chief
MS	=	Military Secretary
AOC RAF in India	=	Air Officer Commanding, Royal Air Force in India
GOC-in-C Commands	=	General Officer Commanding in Command Commands
HQrs.	=	Headquarters

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Source: A.L. Venkateswaran, Defence Organisation in India: A Study of Major Developments in Organisation and Administration since Independence (Publications Division Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Government of India, 1967).  
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General (later Viceroy) of India advised by an Executive Council which excluded the Indian Army C-in-C but included a high-ranking officer—embodying the principle of civil supremacy over the military.<sup>69</sup> Having a **Military Member** inferior in rank but superior in influence to the C-in-C caused numerous confrontations. The most serious of these, the C-in-C Kitchener versus Viceroy Curzon controversy in the early twentieth century, resulted in the the former being made principal defence advisor to the Raj as well as the armed forces' supreme administrator and operational commander.<sup>70</sup> While Kitchener felt able to decide on all matters under his authority, the demands of the First World War led later C-in-Cs to accept advice from various military and civilian quarters. Nonetheless, all policy, administrative, operational and financial decisions concerning Indian defence matters were ultimately taken by the C-in-C.<sup>71</sup>

Fortunately for civil supremacy-of-rule in independent India, Nehru understood the dangers of one man acting as both the government's chief defence advisor and armed forces C-in-C, especially in a young democracy

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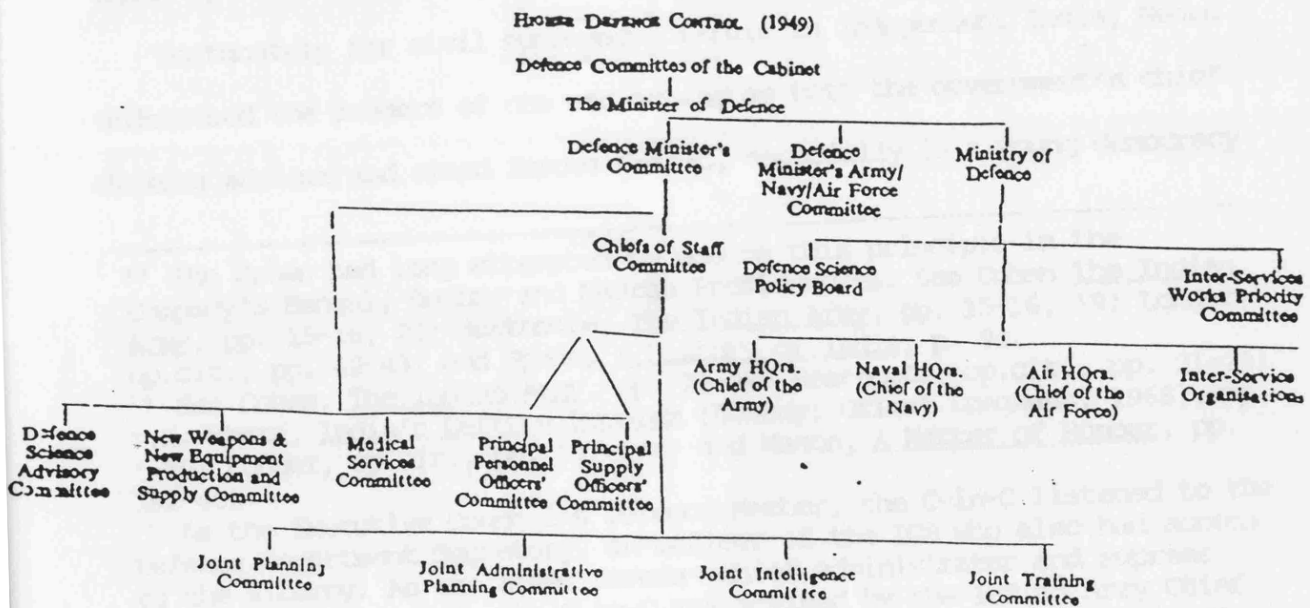
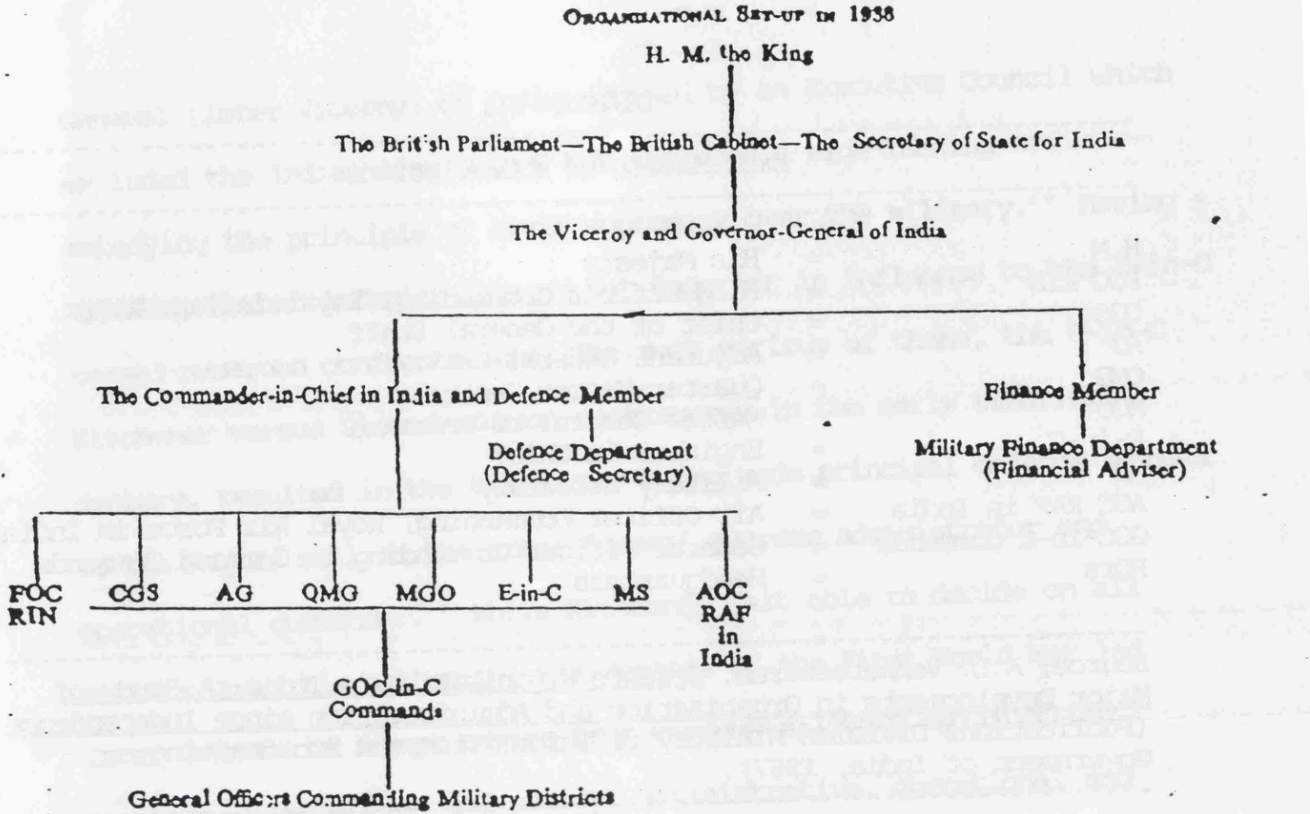
<sup>69</sup> The Crown had long attempted to ensure this principle in the Company's Bengal, Bombay and Madras Presidencies. See Cohen The Indian Army, pp. 15-16, 22; Heathcote, The Indian Army, pp. 15-16, 19; Longer, op.cit., pp. 42-43; and Spear, A History of India, p. 94.

<sup>70</sup> See Cohen, The Indian Army, pp. 22-28; Heathcote, op.cit., pp. 21-22; S.S. Khera, India's Defence Problem (Bombay: Orient Longmans, 1968), pp. 6-10; Longer, op.cit., pp. 137-146; and Mason, A Matter of Honour, pp. 392-402.

<sup>71</sup> As the Executive Council's Defence Member, the C-in-C listened to the Defence Department Secretary, an officer of the ICS who also had access to the Viceroy. As the armed forces' chief administrator and supreme operational commander, the C-in-C was advised by the Indian Army Chief of Staff and three other Principal Staff Officers (PSOs). The C-in-C's power was further circumscribed by the Finance Advisor, Military Finance, a senior ICS officer directly responsible to the Executive Council's Finance Member who ensured that any military demand which necessitated the Government's approval was first discussed with its civilian financial representatives before being put to the Army Department for approval. See Mason, A Matter of Honour, p. 397.

DIAGRAM 5.1

The Defence Hierarchy in India, 1938 and 1949\*



Only the more important of the committees have been included in this chart.

\* See over for explanation of abbreviations.  
 Source: A.L. Venkateswaran, Defence Organisation in India: A Study of Major Developments in Organisation and Administration since Independence (Publications Division Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Government of India, 1967).

where politicians, administrators and military officers are daily learning the limits of their respective organizations' powers.<sup>72</sup> He modified the civil-military defence hierarchy by appointing an elected civilian politician as Defence Minister, "responsible for obtaining policy decisions of the Government, for transmitting those decisions to and seeing to their implementation by the three Service HQs".<sup>73</sup> The military's power was further reduced by replacing the office of C-in-C with a Chief of Staff at the head of each of the three separate armed services who would meet with the Defence Minister and the Defence Secretary only in this capacity and not as the supreme field commander(s).<sup>74</sup> The army, navy and air force were thus under three tiers of civilian control: political—the Cabinet and Parliament as represented by the Defence Minister; bureaucratic—the Defence Secretary at the head of a Defence Ministry staffed *entirely* by civil servants; and financial—the Financial Advisor at the head of the Ministry of Finance (Defence) responsible to the Finance Minister.<sup>75</sup> Nehru also began a process of adjusting the Warrant of Precedence to reflect the armed forces' loss of power compared to government civilians.<sup>76</sup>

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## Conclusion

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<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*, p. 401.

<sup>73</sup> Times of India, *op.cit.*, p. 82.

<sup>74</sup> The official title for these three posts were Chief of the Army Staff and Commander-in-Chief, Indian Army; Chief of the Naval Staff and Flag Officer Commanding, Royal Indian Navy; Chief of the Air Staff and Air Marshal Commanding, Royal Indian Air Force. In April 1955, these offices re-designated as Chiefs of their respective staffs. The head of the air force was upgraded from Air Chief to Air Chief Marshal on 15 January 1966. See Venkateswaran, *op.cit.*, pp. 139-140.

<sup>75</sup> Sinha, *Of Matters Military*, p. 43.

<sup>76</sup> See Cohen, *The Indian Army*, pp. 172-173; Lt General Hridaya Kaul, Whither the Army" *Indian Defence Review* January 1989, p. 62; Kukreja, "Civilian Control of the Military in India", p. 490; and Praval, *Indian Army*, pp. 131, 137-138.

Upon their victorious return from WWII, Indian armed forces' officers faced military mutinies and strikes, and the partition of personnel and materials into the respective military forces of newly independent India and Pakistan. And yet, marvels Major-General 20,

We got rid of the British officers from the units within two months of independence [by rapidly promoting relatively junior officers to the highest positions of command], carried out the most difficult task of evacuating millions of people from India and Pakistan, restored normalcy, brought the erring Princely States within India, quelled communal riots, and still fought a full-fledged war in Kashmir...No other army in the world could have achieved so much in so little time.

The navy and air force shared in the army's proud record of achievement, the basis of which was the constant belief of Indian officers that their professional expertise and corporateness were equal to any challenge. In great part this confidence was due to the armed forces enjoying a virtually unchanged tradition of professional training and organization through the Transfer of Power. IMA GCs continued to be taught British standards of military efficiency while regiments kept their centuries-old battle honours and intermediate officer class, and the army its martial races—and nationally representative personnel—and *izzat*.

Nonetheless, many officers felt their efforts went unappreciated. "Outside the military", recalls Air Chief Marshal 1, "everyone was convinced that since non-violence won independence, it would also suffice now".<sup>77</sup> The very existence of the armed forces appeared in jeopardy. "If the Kashmir thing had not happened in '48", argues Colonel 24, "they [the government] really might have abolished the army".<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> From an interview with Air Chief Marshal 1; New Delhi, 3 September, 1987.

<sup>78</sup> From an interview with Colonel 24; New Delhi, 12 September 1987. This did not stop officers from criticizing the political leadership of the J&K Conflict. See R. Rikhye, The War That Never Was, Pbk. ed. (Delhi: PRISM India Paperbacks, 1989; Delhi: Chanakya Publications, 1988), pp.

Despite such fears, most Indian armed forces' officers believe their new political and administrative leaders were fit to meet the challenges of independence. Indeed, the respondents gauge the latter as more equipped for *swaraj* than the military. See Table 5.6 which summarizes the "Pre-1947" respondents' responses from Tables 5.3 to 5.5..

TABLE 5.6

Were/was the armed forces/political leadership/civil service properly prepared for independence?			
"Pre-1947" Respondents	Armed Forces	Political Leadership	Civil Service
	Percent		
Yes	53.19	44.68	57.45
Qualified Yes	19.15	17.02	21.28
No	23.40	34.04	12.77
No Answer	4.26	4.26	8.51
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00

The high marks gained by all three choices in Table 5.7 bode well for the future of civil supremacy-of-rule in independent India. Remember that in Table 0.1 respondents rank "Professionalism of the armed forces" as the number one factor in preventing a military coup in India. While a belief that their professional expertise and corporateness equipped military officers to cope with the many challenges of the Transfer of Power, their faith in the ability of the country's new political and bureaucratic elite to govern effectively after *swaraj* allowed them to transfer their professional responsibility from the British Raj to independent India's new civilian rulers—and to accept their downgrading in the reorganized civil-military hierarchy.

66-67; Sinha, Operation Rescue, pp. 31-32; and Thorat, From Reveille to Retreat, p. 101.

The loyalty of the Indian armed forces to their new civilian masters was re-affirmed when India became a sovereign democratic republic on 26 January 1950. Previously, only VCOs, NCOs and soldiers—and their equivalent ranks in the naval and air forces—had been required to take an oath of allegiance to the King-Emperor. Henceforth, all personnel of the Indian Army, and the renamed Indian Navy (IN) and Indian Air Force (IAF) would share in a new pledge:<sup>79</sup>

I do swear in the name of God/do solemnly affirm that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of India as by law established and that I will, as in duty bound, honestly and faithfully serve in the Navy/Regular Army/Air Force of the Union of India and go wherever ordered by sea, land or air and that I will observe and obey all commands of the President of the Union of India and the commands of any officer set over me even to the peril of my life.<sup>80</sup>

Only time would tell if the armed forces' personnel of independent India would take this new oath to heart.

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<sup>79</sup> Venkateswaran, Defence, p. 225.

<sup>80</sup> Venkateswaran, Defence, p. 225.



Civil-Military Relations in British and Independent India, 1918-1962,  
and Coup Prediction Theory

CHAPTER 6

Test Three: General Ayub Khan's 1958 Pakistan "Revolution"

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## CHAPTER 6

### Test Three: General Ayub Khan's 1958 Pakistan "Revolution"

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#### Introduction

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Just a decade after the Transfer of Power, commissioned Indian officers saw Pakistan Army C-in-C General Ayub Khan lead former comrades into government with the justification that the civilian leadership had completely mismanaged the country. To see if Indian officers were tempted to follow this example, this chapter will compare the general state of civil-military relations in India and Pakistan in the first decade of their respective independence. Particular emphasis will be placed on both officer corps' perceptions of the (in)competence of the political and administrative elite, as well as on post-Partition differences in their professional and societal experiences.

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#### I. Civil-Military Relations in India, 1947-1957

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##### I.A. Indifference and Ignorance

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Despite proving themselves in Punjab, Junagadh, Hyderabad, and J&K, the Indian military felt neglected during the first decade of independence. Nehru saw national defence as more a function of long-term economic planning than military might.<sup>1</sup> His championing of a Non-Aligned Movement not beholden to the American or Soviet superpowers, and belief that international disputes should be handled by the United Nations (UN)

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<sup>1</sup> Gopal, Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru: Volume 2, pp. 363-368.

and diplomacy further contributed to governmental disinterest in the armed forces.<sup>2</sup>

From 1947-57, civil-military relations also suffered from Nehru's choice of defence ministers.<sup>3</sup> Sardar Baldev Singh, having joined the cabinet more as a compromise Sikh member than for any knowledge of military matters, left the day-to-day running of the ministry to H.M. Patel. Then Chief of the General Staff (CGS) Lieut.-General Thorat recalls the damage done by the mutual antagonism of "His Majesty" Patel and the proud and stubborn army C-in-C Cariappa:

We...had cause to believe that they and most of the senior officers of the Defence and Finance (Defence) Ministries had an exaggerated opinion of their own ability and status, and rather looked down upon the senior army officers. Some of them even believed that they knew more about Army affairs than we professional soldiers did.<sup>5</sup>

Although civil-military relations briefly improved when N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar, an able administrator respected by military officers for his work as Chairman of the Armed Forces Nationalization Committee, became defence minister after the 1952 general elections, he died after just ten months in office.<sup>6</sup> Relations again suffered when Nehru assumed the

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<sup>2</sup> See Brigadier J.P. Dalvi, Himalayan Blunder, (Delhi: Hind Pocket Books (P) Ltd., n.d. in arrangement with Thacker & Company Ltd., Bombay), p. 38; Katari, A Sailor Remembers, pp. 94-96; Rao, India's Defence Policy and Organisation Since Independence, pp. 5-6. and Thorat, From Reveille to Retreat, p. 117.

<sup>3</sup> See Council of Ministers, 1947-1984: Names and Portfolios of the Members of the Union Council of Ministers (From August 15, 1947 to December 30, 1984) (New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1985); L. Kavic, India's Quest for Security: Defence Policies, 1947-1965 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), pp. 147-149; and Khara, India's Defence Problem, pp. 66-69. NOTE: Khara is mistaken in his ordering of defence ministers. The correct order appears in the thesis text.

<sup>4</sup> "His Majesty" was a nickname for Patel given by his colleagues in the Defence Ministry. From an interview with Indian defence expert Mr. C8; Cambridge, 15 May 1989.

<sup>5</sup> Thorat, op.cit., p. 116.

<sup>6</sup> Thapar, The Morale Builders, pp. 287-288.

defence portfolio for the next two years but left (junior) Minister for Revenue and Expenditure Mahavir Tyagi, in his role as Minister for Defence Organisation (MDO), to run the ministry. While Tyagi, writes Lieut.-General Verma, was

a very kind-hearted person and very likeable in many ways, none of us [at Army HQ] knew what exactly the MDO was supposed to do, nor did he. He was apt to visit an ordnance [sic] depot and start counting nuts and bolts to see if they tallied with ledger balances.<sup>7</sup>

Civil-military relations were not helped, adds Verma, by the "lack of self confidence" of then Army Chief General S.N. Srinagesh when dealing with civilian defence bureaucrats. Yet the latter still got most of the blame: in 1954 even ex-Defence Secretary Patel admitted the "ignorance of civilian officials of defence matters is so complete as to be a self evident and incontrovertible fact".<sup>8</sup> While the next defence minister, Dr. Kailash Nath Katju, was a Congress stalwart and the first in this position with a full political background, his ignorance of military matters continued to impair civil-military relations and he gained a reputation for not being able to decide upon anything—careful to do nothing wrong, he did little right.<sup>10</sup> After two years he became Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh and for the next three months Nehru again held the defence portfolio.

In the decade after *swaraj* and before the 1957 appointment of Krishna Menon as defence minister (see Chapter Seven), India's nascent civil-military relationship developed along unenviable lines. Nehru's

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<sup>7</sup> Verma, To Serve with Honour, pp. 89-90. See also Katari, *op.cit.*, p. 76-77; and Thapar, *op.cit.*, p. 289.

<sup>8</sup> Verma, *op.cit.*, p. 95.

<sup>9</sup> From an article in USI Journal April 1954 as used in Sinha, Of Matters Military, pp. 43-44.

<sup>10</sup> See Verma, *op.cit.*, p. 91.

antipathy for all things martial led him to appoint defence ministers with little knowledge of military issues. For the most part, they then delegated day-to-day administration to equally ignorant civil servants who, writes IMS Lieut.-General Thapar, were "out to grab as much power as they could..."<sup>1</sup> From 1947 to 1957, adds ex-Defence Secretary Rao,

the Services eked out their existence, it may not be far wrong to describe, like a neglected wife. She was there, her presence was comforting, on occasions, even useful as when Pakistan or Portugal proved difficult or mischievous, but essentially Governmental policy did not prescribe any definite objective for the Services.<sup>1,2</sup>

How long before this sad state of affairs led to crisis?

#### I.A.1. Questionnaire Respondents

Do the questionnaire respondents share the above, dismal characterization of civil-military relations from 1947 to 1957? See Table 6.1. (Note the limited total of 69 respondents.)<sup>1,3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Thapar, op.cit., p. 284.

<sup>2</sup> Rao, op.cit., p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Table 6.1 is based on the 69 respondents of Questionnaire II. The 27 respondents of Questionnaire I answered the more general question posed on Table FT 6.1. A general similarity is evident, especially when comparing the latter to the former's category of "Political Leadership".

TABLE FT 6.1

What was the attitude of the central government towards the armed forces in the first decade of independence?

	Percent (No.)
Antagonistic	37.04 (10)
Complacent	11.11 (3)
Fair	22.22 (6)
Fine	18.52 (5)
No Answer	11.11 (3)
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Total	100.00 (27)

Three-fifths of respondents feel the "Political Leadership" had an "Antagonistic" (37.68%) or "Complacent" (21.74%) attitude towards the military. India's politicians, writes Lieut.-General 56, "thought that since they were such 'good guys' they didn't really need much of armed forces, unlike the 'British Imperialists'". The freedom movement's "creed of non-violence had overshadowed [the] thinking of our leaders who possibly did not consider armed forces of much use to independent India", adds Brigadier 31. "Most of our leaders", concludes Lieut.-General 94, "believed that since India had no evil intentions against any other country, there was no need for us to have an army".

TABLE 6.1

What was the attitude of the political leadership/senior civil service towards the armed forces in the first decade of independence?		
	Political Leadership	Senior Civil Service
	Percent(No.)	
Antagonistic	37.68 (26)	66.67 (46)
Complacent	21.74 (15)	4.35 (3)
Fair	11.59 (8)	11.59 (8)
Fine	27.54 (19)	13.04 (9)
No Answer	1.45 (1)	4.35 (3)
	Total 100.00 (69)	100.00 (69)

Apathy bred ignorance. India's political leadership, opines Lieut.-General 19, "could not appreciate the difference between militarism and military as an instrument of policy in the hands of the Government". "Barring a few exceptions at the top", adds Brigadier 38, "the politicians did not have many clues of the defence forces and their operations". Yet this ignorance could be a plus, argues Brigadier 46: "fortunately [the] political leadership had no knowledge or expertise to deal with the defence forces and did not interfere much".

The "Antagonistic" and "Complacent" respondents also cite reasons of economy for the military's poor treatment. Lieut.-General 66 recalls how India's elected leaders "thought the armed forces were an unnecessary luxury which the developing country could ill afford". Lieut.-General 54 agrees: "at that time government policy was to build up the economy of the country by saving money on defence". For Major-General 96, this policy explains why the armed forces were "consistently down-graded, starved of essential weapons...equipment and other necessities".

All in all, writes Vice-Admiral 8, India's politicians saw the armed forces as "a necessary evil". At independence, concludes Lieut.-General 5, the country's "Political Leadership" had an attitude "very *much* as that of a teetotalter who had inherited a brewery". [My italics.]

Nonetheless, two-fifths of respondents feel the "Political Leadership" had a "Fair" (11.59%) or "Fine" (27.54%) attitude towards the military in the first decade of independence. Despite some "indifference in the earliest years", writes Brigadier (Dr.) 55, attitudes "changed dramatically following the J&K war, liberation of Hyderabad, Goa, Junagadh, etc. Leaders then became greatly interested in the armed forces". For Major-General 52, even if politicians had "no realisation of its [the military's] importance as an effective instrument of [the] state for pursuance of an independent foreign policy...[their attitude was] one of deep respect for its high traditions and professional competence". Air Chief Marshal 1 agrees:

The President and the PM showed much consideration to the defence set-up. They were in touch with the senior leadership and listened to their views. I held senior (in our context) and responsible positions as Group Captain and Air Commodore during 1947-57 and had contacts in the higher echelons of Government. The administration takes its cue from the PM and he was generous and understanding.

Again, economic factors are seen to shape civil-military relations.

Major-General 85 describes how

The [political] leadership set about planning methodically to build the available resources of the defence forces into an efficient war machine. Admittedly the pace of progress was somewhat slow, but perhaps it could not have been expedited under the circumstances then existing.

Major-General 20 has no such doubts: "Every officer and man realized that we were a poor country and the first priority should be to raise the economic level and fight poverty. At no time did we [begrudge] the neglect of the armed forces during 1947 to 1962". "The attitude of the central government, thanks to the wisdom of the political leadership, was correct and balanced", concludes Air Chief Marshal 18.

In contrast, only a quarter (24.63%) of respondents describe the attitude of the "Senior Civil Service" towards the military as "Fair" (11.59%) or "Fine" (13.04%). Brigadier 40 recalls "a brotherly and friendly attitude [on the part of bureaucrats] characterised by a sense of equality of status and perhaps a sense of professional superiority *vis-a-vis* the politicians". Relations were not perfect. Although, recalls Air Marshal 3, "professional matters [were] left to the armed forces' HQs, bureaucrats tried, unsuccessfully then, to take over more control in the mistaken belief that civilian control meant bureaucratic control—this was resisted firmly by [the] top brass". Nonetheless, Brigadier (Dr.) 55 saw bureaucrats and officers generally enjoying "good companionship".

"Envy and jealousy" are two elements of the almost three-quarters (71.02%) majority of respondents who think the "Senior Civil Service" had an "Antagonistic" (66.67%) or "Complacent" (4.35%) attitude towards the military. Brigadier 90 recalls how



Initially, the civil servants had very little knowledge of affairs 'military'; they therefore [were] inclined to accept what the services laid down. However, there was a definite shift in as much as the civil servant tended to take shelter behind his political superior to enforce certain decisions.

Soon, writes Brigadier 30, the "Senior Civil Service"

took great advantage of [the] politicians' indifference towards the Indian Army. The top level...tried to denigrate top brass of [the] military, [and] took away many privileges mainly due to jealousy...it was not [at] all good for the top civil officers to look down on the military in general.

For Brigadier 76, differences in the bureaucracy's and the military's respective views of civil supremacy generated much ill-will:

In a democracy, it is accepted that the military remain subordinate to the supremacy of the civil government. However, whereas in Western democracies the term 'government' meant the parliament and its elected members, in India, unfortunately, it also encompassed the civil servants, which was never the intention when we became a republic. Thus there was a constant battle between the bureaucrat and the soldier.

By the end of the first decade of independence, writes Brigadier 69, "power had gone to their heads...[Defence] secretaries could twist generals around their little fingers. In meetings our officers were made fools of by the finance 'wizards'". India's top bureaucrats, concludes Brigadier 76, had a "bad, positively bad" attitude towards the military.

Many "Antagonistic" and "Complacent" respondents feel the "Senior Civil Service" happily inflated what Vice Admiral 103 describes as Nehru's "constant nightmare that the military will one day carry out a coup".<sup>14</sup> Lieut.-General 94 explains how

most of the [political] leaders who came in contact with the Armed Forces became aware of the fact that military officers and men were as patriotic as the old Congress leaders. But there was also a lurking fear in their minds, especially after the military take-over in Pakistan, that the military might be having political ambitions.

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<sup>14</sup> From an interview with Vice Admiral 103; New Delhi, 18 September 1987.

Spotting these suspicions, writes Lieut.-General 10, "bureaucrats tried to play on the fears of politicians of a military coup". "Unhelpful and petty" bureaucrats "were not adverse to sowing seeds of suspicion in their [politicians'] minds", agrees Brigadier (Justice) 47.

Indian civil-military relations in the first decade of independence suffered from what respondents describe as a generally negative attitude towards the armed forces by both the "Political Leadership" and the "Senior Civil Service". "If there wouldn't have been a war in J&K in 1947-48...the political leadership would have thought the army an unnecessary burden on the country", sums up Brigadier 60. That bureaucrats receive relatively more blame is most obviously shown by the difference in respondents recalling an "Antagonistic" attitude towards the military on the part of politicians (37.68%) versus civil servants (66.67%). It was the latter, charges Lieut.-General 49, who "starved the military of essentials with deliberate care..." More insidiously, adds Vice Admiral 103, even though senior bureaucrats "did not seriously believe that the military would attempt a coup, they were only too happy deliberately to fan this fear of Nehru's".<sup>15</sup> Regardless of which branch of civilian government was held more responsible, would the poor state of Indian civil-military relations during the first decade of swaraj endanger civil supremacy-of-rule in India--especially if officers were confronted by the example of a successful armed forces' coup next door?

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## II. Civil-Military Relations in Pakistan, 1947-1958

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### II.A. The Military Takes Over

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<sup>15</sup> From an interview with Vice Admiral 103; New Delhi, 18 September 1987.

On 7 October 1958, Pakistan President Iskander Mirza abrogated the constitution, proclaimed Martial Law, dismissed the central and provincial governments and assemblies, and appointed Pakistan Army C-in-C General Ayub Khan as Chief Martial Law Administrator. Twenty days later, Ayub pressured Mirza into surrendering all governing power to him in what he described as a "Revolution".<sup>16</sup> There is not the space here to describe Ayub's period of rule; his creation of "Basic Democracies", 1960 election as President of Pakistan, formulation of a new constitution, 1965 re-election and eventual replacement in office four years later. What will be examined below are the circumstances leading up to Ayub's Revolution, their similarities with the Indian experience over the same period and Indian military officers' recollected opinions of the Pakistan Army takeover.

Pakistan's government had already weathered one attempted military coup. In Spring 1951, the government uncovered the "Rawalpindi Conspiracy", a plot led by Major-General Akbar Khan to assassinate PM Liaquat Ali Khan, Army C-in-C (the British) General Sir Douglas Gracey, and other top officials. Tried and convicted by a Special Civil Tribunal, the plotters were freed some years later.<sup>17</sup> Ayub understood the conspiracy as having "deep roots; it grew in the soil of discontent and distrust" created by the spate of rapid post-Partition promotions which raised officers' career expectations to unreasonable and unobtainable heights, the J&K Conflict which saw junior officers "out on their own with little direction from headquarters and with considerable

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<sup>16</sup> See Cohen, The Indian Army, p. 178; and Khan, Friends Not Masters, pp. 70-76.

<sup>17</sup> See Cohen, *op.cit.*, p. 178; Khan, *op.cit.*, pp. 70-76.

responsibility" and, most importantly, "the discontent...[caused by] a government which failed to discharge its functions properly".<sup>18</sup>

Ayub main justification was the political leadership's mismanagement of Pakistan:

Those who followed Liaquat Ali Khan [assassinated a few months after discovery of the Rawalpindi Conspiracy] in political office proved unequal to the task. They did not understand the problems facing the country, nor did they have the courage to try to solve them. One after another they made a mess of things...and the country started slipping very fast.<sup>19</sup>

Chronic political infighting also affected civil servants, writes Ayub:

The politicians were naturally dependent on permanent services, but the more powerful among the services had developed political ambitions of their own. Everyone seemed to have a group of his own and his sole occupation was to grind his own axe regardless of whether the country was ground to pieces in the process.<sup>20</sup>

Finally, adds Ayub, the deterioration in the political and economic situation in the run-up to the 1958 elections led "Perfectly respectable people...[to] come to me and say, 'You can save the situation...'"<sup>21</sup>

The factors leading to the 1958 coup illustrate the danger of relying on only one of the competing military intervention theories. The first set of theorists would argue that the ineffectiveness of Pakistan's politicians and bureaucrats would eventually pull its "model citizen" professional military officers into assuming power for the good of the country. Ayub himself describes the Pakistan Army in 1958 as "the only disciplined organization that could give the country the necessary covering fire, in order to enable it to steady itself and extricate itself from the evils which had surrounded it".<sup>22</sup> The dilemma is that

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<sup>18</sup> Khan, op.cit., pp. 37-38.

<sup>19</sup> ibid., p. 49.

<sup>20</sup> ibid., p. 49.

<sup>21</sup> ibid., pp. 56, 58.

<sup>22</sup> ibid., p. 58.

the high degree of professionalism which creates officers perfectly suited to take over government demands they refrain from doing so. Indeed, Ayub laments the Rawalpindi Conspiracy's damage to the army's "great tradition of loyalty, sense of duty, patriotism, and complete subordination to civil authority".<sup>23</sup> As C-in-C, he claims to have fought against the incursion of politics into the army, banning their discussion among senior officers, and accepting a cabinet position in 1954 only "to act as a buffer between the politicians and the armed forces".<sup>24</sup>

For the second set of military intervention theorists who see third world officers as inclined to become enmeshed in their transitional society's political and socioeconomic conflicts, this acceptance was ultimately futile. Ayub himself acknowledges that his officers could not remain forever unaffected by "all the political chicanery, intrigue, corruption, and inefficiency manifest in every sphere of life".<sup>25</sup> For the second set, seeking to terminate developmental pressures may lead officers to shift their professional sense of responsibility to serve their client—society—from the legitimate government to the state itself. As in the case of Ayub's ousting of President Mirza 20 days after being invited to serve as Chief Martial Law Administrator, this shift allows military officers to realize their potential as political actors, pushing their way into power with the seemingly irreproachable justification of "serving the nation".

Paradoxically, Ayub also justifies leading the army into government in order to protect it from domestic politics. This may be understood in

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<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 42, 53.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, p. 58.

the light of the third theory of military intervention which sees officers' defence of their organizational corporateness as the prime motivation for a coup. The Rawalpindi Conspiracy came as a "great shock to me and to all right-thinking people in the army",<sup>26</sup> recalls Ayub— apparently, as much for violating the professional chain of command as for its goal of overthrowing the government.<sup>27</sup> Ayub was similarly scandalized during the 1958 general election run-up when the Pakistan Army's professional respect for civil supremacy-of-rule was threatened by various politicians "making contact with certain members of the armed forces...spreading all kinds of rumours to isolate senior officers and to create groups of army officers to support them in the pursuit of their ambitions".<sup>28</sup> Finally, writes Ayub, the impending threat of electoral violence meant "whether the army liked it or not it would get embroiled [in politics], because in the final analysis it would become a question of maintaining some semblance of law and order in the country".<sup>29</sup> Thus, even though he worried that "a well-organized, trained, and disciplined army would find it extremely distasteful to be turned into an instrument for securing power",<sup>30</sup> Ayub deemed his Revolution necessary to protect both the Pakistan Army's traditional, corporate non-involvement in politics and its role as ultimate guarantor of domestic law and order.

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#### II.A.1. Questionnaire Respondents

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<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>27</sup> Cohen, *op.cit.*, p. 178. See also Col. Mohammad Ahmad, *My Chief* (Lahore: Longmans, Green and Co., 1960), pp. 37 ff as used in Cohen, *op.cit.*, p. 178.

<sup>28</sup> Khan, *op.cit.*, p. 57.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*, p. 58.

What did Indian armed forces' officers think of their former comrades-in-arms taking power next door in Pakistan? See Table 6.2.

TABLE 6.2

What were your feelings on Ayub Khan's "Revolution"?	
	Percent(No.)
Necessary and/or Unsurprising	33.33 (32)
Unnecessary and/or Surprising	32.29 (31)
No Particular Notice	26.04 (25)
No Answer	8.33 (8)
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Total	99.99 (96)

For a third (33.33%) of the respondents, the military intervention was "Necessary and/or Unsurprising". Brigadier 27 could see that Pakistani politicians were "not up to the mark" in, adds Lieut.-Colonel 14, a country suffering from a "general breakdown of [the] parliamentary system". Lieut.-General 16 offers a telling comparison:

Pakistan...suffered from lack of institutionalisation of the body politic. India was lucky in its leaders like Nehru and Patel who gave it stability and built institutions. In Pakistan Jinnah died in 1948, Liaquat was assassinated a few years later...in these circumstances, the coup was not a surprise.

Indian officers, argues Major-General 96, "generally approved...Someone had to fill the vacuum in political leadership and the Army was as qualified to do so if not better than a host of weak parties and self-serving politicians". Moreover, argues Major-General 34, "Ayub stepped in to take the reins of government at the request of Pakistani politicians. He had no choice in the matter". "It was a case of politicians virtually pushing the military into politics", agrees Lieut.-General 19. "At least", offers Brigadier 40, "the Pakistan Army was...more nationalistic in outlook than the civilian coterie ruling the country at the time".

Some "Necessary and/or Unsurprising" respondents hoped Pakistan's Revolution might have a salutary effect at home. "Pakistan's political system had ceased to effectively exist, from which India should learn a lesson", writes Brigadier 44. Brigadier 73 recalls Indian officers as

happy that at least some army general is exerting himself in our subcontinent and [hopeful that] our politicians will [sic] change for better towards the armed forces. Considering the situation, that action was necessary and desirable. However, the same could not have been enacted in India.

Not so, argues Lieut.-Colonel 81, "the people of the subcontinent—whether Pakistanis or Indians needed to be disciplined and the politicians were no good for this. A dictator was good for Pakistan".

Might one also improve India?

No; even those respondents most enthusiastic over Ayub's Revolution soon saw that military rule failed to improve the general situation, and damaged the armed forces themselves. Lieut.-General 56 explains:

Initially one felt good about the stories coming across about army NCOs checking [on] civil servants and chasing them into their offices on time and such like, but things were soon back to normal...In retrospect [military rule was] neither necessary nor desirable, at least as far as Pakistan is concerned.

Brigadier 62 offers a similar recollection:

[From] what one could gather from [the] press and occasional visitors, corruption was rampant in all walks of life, there were signs of unrest in East Pakistan and a drastic change had become necessary. Initially Ayub Khan did a commendable job but later military rulers themselves got affected by greed.

Though some Indian military officers originally approved of Pakistan's Revolution, they "had no idea of what damage it will [sic] cause in the long run", concludes Major-General 52.

Another third (32.29%) recall Ayub's Revolution as "Unnecessary and/or Surprising". "The [Indian] army was shocked", recalls Lieut.-General 4. "I do not think that a coup is a correct answer to any



country's problems", argues Brigadier 50. Some officers worried about a knock-on effect. Ayub's Revolution was "a bad development for the region", writes Lieut.-General 95 and, adds Brigadier 37, "spelt danger to India's security".

A few respondents see the 1958 Revolution as the result of the dominance of one community, Punjabi Muslims, of both country and army— at independence, they made up approximately 60% of Pakistan Army personnel.<sup>31</sup> Although Ayub was a NWFP Pathan (also Muslims), Air Marshal 5 argues that his takeover was "not entirely unexpected given the strong feudal interests of the dominant Punjabi mussalman...who also dominated the army and provided the cohesive 'caste' kinship for a successful coup". Remember that on Table 0.1 respondents rank "Nationally representative military personnel" as the fourth most important factor contributing to India never having had a coup. In contrast, writes Major-General 89, Ayub's Revolution was "a natural extension of the Punjabi Muslim officer class...in their quest for power".

Other "Unnecessary and/or Surprising" respondents describe military rule in Pakistan as more undesirable than unexpected. For Lieut.-General 94, civil-military antagonism was apparent long before 1958:

I visited Pakistan unofficially for a day in 1954. I was somewhat surprised to see that the Army had quite a hold over the civil administration. One could see that they would throw out their political leaders for whom they had nothing but contempt. Quite a few of them told me that we were lucky to have people like Jawaharlal Nehru and others.<sup>32</sup>

Yet, recalls Brigadier 90, if

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<sup>31</sup> See S. Cohen, The Pakistan Army (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 40-47, 113-117; and Khan, op.cit., p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> "Most senior Pakistani officers", adds Cohen, "have a grudging admiration for the Indian accomplishment [of democracy], but quite typically...attribute the difference to the Indians' being lucky in their [civilian political] leadership". See Cohen, The Pakistan Army, p. 106.

one felt sorry for the Pakistanis, one also felt that in a vast country such as ours, with so much diversity, poverty, illiteracy, there was some justified need to have discipline and a degree of authoritarian administration. To that extent, Ayub's action was not too harshly condemned.

For Brigadier 29, the reaction of Indian officers to the Pakistan Army's take-over of government was "generally unfavourable but predictable in the circumstances prevailing in Pakistan at the time".

Some respondents express regret for the Revolution's effect on their former comrades-in-arms. Major-General 20 describes how

We felt that the military coup in Pakistan will bring the end of the high military traditions of the Pakistan Army. We felt that once the army entered politics and started ruling Pakistan, the army will deteriorate and its officers and men will get involved in corruption, nepotism and unmilitary [sic] professions. All this came out true.

Brigadier 60 agrees: "Pakistan had a good army and after the coup d'état, once the army got used to having power, the army will [sic] not be as good as previously".

A final quarter (26.04%) of respondents took "No Particular Notice" of Pakistan's Revolution. "Once we have [sic] accepted Pakistan as a separate country it was none of my concern to think of their internal affairs", adds Brigadier 30. Two other reactions are discernible. In the words of Lieut.-General 87, the first was a

feeling...of apprehension, not because of any altruistic attitude towards the place of the military in a democracy but because of the likelihood that Ayub Khan providing Pakistan with a good administration and thus posing a threat of some magnitude to India.

The second was the opportunity to denigrate Pakistan. Ayub's take-over "exposed [the] hollowness of Pak. political leadership and [the] utter helplessness of [its] people and political leaders", writes Brigadier 31, and "it is so even today". "Pakistan cannot survive as an

independent entity", adds Air Chief Marshal 12, "it needs outside (US) assistance and dictatorships". "If our politicians were inexperienced and lacking in understanding of the military, the Pakistani politicians and elite were outright grabbers", argues Lieut.-General 49, "Ayub with his supporters grabbed the most".

The respondents' responses reveal most Indian military officers as able to dispassionately observe the political upheaval taking place next door by their comrades-in-arms of only 11 years before. "The army was simply [the] most organized actor in Pakistan", opines Lieut.-Colonel 25. Yet, however "Necessary and/or Unsurprising", the particular circumstances perceived to have led to Ayub's takeover of government— incompetent political and administrative leadership, the dominance of one ethnic group in society and army, a feudal socioeconomic structure— were dismissed as irrelevant to India. "Anything", writes Brigadier 69, "could happen in Pakistan". Even so, concludes Brigadier 39, a "civil government and politicians are always the right people to govern any country".

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### III. Contrasting Experiences

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#### III.A. A Hindu Versus Muslim Predisposition to Military Rule

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A number of Table 6.2's "Necessary and/or Not Surprising" and "No Particular Notice" respondents explain their choice by arguing that a national religion of Islam predisposed Pakistan to military rule. Lieut.-General 88 "took [Ayub's coup] as a part of Muslim culture". Brigadier 76 saw it as "no different than such coups in almost all Muslim countries. Perhaps these countries thrive best on a military

dictatorship". "Islam, its faith, culture and tradition lend themselves to a military dictatorship the world over and continue to do so in Pakistan and elsewhere", concludes Major-General 74.

Are Islam and democracy incompatible? Judith Brown explains how, since Muslims believe "the heart of reality is Allah, one God who is creator and arbiter of all things", they must strive to order their personal and public life as laid out in the holy Koran and by *Shariah* (Islamic law) as developed and taught by the *ulema*. Politically, this means creating "a theocratic state, where God rules in practice because his ministers and law order life."<sup>33</sup> Although most Muslim rulers are unwilling to hand over power to religious leaders on the basis of non-political arguments, they do appear ready to use Islam's "well-formulated and powerful belief structure"<sup>34</sup> in absolutism to sustain autocratic rather than pluralistic rule:<sup>35</sup> of the 13 coups world-wide from 1950 to 1957, five occurred in three Islamic states compared to eight in seven other countries; giving ratios of 1.67/1 and 1.14/1,

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<sup>33</sup> Brown, *Modern India*, pp. 27-28.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>35</sup> Ayub Khan recalls that, after his Revolution,

the demand for an Islamic Constitution was...ardently advocated by the *ulema*. Since no one had defined the fundamental aspects of an Islamic Constitution, no Constitution could be called Islamic unless it received the blessing of all the *ulema*. The only way of having an Islamic Constitution was to hand over the country to the *ulema* and beseech them, 'lead kindly light'...This was a position which neither the people nor I was prepared to accept, opposed as it was to the fundamental democratic principle that all authority must vest in the people.

Khan did, however, accept that the history of Islamic states showed that "the leader, once he is chosen by the community, should have sufficient power to co-ordinate, supervise, and control the activities of government. Delegation of authority was permissible but central control must remain in the hands of the chosen leader..." See Khan, *op.cit.*, pp. 190, 198-204.

respectively. From 1958 to 1985, 32 coups occurred in 13 nations where Islam was the chief religion compared to 89 in 45 other states; ratios of 2.46/1 and 1.98/1, respectively.<sup>36</sup> A 1990 survey of 17 Arab nations (all embracing Islam) revealed six absolute monarchies and six secular dictatorships. Only five were in the process of introducing "an element of pluralism"<sup>37</sup> and not one displayed European democratic standards.

Before the 1958 Revolution, however, Islam played little part in the professional development of commissioned Pakistani military officers.<sup>38</sup> Although it was used to unify the Pakistan Army on a general, emotional level (e.g., in the introduction of Islamic battle cries) the country's political and military leaders were more concerned with constructing a viable defence establishment than with revamping officers' ideology which continued to remain that of the British officer and gentleman. While senior military commanders under Ayub's government and General Yahya Khan's subsequent martial law regime (1969-1971) increasingly referred to the "spirit of *jihad* [holy war] and dedication to Islam",<sup>39</sup> there was no concerted effort to incorporate religious measures into the armed forces' training, organization or strategy. Only during General/President Zia al-Haq's period of military rule (1977-1988) were more formal measures (e.g., the introduction of Islamic teachings into

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<sup>36</sup> The nations and the year(s) of coups are taken from O'Kane, The Likelihood of Coups, pp. 141-144. In judging which countries have Islam as their chief religion, I include Nigeria, Sudan and Indonesia as well as obvious choices such as Syria, Oman and Afghanistan.

<sup>37</sup> N.a., "Dicing with Democracy", The Economist, 3 February 1990, p. 66.

<sup>38</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the following discussion of Islam and Pakistan officers and dates of subsequent military regimes is taken from Cohen, The Pakistan Army, pp. 37, 86-104; and N.a., "Pakistan: A troubled history", The Economist, 23-29 November 1991.

<sup>39</sup> From a speech by Pakistan Lieut.-General Tikka Khan as used in Cohen, The Pakistan Army, p. 86. The definition of *jihad* is taken from Brown, op.cit., p. 28.

the Pakistan Military Academy; PMA) adopted. Yet, while most Pakistani officers today happily observe Islamic law in their personal lives, many continue to question the incorporation of religious strictures into their professional careers.

In contrast to their belief that a national religion of Islam predisposes a country to military rule, many respondents are convinced that Hinduism helps ensure continued civilian government. See Table 0.1 in which the questionnaire respondents rank India's "Dominant Hindu culture against military rule" as the sixth most important factor in the country never having experienced an armed forces' coup.

The respondents stress they are not speaking of Hinduism in a strict religious sense but, explain Lieut.-General 19 and Colonel 24, respectively, more as a "philosophy" or "way of life".<sup>40</sup> Nonetheless, while Hinduism lacks the discipline of a revelatory text, organized church and congregational worship common to most other world religions, its adherents' search for *dharma*—what Brown describes as the "fundamental laws of existence, to which men and women must conform through performance of their own...religious duty"<sup>41</sup>—has created a rigid caste system which, argues Lieut.-General 94, "keeps people in their place".<sup>42</sup> Given the inescapability of caste, continues Air Chief

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<sup>40</sup> From follow-up interviews with Lieut.-General 19; New Delhi, 10 September 1987; and From an interview with Colonel 24; New Delhi, 12 September 1987.

<sup>41</sup> Brown, *op.cit.*, p. 23. Paul Younger argues that *dharma* has come to mean "'order'" and to describe all the religious, legal, customary and political efforts to identify an area of stability of both roots [primordial loyalties expressed in social institutions such as family and caste] and vision [a primordial commitment to the idea of a universal vision of human existence]". See Brown, *op.cit.*, p. 23; and P. Younger, From Ashoka to Rajiv: An Analysis of Indian Political Culture (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1987), pp. viii, 1-10, 20-24, 39-42.

<sup>42</sup> From a follow-up interview with Lieut.-General 94; New Delhi, 15 August 1989. Traditional Hindu society is divided into four great and

Marshal 12, "Hindus are not like Muslims...[Hindus are] very complacent, god-fearing...total worriers".<sup>43</sup> Hinduism, agrees Major-General 105, is "milder by nature [than Islam; it is] conformist...traditionalist".<sup>44</sup> For Lieut.-General 17, such qualities mean Hindus cannot "reconcile themselves to such a drastic form of action [as a military coup]...The Hindu doesn't want to hurt a bloody fly".<sup>45</sup>

The respondents offer historical proof that Hinduism has helped keep independent India free from military rule. Mr. C1, a leading Indian journalist and commentator, describes how

in Indian history kings ruled with the aid of their chief advisor, usually a Brahmin. Under the king came his commander-in-chief. A king might lead his army into battle but always in the role of king, not military commander. The king always retained his political authority.<sup>46</sup>

Vice Admiral 103 agrees:

In the days of the ancient Aryan civilization—which introduced the caste system in India—civil/military relations were at their peak in understanding and delineation. Brahmins ruled, wrote laws and administered while warriors enforced law. Both were interested in keeping bottom two classes from real power.<sup>47</sup>

For Major-General 74, Mughul rule in India was an exception when, "as in any Muslim country, the rulers...[implemented] usually dictatorships and changes...[were] made by violent means".<sup>48</sup> In contrast, argues Vice

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mutually exclusive castes: *brahmans* (priests), *kshatriyas* (warriors and aristocracy), *vaishyas* (merchants), and *shudras* (cultivators). See Thapar, A History of India, pp. 37-40.

<sup>43</sup> From a follow-up interview with Air Chief Marshal 12; Pune, 11 October 1987.

<sup>44</sup> From an interview with Major-General 105; New Delhi, 12 September 1987.

<sup>45</sup> From a follow-up interview with Lieut.-General 17; London, 26 November 1987.

<sup>46</sup> From an interview with Mr. C1; New Delhi, 13 September 1989.

<sup>47</sup> From an interview with Vice Admiral 103; New Delhi, 18 September 1987.

<sup>48</sup> From a follow-up interview with Major-General 74; New Delhi, 21 August 1989.

Admiral 2, "the Hindu mind is not militaristic, the Hindu concept of a just king is not a militarily just king"..<sup>49</sup>

While the Indian armed forces today provide facilities for all their personnel to observe the rites of their respective religions, and do not allow any one faith to dictate their recruitment, training, organization and/or strategy, the country's dominant Hindu culture inevitably affects their standing in society. Lieut.-General 94 explains:

In a Muslim culture soldiers see themselves as 'guardians of the nation', enjoying a unique position in society as defenders of the country's ideals, [i.e., those of] Islam. A Hindu soldier does not occupy a special place in society. Though he and his institution are respected, he is not thought of as particularly special or different. He does not think he has a special status. He sees his role purely as relating to his military advisors.<sup>50</sup>

Lieut.-General 107 agrees that "Hinduism has much to do with an apolitical military...The Hindu way of life [is] not a fanatical way of life unlike the Muslim".<sup>51</sup> "In Hinduism", adds Colonel 24, "there are things more powerful than the sword—the strength of the mind, of being moral, and the weakness of being immoral".<sup>52</sup>

Hinduism's lack of definition relative to other world religions does lead to some disagreement as to its influence in preventing military rule in India. If you can "find me a Hindu and bring him to me I shall be very grateful", says Commodore 99; "There is no 'Hinduism'...It is

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<sup>49</sup> Admiral 2 concedes that "Shivaji [a Mahratta ruler from 1659-1680, he established a state independent of Mughul rule] is an exception...but even he administered the civil side through a council of civilian ministers". Younger concurs with the respondents' description of a pre-Mughul India ruled by kings advised by Brahmins within "firmly demarcated" boundaries of authority. From a follow-up interview with Vice Admiral 2; Bombay, 7 October 1987; Spear, A History of India, pp. 59-60; and Younger, op.cit., pp. 27, 45-47.

<sup>50</sup> From a follow-up interview with Lieut.-General 94; New Delhi, 15 August 1989.

<sup>51</sup> From an interview with Lieut.-General 107; New Delhi, 20 September 1987.

<sup>52</sup> From an interview with Colonel 24; New Delhi, 12 September 1987.



like the English language in that you can find everything in it". Any anti-coup intervention attitude, he continues, is due to the more general "environmental influence of being an Indian...[which includes] resistance to unnatural change...it is difficult to...change the motivation of an Indian as by nature we are subjugated [sic] to the beaten track".<sup>53</sup> Ex-Defence Secretary Mr. C5 also doesn't "want to use the word 'Hindu'. But there is an Indian culture which is basically law-abiding and peaceful. One can't call it Hindu as Indians still do not believe in the two-nation theory".<sup>54</sup> For some respondents all India's religions have contributed to the make-up of contemporary society.

How widespread among commissioned Indian officers of all religions is the notion that Hinduism has been a major factor in preventing a military coup in India? With the exception of the Zoroastrian Brigadier 76, every one of the 16 respondents quoted above in this section—Lieut.-Generals 17, 19, 88, 94 and 107, Major-Generals 74 and 105, Colonel 24, Vice Admirals 2 and 103, Commodore 99, Air Chief Marshal 12, journalist and commentator Mr. C1, and ex-Defence Secretary C5—is Hindu. Despite the respective assurances of Lieut.-Generals 17 and 107 that their Muslim and/or Christian comrades agree as to the existence of a "Dominant Hindu culture against military rule" in India,<sup>55</sup> each of the three non-Hindu respondents who offers an opinion disagrees. The Shia Muslim Air Marshal 5 does not "think that you can get away with saying that a Hindu culture is inherently democratic. Their culture doesn't

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<sup>53</sup> From an interview with Commodore 99; Bombay, 6 October 1987.

<sup>54</sup> From an interview with Mr. C5; New Delhi, 14 August 1989.

<sup>55</sup> "A Muslim or Christian officer would say the same thing" comments Lieut.-General 17; "Muslim officers in the IA would agree with this", adds Lieut.-General 107. From a follow-up interview with Lieut.-General 17; London, 26 November 1987; and an interview with Lieut.-General 107; New Delhi, 20 September 1987.

suggest this. Islam as a religion is very democratic, only its practice is not".<sup>56</sup> The Jewish Lieut.-General 100 dismisses the notion that Hinduism has created respect for the civil authority as "Rubbish! Look to Indian history, [it's] extremely bloody, [and full of] extreme communal feelings".<sup>57</sup> While conceding that "being ruled by outsiders for over 1500 years has affected the Indian character, skewing its values towards sycophancy and corruption", the Sikh Major-General 75 argues that "it is not [a Hindu] culture but other circumstances...[which have] resulted in a lack of character".<sup>58</sup>

Of course, not all Hindu respondents believe in a dominant Indian culture of Hinduism or its anti-coup influence. For Brigadier (Justice) 47, the idea is "nonsense".<sup>59</sup> Major-General 85 asks: "What is the definition of 'Hinduism'? What is India's ethos, character? Our strength has been that we have absorbed invading cultures not just tolerated them. So we have absorbed many Western ideas as well".<sup>60</sup> Ex-Governor Mr. C7 agrees: India's civil supremacy-of-rule has "nothing to do with Hinduism...[the idea] is to a very great extent nonsense. While we cannot escape the influence of the Hinduism of 80% of Indians, too many people who think about Indian problems put them in a religious context".<sup>61</sup> "If we look to history", adds Admiral 58, "we can see that the caste of *kshatriyas* were warriors and kings. One could argue that if

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<sup>56</sup> From a follow-up interview with Air Marshal 5; New Delhi, 17 August 1989.

<sup>57</sup> From an interview with Lieut.-General 100; New Delhi, 9 September 1989.

<sup>58</sup> From a follow-up interview with Major-General 75; New Delhi; 14 August 1989.

<sup>59</sup> From a follow-up interview with Brigadier (Justice) 47; New Delhi, 19 August 1989.

<sup>60</sup> From a follow-up interview with Major-General 85; 16 August 1989.

<sup>61</sup> From an interview with ex-Governor C7; New Delhi, 13 August 1989.

you have the right to bear arms you also have the right to rule".<sup>62</sup>

Though accepting the existence of a dominant Hindu culture, ex-Principal Defence Secretary Dr. C4 argues it has had "no influence in preventing a coup. Hinduism is very arbitrary, very authoritarian, very feudal. Under the British it was even more so, more sycophantic".<sup>63</sup>

TABLE 6.3

A breakdown of Table 0.1's sixth-place choice, "(C) Dominant Hindu culture inherently against military rule", by respondents' religion

No. of officers/Religion/Rankings of (C):	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	Total	
48 / Hindu	3	2	3	5	2	15 <sup>a</sup>	
12 / Sikh	1	0	0	2	1	4 <sup>b</sup>	
4 / Christian	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1 / Buddhist	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1 / Zoroastrian	0	0	0	0	0	0	
3 / "No Religion"	0	0	0	0	0	0	
69 Respondents	Total	4	2	3	7	3	19

<sup>a</sup> The 48 Hindu respondents give (C) eight other rankings: one 9th, three 10ths, one 11th, one 13th and two 15ths.

<sup>b</sup> The 12 Sikh respondents give (C) two other rankings: one 7th and one 10th.<sup>c</sup> The four Christians include two Roman Catholics.

Nonetheless, that non-Hindu officers are more sceptical of Hinduism as a factor helping to ensure continued civil supremacy-of-rule in India is shown in Table 6.3. Combined, the 21 Sikh, Christian, Buddhist, Zoroastrian and/or "No Religion" officers muster just four (one 1st, two 4ths and a 5th) top five rankings for "A Dominant Hindu culture against military rule"; giving a ratio of 5.25/1. Hindu officers account for the remaining 15 (three 1sts, two 2nds, three 3rds, five 4ths and two 5ths) top five rankings; or a ratio of 3.2/1.

<sup>62</sup> From a follow-up interview with Admiral 58; Gurgaon, 28 August 1989.

<sup>63</sup> From an interview with ex-Principle Defence Secretary Dr. C4; New Delhi, 4 September 1989.

Whatever the views of Hindu versus non-Hindu officers as to the existence of a dominant Hindu culture in India and/or its role in helping to prevent a coup, there is no escaping the question of applicability. That is, while respondents can point to the proliferation of coups in Muslim countries to support the view that a national religion of Islam predisposes a state to military rule, they can offer only India as an example of a nation with a dominant Hindu culture. That it has never experienced a coup is neither here nor there: if there was a military takeover in India, would respondents still view Hinduism as an anti-coup influence? If, instead of a strictly Hindu culture it is an "Indianness"—created from the totality of the subcontinent's historical experiences in which a multitude of often competing religions and cultures have contributed—which has helped prevent military rule, the Indian example is even more inapplicable to other countries.

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### III.B. Military Reference-Group Experiences

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More easily comparable are the distinctly different reference-group experiences of Indian and Pakistani armed forces' officers from 1947-1957/8. Remember Price's theory of military intervention: so powerful is the desire of Third World officers to retain all aspects of their prestigious Western academy training that they develop a positive reference-group identification with the officer corps of the educating state, sometimes to the extent of becoming non-nationalistic—sharing the latter's dislike for politicians, especially anti-colonial leaders—and non-puritanical—demanding First World standards of compensation and social liberties. If such officers judge their country's new leadership

and/or status in society as inferior to that previous to independence, they may forcibly overthrow the government."<sup>4</sup>

There was little danger of independent India's commissioned officers becoming non-nationalistic and/or non-puritanical. Although they continued to be taught according to the ideal of a British officer and gentleman, since 1932 all Indian officers had received their professional academy training at the IMA. And, while a number of officers participated in UNO operations in Korea, Indo-China, Egypt and Lebanon<sup>5</sup> and/or enjoyed higher command and technical training courses in the UK, the vast majority had no opportunity to compare directly their resource allocation, corporate status and/or rewards with their foreign counterparts. With the exception of some Brindians, officers did not ape British military attitudes nor expect to receive Western rates-of-pay. (Even so, the Indian armed forces continued to receive a significant share of public expenditure: from 1950 to 1958, "defence as a percentage of current expenditure" only slowly declined from 29% to 24.3%.)<sup>6</sup> The poor quality of Defence Ministers also helped ensure that the military's corporate sphere of decision-making was left (perhaps too) inviolate. Most importantly, most officers had long appreciated the competence of their political and administrative leaders and had had complete confidence in their preparedness for independence.

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<sup>4</sup> Price, "A Theoretical Approach to Military Rule in New States", pp. 390-402. Note also that Claude E. Welch, Jr. and Arthur K. Smith, members of the third coup prediction group, argue that the "likelihood of domestic military intervention rises to the extent that external military assistance facilitates role expansion and greater autonomy for the armed forces". See Welch and Smith, Military Role and Rule, pp. 18-19.

<sup>5</sup> See Evans, Thimayya of India, pp. 291-303; Longer, Red Coats to Olive Green, pp. 333-341; Praval, Indian Army After Independence, pp. 147-170; and Thorat, *op.cit.*, pp. 124-163.

<sup>6</sup> Kavic, *op.cit.*, Appendix I.

In contrast, joining the US-sponsored Baghdad Pact and South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO)<sup>67</sup> exposed Pakistan's "1950-1965 generation"<sup>68</sup> of military officers to the full force of the American defence establishment. In addition to receiving a great quantity of equipment, the Pakistani armed forces revised their tables of organization to US suggestions, switched their subscriptions from UK military journals to American competitors, and even modified the strict traditions of the mess—crucial in forging the professional qualities of a British officer and gentleman and regimental *izzat*—to accommodate American ways.<sup>69</sup> Most importantly, Pakistan's 1950-1965 generation of officers underwent a considerable amount of prestigious professional training in the US.<sup>70</sup> In the end, their reference-group identification with the American armed forces combined with their role in US-led international alliances to give Pakistan's military officers the over-confidence to think themselves capable of governing.<sup>71</sup>

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### III.C. Initial Political Stability

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<sup>67</sup> See Khan, *op.cit.*, pp. 116, 154-158.

<sup>68</sup> Cohen, *The Pakistan Army*, p. 63.

<sup>69</sup> One Pakistani officer recalls how "Some of our messes, against clear Army orders, admitted ladies, perhaps imitating some aspects of the American Officers' clubs. From the introduction of ladies it was but a step to providing singing girls, presumably under the influence of some cultural move. Not very edifying for the up and coming young officer". See M. Attiqur Rahman, *Our Defence Cause* (London: White Lion, 1976), p. 44 as used in Cohen, *The Pakistan Army*, p. 67. See also pp. 64, 68.

<sup>70</sup> Cohen, *The Pakistan Army*, p. 64.

<sup>71</sup> For Cohen, the huge US presence compromised the "purely national image" of the Pakistani armed forces, and imbued officers who had no direct experience of the British-led Indian Army with "an exaggerated view of the weakness of both India and the Indian military...[and] an overblown estimate of their own and Pakistan's martial qualities". Ultimately, continues Cohen, this exaggerated self-confidence led to "defeat" in the 1965 war with India and the creation of Bangladesh in 1971. See *ibid.*, pp. 63-64, 68.

The first and second groups of military intervention theorists argue that the crucial determinant of an armed forces' coup is the quality, stability and popularity of a country's political and administrative leadership during the turmoil of post-independence modernization. Other factors, including officers' perceptions of government attitudes towards the armed forces, a national religion's (im)probable predisposition to military rule, and officers' reference-group identification are unlikely to lead to a coup if a government is widely perceived as legitimate and effective. On this matter, the respective experiences of Pakistan and India from 1947-1957/8 could hardly have been more different.

In Pakistan, political infighting after the death of two outstanding leaders, Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan, soon after Partition and the lack of a constitution led to chronic government instability. With the civil service increasingly politicized and the economy suffering, many people openly demanded intervention by the one remaining organization, the army, seen as capable of uniting the country. India, in contrast, enjoyed a surfeit of experienced politicians belonging to one party, Congress, which by 1958 had won two general elections under an established constitution.<sup>72</sup> India also inherited experienced senior civil servants confident of their ability to administer an independent nation. Most importantly, there was Nehru's towering authority.

The respective majorities of respondents on Table 6.1 who recall India's political and administrative leadership as having an "Antagonistic" and/or "Complacent" attitude towards the armed forces in the first decade of independence must be seen against their supportive

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<sup>72</sup> See Edwardes, Nehru, pp. 243-244, 246-252, 256-257, 264; and Gopal, Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography Volume I, 1889-1947, p. 347.

attitudes expressed for these two groups before and on the verge of swaraj as shown on Tables 3.6, 5.4 and 5.5. Officers' high expectations for independent India's civil-military relations had not been fulfilled. Yet neither had they deteriorated to the extent of overshadowing the demonstrated ability, authority and popularity of India's civilian governing elite. Indian armed forces' officers had no opportunity to be pulled or to push themselves into power. The respondents acknowledge this; see Table 0.1 in which "Initial political stability, quality and/or democratic rule" and "Wisdom and stature of national leaders" are ranked as the third and eighth most important factors, respectively, contributing to India never having had a military coup.

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### III.C.1. Questionnaire Respondents

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Did India's civilian and military population recognize their government's ability to rule? See Table 6.4.

TABLE 6.4

Did civilians/military officers feel the Indian armed forces should follow the example of Ayub Khan's Revolution?		
	Civilians	Military Officers
	Percent(No.)	
No	81.25 (78)	92.71 (89)
Yes	15.63 (15)	4.71 (4)
No Answer	3.13 (3)	3.13 (3)
	Total 100.01 (96)	100.01 (96)

Large majorities (81.25% and 92.71%, respectively) of respondents recall "No" "Civilians" or "Military Officers" as desirous of replicating the 1958 Pakistan Revolution in India. Many praise the first Indian Indian Army Chief for the country's safe civil supremacy-of-rule. Brigadier (Dr.) 55 explains:



The Indian Army had a very good leader in Field Marshal Cariappa who drummed into all officers day in and day out that our job is to protect the country, obey the government and protect the population from strife. Every officer had to carry these commandments in his pocket--[in] a small book.

India's officers, argues Lieut.-General 49, had both "respect for our political leadership at that time...[and] a clear knowledge of our own incapability of running things other than the military"

The small minority (15.00%) of "Yes" respondents recall "Civilians" discussing the attraction of the Pakistan Revolution. "One often heard it said at social gatherings 'Why don't you military men copy Pakistan and throw out these political nincompoops'", recalls Lieut.-General 4. Lieut.-Generals 56 and 95 point to the business community as the one segment of civilian society "viewing a military takeover as being beneficial". Major-General 96 remembers that "such talk was from sources which...wanted to gain power themselves, like the I.B. [Intelligence Bureau; see Chapter Eight]".

Just four (4.17%) respondents answer "Yes", "Military Officers" did discuss following Ayub's example. Brigadier 70 remembers some "vague conversations among people both military and civil". Major-General 72 protests that this was only an "academic discussion amongst the military". Brigadier 73 disagrees: "Ayub Khan's action was favoured by a large portion of the army officers. I should say it [this view] was held fairly strongly". Lieut.-Colonel 81 goes further: "We could have done better with a form of military dictatorship for some time. We would be a better country". Officer 81 retired a Lieut.-Colonel.

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Conclusion

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Fears that the poor state of Indian civil-military relations in the first decade of independence might lead officers to copy the 1958 Revolution of their Pakistan neighbours proved unfounded. For, while Nehru disdained the military as almost irrelevant to his government's policies for domestic and international conflict resolution, he continued to respect the armed forces' corporate sphere of decision-making and adequately reward its personnel. For Vice Admiral 103,

Any anger towards politicians was always of an indirect nature in that officers felt they had more time for the bureaucrats than the military. The military was upset with Warrant of Precedence and the open humiliation, unconcealed arrogance of the IAS regarding the military. But this is insufficient motivation for a coup. *One wants to change the [Defence] Minister, not the system. [My Italics.]*<sup>73</sup>

Moreover, argues Major-General 74, officers understood the reasons behind what they perceived to be the neglect of the armed forces: "the priorities of [the political] leaders were consolidation, development in core sectors and [the] creation of industrial base, rural development and [a] reduction in disparities". Although "there was some grouching about pay and allowances being lowered", recalls Major-General 105, "a good soldier always grouches".<sup>74</sup>

Indeed, the "Antagonistic"/"Complacent" relations between military officers and senior bureaucrats described in Table 6.1 may have helped ensure civil supremacy-of-rule in India. Dowse argues that a developing country's military officers and "bureaucratized [sic] middle class" share "primary socialization and educational patterns...[and] structural positions...*vis-a-vis* the politicians". As "alternative elites" with "a

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<sup>73</sup> 109 From an interview with Vice Admiral 103; New Delhi 18 September 1987.

<sup>74</sup> From an interview with Major-General 105; New Delhi, 12 September 1987.

firm interest in ordered modernization and economic growth", one or both of these two groups "must" assume leadership responsibility if the political elite fails to deliver national "growth, unity, stability, etc." Since the military do not have the numbers nor expertise to administer the complex state machinery and civilians cannot physically overthrow a regime, continues Dowse, the most effective instruments for replacing regimes are "military-bureaucratic coalitions".<sup>75</sup>

While India's military officers and senior civil servants shared a socioeconomic background of privilege and their respective organizations a history of elitism, their hostile relationship in the first decade of independence precluded developing a coalition against their political masters. "In British times", recalls Lieut.-General 101,

the military enjoyed a special place where even a jawan's needs would be seen to by civil servants. Today the civil servants couldn't care less. Civil servants never liked the military because previously they were overawed by the military. Now they wanted to put the military in its place. After independence the IAS thought that if they could gain the backing of the politicians against the military they could completely command the country.<sup>76</sup>

So, whereas Dowse argues that the military-bureaucratic coalition most effective for ousting a regime is fostered by its two elements sharing a similar position vis-a-vis the politicians,<sup>77</sup> Lieut.-General 101 points out that in India, "the situation is civil servants and politicians versus the military. Contrast this with Pakistan where it is the civil servants and military versus the politicians".<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Not that officers and bureaucrats "plot coups with one another, [and] carry them out", writes Dowse, for the "need for secrecy would preclude such an arrangement". See Dowse, "The Military and Political Development", pp. 228-232.

<sup>76</sup> From an interview with Lieut.-General 101; New Delhi, 18 August 1989:

<sup>77</sup> Dowse, op.cit., pp. 229, 231.

<sup>78</sup> From an interview with Lieut.-General 101; New Delhi, 18 August 1989. After assuming power in Pakistan, Ayub Khan found cooperative partners:

After Partition, India and Pakistan developed in different ways. Contrasting religious predispositions to military rule, reference-group identification experiences and initial political stability differentiated and distanced Indian officers from their former comrades in the British-led Indian military who seized the reins of government in Pakistan. The respondents' low, 14th place ranking in Table 0.1 of the "Example of ineffectiveness of military rule in Pakistan and Bangladesh" among factors contributing to India never having had a military coup shows their unwillingness to relate neighbouring countries' respective experiences to their own. In 1958, concludes Air Marshal 5, "only a few nutters",<sup>79</sup> civilian or military, suggested that Indian armed forces' officers copy Pakistan's Revolution.

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The basic structure of the civil administration was sound: all that it needed was a sense of confidence and freedom to operate without having to worry about extraneous considerations. The civil institutions responded to the situation admirably and started functioning efficiently and independently within a very short time.

Nonetheless, some scholars, like V. Kukreja, maintain there was in India no necessity of the kind of "alliance" between the politicians and civil service against the military (which had hardly any military organization to speak [of] at the time of independence) nor was here any such thing. There was the more or less natural order of institutionalization that developed under Nehru under very favourable circumstances especially in comparison with Pakistan.

See Khan, op.cit., p. 78; and V. Kukreja, "Civilian Control of the Military in India", The Indian Journal of Political Science 50:4 October-December 1989, pp. 491-492.

<sup>79</sup> From a follow-up interview with Air Marshal 5; New Delhi, 17 August 1989.

Civil-Military Relations in British and Independent India, 1918-1962,  
and Coup Prediction Theory

CHAPTER 7

Test Four: The Menon-Kaul Nexus

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## CHAPTER 7

### Test Four: The Menon-Kaul Nexus

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#### Introduction

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The time of greatest civil-military conflict in India began in the late 1950s with the rise of Krishna Menon and Lieut.-General B.M. Kaul to the top rank of the defence establishment. As defence minister and chief of the general staff, both used their close personal relationship with PM Nehru to vaunt over established civil-military procedure, playing favourites and upsetting colleagues to the point of being charged with politicising the armed forces. A Menon-Kaul nexus appeared to split the officer corps into pro- and anti-Menon-Kaul factions. Was there a danger of either bloc intervening against the civilian government to ensure the furtherance of their own respective interests?

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#### I. Menon

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##### I.A. A New Beginning?

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After a decade of governmental neglect of the armed forces, India's senior military officers, the former KCIOs,<sup>1</sup> warmly welcomed the almost simultaneous appointments of V.K. Krishna Menon (henceforth cited by surname only) and General Thimayya as defence minister and Indian Army

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<sup>1</sup> While KCIOs, IOOs and Indian ECOs had been re-designated as "officers" after independence, "KCIOs" will continue to be used below when referring to those eight illustrious Sandhurst graduates described above and, as a section heading, will include the written (auto)biographical accounts of pre-WWII-commissioned officers from all three armed forces who rose to senior military posts.

Chief, respectively, in the Spring of 1957.<sup>2</sup> Menon, highly intelligent, eloquent, admired for his London-based efforts in pursuance of *swaraj*, service as India's first High Commissioner to the UK, and defence of Indian interests as head of the country's UN mission, was also known to be an influential confidant of Nehru.<sup>3</sup> As such, writes Lieut.-General Kaul, the new DM "could be described as universally popular in the Services when he first came".<sup>4</sup> Thimayya, too, writes Major-General Palit, was "a popular general. Open, outgoing and with a glowing operational record, he had during his career gained the loyalty and affection of the officer cadre as no other Indian officer before or after him".<sup>5</sup> With Menon and Thimayya at the top of the India's defence hierarchy, expectation were great and, recalls (then Major-General) Chief of the General Staff (CGS) Lieut.-General Verma,

During the first few months of the regime, it appeared that cooperation between Army Headquarters and the ministry of defence would be really effective, and an atmosphere of mutual confidence would be created by the new DM...

The DM started off by being very pleasant and friendly with most of the senior officers, which was reciprocated by the officers concerned. Timmy and I were given special attention in this "wooing".<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Menon was appointed defence minister on 4 April 1957 and Thimayya became army chief one month later. See Council of Ministers, 1947-1984; and N. Maxwell, India's China War (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970), p. 189.

<sup>3</sup> See T.J.S. George, Krishna Menon: A Biography (London: Jonathan Cape, 1964), pp. 19, 31-35, 46-47, 51-57, 67-93, 90-91, 94-97, 102-107, 120-132, 148-151, 162-165, 167-199, 212-218; and Vira Memories of a Civil Servant, pp. 61-63.

<sup>4</sup> Kaul, The Untold Story, p. 215. See also Longer, The Defence and Foreign Policies of India, p. 81; Maxwell, *op.cit.*; and Praval, Indian Army After Independence, pp. 218-220.

<sup>5</sup> Palit, War in High Himalaya, p. 72. (NOTE: Although an ICO, Palit's relative seniority and familiarity with the principle characters of India's civil-military hierarchy during this period qualify him for inclusion in this and subsequent "KCIO" sections.) See also Evans, Thimayya of India, pp. 190-228; Longer, Red Coats to Olive Green, p. 235; and Thorat, From Reveille to Retreat, pp. 49-51, 53-80, 175.

<sup>6</sup> Verma, To Serve with Honour, p. 100. See also Thorat, *op.cit.*, p. 175.

When, in 1958, Admiral R.D. Katari and Air Marshal S. Mukherji joined Thimayya as heads of the IN and IAF, respectively, Indians commanded all three services for the first time. Katari describes his two peers as "both fine, upright men and good friends of mine and I could not have wished for more congenial team-mates...the degree of mutual respect and harmony we developed would have been difficult to repeat".<sup>7</sup> India's defence establishment seemed poised to begin a new and fruitful era.

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I.A.1. Questionnaire Respondents

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The Indian military's more junior officers, as represented by the questionnaire respondents, display a somewhat cooler attitude to Menon's appointment. See Table 7.1. (Views on Menon's tenure as DM are examined in a separate section below.)

TABLE 7.1

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What were your initial feelings on Menon's appointment  
as Defence Minister?

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	Percent(No.)
Positive	39.58 (38)
Mixed	38.54 (37)
Negative	12.50 (12)
No Answer	9.38 (9)
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Total	100.00 (96)

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A small minority (12.50%) of respondents had a "Negative" opinion of Menon becoming DM, mainly because of his reputation. Lieut.-General 56 doesn't "recall having any [feelings] in particular, except insofar as I despise cheek and arrogance. We had been hearing and seeing him (in news films) boring the UN General Assembly (and his own delegation) to tears on the Kashmir issue, and lying to boot". Menon's "arrogance was a well

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<sup>7</sup> Katari, *A Sailor Remembers*, p. 92.



known trait", agrees Brigadier 43, "and no one in the country was happy with his appointment".

Two-fifths (38.54%) of respondents had a "Mixed", or mainly disinterested, response to the new DM. "We were never concerned as to who became the Defence Minister", explains Major-General 20; "it is up to the Prime Minister to choose". "One politician was as good or bad the other", grumbles Brigadier 44.

Another two-fifths (39.58%) of respondents had a "Positive" response to Menon's appointment. Vice Admiral 6 recalls "jubilation", while Major-General 96 saw Menon as "a vast improvement over superannuated politicians like Katju". Brigadier 61 favoured Menon's "reputation as a go-getter...[who would] get things done for the defence services". "Above all", writes Brigadier 63, "he enjoyed the confidence of the PM" and therefore, adds Major-General 72, "We felt that he would be able to help the army in gaining status, social respect and better equipment".

The respondents share their seniors' high opinion of Thimayya. He was, says Major-General 97, "very well respected, highly competent, a fine diplomat".<sup>8</sup> For Lieut.-General 10, Thimayya was "undoubtedly one of the Indian Army's best field commanders. I have a great respect for his professionalism and dynamic qualities as a leader of men. His becoming the Chief added lustre to the office rather than the other way around".<sup>9</sup> "I think the army as a whole hero-worshipped Thimayya", adds Lieut.-General 17. He also recalls how, as chief-designate, "Thimayya spoke to us [Indian Army personnel] at Dehradun in 1956 and said that he was going to improve the lot of the common soldier and officer. [He said,]

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<sup>8</sup> From an interview with Major-General 97; New Delhi, 15 September 1989.

<sup>9</sup> From a follow-up interview with Lieut.-General 10; Patna, 29 September 1989.

"In my left pocket I have my letter of confirmation, in my right my letter of resignation".<sup>10</sup> Increasing civil-military tensions eventually forced Thimayya to use the letter in his right-hand pocket.

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I.B. As Defence Minister

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The Indian armed forces accomplished some notable achievements under Menon. Abroad, military personnel were deployed in peacekeeping missions in Lebanon, Laos, the Congo and Gaza.<sup>11</sup> At home, the armed forces forcibly liberated Goa, Daman and Diu, Portugal's remaining colonies on the subcontinent, in "Operation Vijay".<sup>12</sup> Menon himself also carried out a number of important military reforms, most notably in the field of indigenous defence production.<sup>13</sup>

While Menon's successes as DM may be traced to his forceful personality and fierce concentration on the problem at hand, his working habits did not always impress civil service colleagues. While "a very well-intentioned person...responsible for the great achievement of starting up [a] sound base of indigenous military production", recalls Ex-Defence Secretary Mr. C5, Menon was also "brash, impatient; [he] wanted quick results...[and therefore] rubbed people the wrong way".<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> From a follow-up interview with Lieut.-General 17; London, 26 November 1987.

<sup>11</sup> See Longer, op.cit., pp. 358-360; and Praval, op.cit., p. 170-182.

<sup>12</sup> See P.D. Gaitonde, The Liberation of Goa: A Participant's View of History (London: C. Hurst & Company, 1987); George, op.cit., pp. 231-232; Longer, op.cit., pp. 361-362; Palit, op.cit., pp. 119-121, 132, 135; Praval, op.cit., pp. 236-236; and Rao, India's Defence Policy and Organisation Since Independence, p. 44.

<sup>13</sup> See George, op.cit., pp. 222-223; Rao, op.cit., pp. 34-35; R. Venkataraman, "Krishna Menon: Architect of India's defence modernization", Link (New Delhi) 34:42 31 May 1992; and Venkateswaran, Defence Organisation in India, pp. 279-310.

<sup>14</sup> From an interview with ex-Defence Secretary Mr. C5; New Delhi, 14 August 1989.

Ex-ICS officer Dharma Vira agrees Menon was both "a man with a sharp intellect who could speak well and work hard" and one who "had a tremendous ego and an inflated notion about himself...In his view one who did not agree with him was either a fool or a knave".<sup>15</sup> In the end, continues Vira, Menon's personal rudeness "succeeded in neutralizing...[any] advantage [of his innate brilliance]".<sup>16</sup>

KCIOs amplify the above senior civil servants' opinions—positive and negative—of Menon. On one hand, writes Air Chief Marshal P.C. Lal, the DM "was dynamic...a visionary"<sup>17</sup> and, adds Katari, "some of his programmes were to result in lasting good to the country".<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, recalls Palit, Menon "had no previous ministerial or administrative experience and found it necessary to disguise this deficiency by affecting a perpetual sneer at officialdom".<sup>19</sup> The DM, continues Lal, had a "vitriolic, acerbic, unnecessarily devastating tongue and temper".<sup>20</sup> Menon, adds Katari, was

a very intelligent man with a sharp mind a prodigious memory... [but] also had in abundant measure other traits that go with high intellect—supreme arrogance...[and] ill-concealed impatience with those less endowed...at the human, personal level, I felt that he was something of a bully who took pleasure in harassing those who were prepared to take it lying down.<sup>21</sup>

Despite his notable achievements, Menon's arrogance and onerous working methods doomed India's armed forces to what Verma dubs "Menonitis".<sup>22</sup>

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#### I.B.1. Questionnaire Respondents

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<sup>15</sup> Vira, op.cit., p. 82. See also pp. 55-58; Katari, op.cit., p. 99; and Verma, op.cit., p. 108.

<sup>16</sup> Vira, op.cit., p. 82. See also Venkataraman, op.cit., p. 15.

<sup>17</sup> Lal, My Years with the IAF, p. 84.

<sup>18</sup> Katari, op.cit., p. 100.

<sup>19</sup> Palit, op.cit., p. 72.

<sup>20</sup> Lal, op.cit., p. 75.

<sup>21</sup> Katari, op.cit., pp. 97, 99. See also Verma, op.cit., pp. 107-108.

<sup>22</sup> Verma, op.cit., p. 97.

With less opportunity to work closely with Menon, it is not surprising that the relatively junior respondents' additional comments made on their respective answers to Table 7.1 show them more impressed with Menon's push for indigenous defence production than concerned with his arrogant, off-hand manner. While some, like Lieut.-General 95, recall "hearing of Menon's autocratic ways", most others offering any comment on Menon agree with Major-General 36 that he was "a go-getter and dynamic Defence Minister". For Brigadier 90,

Menon produced results and therefore no one was interested in whose protege he was. He gave the services a degree of respectability and say and we had a political figure who was prepared to stand up for us whether his political contemporaries liked it or not. He clearly showed a straightforwardness in Defence Production and [the] need for being self-sufficient in military hardware.

Menon, concludes Major-General 74, was "a genius in his own right who was instrumental in creating defence R&D to be self-reliant".

The three respondents who report working with Menon at close hand offer divergent opinions of the DM. Lieut.-General 16

was serving in the military wing of the cabinet secretariat and came into fairly close contact with him [Menon]. Initially he electrified the MoD. It soon became apparent that he was bad at conducting conference; impatient, bad tempered. He would call conferences without agenda or adequate preparation. He could not run a happy team or carry people with him.

In contrast, Major-General 33 "attended the first defence production conference...Menon made a lasting impression on me with his very strong plea for indigenising the defence production base". As Director R&D (Engineering), Brigadier 76 "worked very closely with him...[Menon was] a brilliant man, whose major contribution was setting up the indigenous manufacture of military hardware and defence R&D".

The above comments do not necessarily mean that the armed forces' more junior officers had a more charitable view of Menon than KCIOs. Unsolicited views always tend to favour the subject especially if, as with Menon, conventional opinion is negative, and all of the above respondents who praise his work belong to the "Positive" group on Table 7.1. Thus, some of the above six "Positive" officers may be seeking to defend their initial view of Menon by concentrating on his programme of indigenous defence production. In contrast, no respondent having a "Mixed" or "Negative" opinion of Menon's appointment on Table 7.1 goes on to compliment his efforts as DM. In the end, the respondents' unsolicited praise of Menon's performance as DM must be heavily discounted in the face of the sharply negative opinions of those KCIOs who dealt daily with the man.

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## II. Kaul

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### II.A. Rise Up the Ranks

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Like Menon, Kaul had captured Nehru's imagination, standing out from his peers in several ways. For one, Kaul engaged in nationalist acts while a youth and, contrary to all tenets of military professionalism, had continued such actions after being commissioned into the army.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> During the height of the Quit India movement, he met Valsa Mathai, a 19-year old "revolutionary leader", who

dared me to address a students' anti-British rally which I did and at which I spoke on the need of youngmen [sic] coming forward to join the war effort and its significance in the future free India...I expressed many nationalist sentiments publicly which amounted to 'sedition' from the British point of view.

After his (British) CO failed to punish him for speaking out, Kaul

Kaul's charitable attitude towards the Indian national armies' personnel, and his confidence in the army's ability to overcome the commissioned officer shortfall at independence further pleased the PM.<sup>24</sup> That Kaul, like Nehru, was a Kashmiri Brahmin, a small and readily identifiable community much in evidence in independent India's foreign service and higher administration, also did him no harm.<sup>25</sup> Kaul soon became Nehru's advisor/confidant during his rapid rise in the army,<sup>26</sup> impressing the PM during his various official stints as military attaché in Washington, military advisor to India's delegation to the UN Security Council, commander of the J&K militia, chief of staff to Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission (NNRC) Chairman (then Lieut.-General) Thimayya, Uttar Pradesh Area Commander, quartermaster-general (QMG), and CGS, and his unofficial duties as the PM's troubleshooter in J&K and sometime factotum. Kaul also caught Nehru's eye when as commander of 11th Infantry Brigade CO and then of 4th Infantry Division he twice led his men in constructing much needed military housing and, at the request of

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continued his nationalist activities "in the underground movement and thoroughly enjoyed the experience". He again breeched military discipline during the Red Fort Three courts-martial by acceding to chief defence counsel Bhulabhai Desai's request to procure "a document, in possession of the British Intelligence authorities, which could prove valuable to the defence of these men". Kaul also helped Colonel M.S. Himmatsinhji, a nominated military representative of the Legislative Assembly, to draft a speech defending the Indian national armies. See Chapter Four; and Kaul, op.cit., pp. 9-11, 62, 70-71, 74-75.

<sup>24</sup> ibid., pp. 71, 74, 81.

<sup>25</sup> See Khera, India's Defence Problem, p. 220; and Maxwell, op.cit., p. 187.

<sup>26</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the following details of Kaul's military career are taken from W. Hangan, After Nehru, Who? (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1963), pp. 251-255; Maxwell, op.cit., pp. 186-189; Kaul, op.cit., pp. 87, 95, 97-98, 104-120, 122-124, 133-135, 140-153, 169, 175, 182-191, 196; and Khera, op.cit., pp. 223-224.

Menon, oversaw the building of the Defence Pavilion of the India Exhibition in Delhi, a project inaugurated by Nehru.<sup>27</sup>

With Nehru's "patronage", Kaul appeared headed for the top. An editorial in the Bombay Current stated:

If Nehru ever felt inclined to name a successor to to himself, it is even possible that discarding all the old and known Congress types, he would not be adverse to making so unorthodox a choice as General Kaul...Kaul is the man to watch. He will not only become the Chief of the Army Staff; he may one day even become Prime Minister of India.<sup>28</sup>

Kaul was also included by Welles Hangen in his book, After Nehru, Who?, as the only non-civilian among the nine people (including Indira Gandhi and eventual Nehru successor Lal Bahadur Shastri) he tipped as favourites to replace Nehru.<sup>29</sup> How high would Kaul rise?

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#### II.A.1. KCIOs

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Like Menon, Kaul had his strong points. Palit was

much attracted by his ebullient, outgoing personality. Often impulsive and unpredictable, he nevertheless...was tolerant, not suspicious, of a subordinate with professional curiosity and intellectual pursuits...he was professionally competent, resourceful and innovative.<sup>30</sup>

Lieut.-General Thorat agrees Kaul "was above average in intelligence and had immense drive. He was a tireless worker and a good speaker though given to unnecessary dramatisation".<sup>31</sup>

Yet any number of factors combined to convince his colleagues that Kaul lacked the "right stuff" for high command. Unlike the majority of his KCIO peers, he was not from a princely, privileged or martial

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<sup>27</sup> Kaul, op.cit., pp. 123-124, 187, pp. 190-191.

<sup>28</sup> The editorial is dated 7 October 1961. As used in Kaul, op.cit., pp. 285-286. See also Maxwell, op.cit., pp. 196-197.

<sup>29</sup> Hangen, op.cit.

<sup>30</sup> Palit, op.cit., pp. 71, 76.

<sup>31</sup> Thorat, op.cit., p. 177. See also Palit, op.cit., p. 76.

family, nor did he play polo, hunt, smoke or drink alcohol.<sup>32</sup> Kaul's passion for *swaraj* politics was also unusual for a "gentleman and officer", and Neville Maxwell describes him as "a nationalist in a way that set him quite apart from his Indian fellow-officers of similar Sandhurst background, who were only patriots".<sup>33</sup> Perhaps—but, as described above, Kaul's nationalist fervour led him to break his professional code of non-involvement in politics, behaviour abhorrent to his fellow KCIOs.<sup>34</sup>

Even after independence, Kaul's politics set him apart from his peers. In Korea, recalls NNRC Custodian Force of India (CFI) GoC Thorat, Kaul "emerged as an ardent admirer of communism and seriously embarrassed Timmy [Thimayya] and me by his partiality towards the communist prisoners".<sup>35</sup> Thimayya adds that when Kaul returned from an official visit to China towards the end of his NNRC posting

singing their praises...I sacked him. He offered me his resignation. I refused and urged him to take long leave in India. We were all under pretty heavy strain in those days. The other officers thought I was a fool not to have accepted Kaul's resignation. Now I'm inclined to think they were right.<sup>36</sup>

Kaul himself records both positive and negative impressions of China in his autobiography but omits any offer to resign.<sup>37</sup>

His colleagues also disliked Kaul's ready access to Nehru and the building projects which caught the PM's eye. While the former initially

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<sup>32</sup> See Evans, *op.cit.*, pp. 19-22, 306-307; Hangen, *op.cit.*, p. 244; and Kaul, *op.cit.*, pp. 3-8, 14-16, 20, 36-37; Thorat, *op.cit.*, pp. 104-107, 169-172; and Verma, *op.cit.*, pp. 18-21.

<sup>33</sup> Maxwell, *op.cit.*, p. 187. See also Kaul, *op.cit.*, pp. 41, 82.

<sup>34</sup> Thorat, *op.cit.*, p. 177.

<sup>35</sup> Thorat, *op.cit.*, p. 177. See also pp. 131, 155, 160; Kaul, *op.cit.*, pp. 157-160; Longer, *op.cit.*, p. 337; and Praval, *op.cit.*, pp. 160-161.

<sup>36</sup> As used in Hangen, *op.cit.*, p. 254.

<sup>37</sup> Kaul, *op.cit.*, pp. 154-157, 159-160.



might be dismissed as mere jealousy,<sup>38</sup> Nehru's willingness to see Kaul outside of normal civil-military channels would have grave implications for the defence of India's northern borders. Similarly, while the latter work may have been imperative, Kaul's seniors saw using troops for construction as detracting from the military's effectiveness in its primary role of defence of the nation.<sup>39</sup> When Kaul went ahead with his projects, he found himself the butt of a wide-spread and hurtful—personally and professionally—caricature of him as a "house-builder".<sup>40</sup>

Most damaging in his colleagues' eyes was Kaul's lack of combat experience. After graduating from Sandhurst and serving a mandatory year with a British Army regiment in India, Kaul was accepted into a prestigious Indian Army infantry unit. Although "anxious to remain in the Rajputana Rifles in which I was not doing too badly", he then requested a transfer into the Service Corps because its higher salary would enable him to service debts incurred by his "constantly ill"<sup>41</sup> mother. Thorat picks up the story:

On the outbreak of World War II he [Kaul] asked my advice as what he should do. Naturally I told him to seek posting to a unit which was likely to proceed overseas on active service. To my utter surprise he argued that his talents would be far better utilised in the Public Relations set-up which he had decided to join...he certainly saved himself from being exposed to the dangers and discomforts of war. *Kaul was one of the few officers of his time who never served with combat troops in the field.* [My italics.]<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> See Kaul, op.cit., pp. 70-74, 83-84, 95, 97, 140-147, 194, 219, 315; Khara, op.cit., p. 221; and Verma, op.cit., pp. 101-102.

<sup>39</sup> See Kaul, op.cit., pp. 182-184; and Verma, op.cit., pp. 102-103.

<sup>40</sup> See Hangen, op.cit., p. 257; and Kaul, op.cit., pp. 123, 191-196, 201.

<sup>41</sup> Kaul, op.cit., pp. 50-51.

<sup>42</sup> Thorat, op.cit., p. 176. See also Kaul, op.cit., p. 63; and Verma, op.cit., p. 101.

This lack of combat experience was remarkable given the Indian Army's huge wartime expansion. Either the infantry judged Kaul incapable of fighting duties or he shied away from live action or both.<sup>43</sup> Although he returned to a fighting unit in 1948 as 11th Infantry Brigade Commander and went on to lead the 4th Infantry Division, Kaul was never able to live down his lack of combat experience.<sup>44</sup>

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#### II.A.2. Questionnaire Respondents

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Did the relatively junior questionnaire respondents share their superiors' negative impression of Kaul? See Table 7.2. The following comments are limited to Kaul's qualities as an officer. Responses which touch on other aspects of his career are examined in separate sections.

TABLE 7.2

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What was your opinion of Lieut.-General Kaul before the Autumn of 1962?

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	Percent(No.)
Negative	69.79 (67)
Mixed	12.50 (12)
Positive	8.33 (8)
No Answer	9.38 (9)
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Total	100.00 (96)

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A small minority (8.33%) of respondents had a "Positive" opinion of Kaul before Autumn 1962. For Major-General 96, he was "one of the most dynamic senior officers I have ever seen. Lieut.-General 95 describes Kaul as a "bundle of energy... dynamic".<sup>45</sup> Brigadier 28, Kaul's PSO "in a particular appointment when he was Major General", describes him as "a

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<sup>43</sup> Kaul states his "repeated requests for a transfer back to the Infantry" were always refused. See Kaul, op.cit., pp. 68-70, 87.

<sup>44</sup> See Palit, op.cit., p. 76; and Verma, op.cit., p. 121.

<sup>45</sup> From a follow-up interview with Lieut.-General 95; New Delhi, 13 September 1989.

brilliant staff officer particularly in the logistics field...He was a real 'go getter'".

The tenth (12.50%) of respondents who had a "Mixed" reaction to Kaul express some doubts about his professional abilities. Lieut.-General 93 "worked very closely with Gen. Kaul as GSO [General Staff Officer] 1 when he was GoC 4th Ind Div...[Although] he had many good qualities...tactically he was weak". While "an intelligent and capable soldier", agrees Air Chief Marshal 18, Kaul "could not be considered an elite strategist". Lieut.-General 94 describes Kaul as

a very intelligent and hard-working officer. He was highly ambitious. He did not enjoy a good reputation as a combat officer. To overcome this difficulty he made full use of his relationship with Nehru...He was a good peace time officer who could not bear the strain of battle.

Yet, if "Kaul was never an outstanding field commander", writes Brigadier 64, "he was...dynamic in many other fields".

The two-thirds (69.79%) majority of respondents who recall a "Negative" opinion of Kaul's career pre-Autumn 1962 beg to differ. Lieut.-General 10, one of his staff officers, describes Kaul as "essentially a political being who was highly ambitious and tried to exploit his Kashmiri connections". Major-General 85 recalls how "Kaul's reputation was destroyed when he turned soldiers into masons" for Project Amar".<sup>46</sup> Kaul's lack of combat experience is particularly resented. "Kaul", adds Major-General 96, "did not have much of an army career to speak of. He had passed the war in Public Relations and then as a Service Corps officer. No right-thinking soldier took his pretensions to generalship seriously". Lieut.-General 49 concurs:

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<sup>46</sup> From a follow-up interview with Major-General 85; New Delhi, 16 August 1989.

As a soldier Kaul was all theory and no practical grasp...[he] had an inflated ego which blocked his mind to learning even the easiest experiences of combat...He would have served India best as a Minister with drive and energy—not as an army commander at any level (not even a platoon).

All in all, Kaul generated a remarkable amount of contempt from his comrades in all three defence service. For Air Chief Marshal 12, he was "a totally self-centred officer with no professionalism or real patriotism", for Vice Admiral 2 "a strutting egoist", and for Brigadier 69, a "piss-poor officer...who never heard a shot fired in anger". Lieut.-General 4, a battalion commander in Kaul's division, "knew him to be a hoax and a bully long before 1962...[he was] just bloody mad...insane".<sup>47</sup> "There is hardly any officer in the army who did not have contempt for this man", concludes Brigadier 76.

Having had far more opportunity to work with and/or observe Kaul than Menon, the respondents' overall opinion of the former is much closer to that of the KCIOs than of the latter. Both sets of officers think Kaul used his Kashmiri background to ingratiate himself with Nehru, both ridicule his house-building activities, and both are appalled that he could rise so high without any combat experience. Are these criticisms fair? Could Kaul's rapid rise be due to his acknowledged administrative drive, or was it attributable to political favouritism?

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### III. Politicization?

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#### III.A. KCIOs

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<sup>47</sup> From a follow-up interview with Lieut.-General 4; Pune, 12 October 1987.

For the KCIOs, Menonitis went beyond the DM's rudeness to his colleagues to include a disregard for professional advice and a deliberate manipulation of the civil-military decision-making hierarchy. When Menon, writes Thorat, "discovered that Timmy [Thimayya] was not as pliant a Chief as he would have liked him to be...[he] started to bypass him and began to deal directly with his subordinate officers".<sup>48</sup> Any officer daring to disagree with Menon, adds Verma,

was branded an obstructionist or [one] not having an opinion of his own...In the absence of the Chief, he wanted me to change a policy, and when I said I would have to discuss it with the Chief first, he shouted, "Haven't you got an opinion of your own?" I said that I had, but in the army we did not work the way he wanted us to. We did not try to stab our colleagues in the back. I was never forgiven for that...<sup>49</sup>

In an attempt, write Palit and Air Chief Marshal Lal, respectively, "to dominate the military bureaucracy by trying to make dent in the solidarity of its senior ranks"<sup>50</sup> Menon "encouraged officers whom he liked to be in direct contact with him, ignoring the Chiefs, and that is not only unethical but a foolproof method of undermining [military] discipline".<sup>51</sup> The DM began favouring officers who agreed with him, regardless of rank and/or capabilities, continues Verma:

Before long...it became generally known that the DM expected loyalty to his person even at the expense of the service and the individual's superior service officers. He started by making subtle promises, hinting at better future prospects to certain officers in reward for doing his bidding. This *modus operandi* was extended equally to the navy and air force as well.

He would send for a junior officer and question him with regard to the advice given to him (DM) by the individual's superiors. He would get the junior officer to agree with his own views and thereby create a feeling of disloyalty among junior officers to their superiors...

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<sup>48</sup> Thorat, op.cit., p. 176.

<sup>49</sup> Verma, op.cit., p. 101.

<sup>50</sup> Palit, op.cit., p. 72.

<sup>51</sup> Lal, op.cit., p. 85.

He was thus able to locate officers who would play ball with him and give him the answer he wanted. [My indents.]<sup>52</sup>

No officer was more willing to "play ball" with Menon than Kaul who, writes Palit, "emotional, insecure and ambitious—fell for his blandishments".<sup>53</sup> Kaul, adds Verma, was used by the DM "as a quisling amongst senior officers to accomplish his own designs".<sup>54</sup>

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### III.B.1. Supersession, Resignation, and Witch-hunts

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For many, the proof of Kaul's undue influence in the armed forces came with his controversial May 1959 appointment to QMG, apparently over the heads of two more highly recommended officers.<sup>55</sup> While those right-wing politicians who had been seeking to lessen Menon's influence on Nehru and on the armed forces now targeted Kaul, senior KCIOs worried that the new QMG would use his seat on the army Selection Board to hasten the rise of his followers dubbed "Kaul-boys".<sup>56</sup> One so accused was (then Brigadier) Palit who served under Kaul in 4th Infantry Division and then was appointed by him as DMO when the latter became CGS (see below and Chapter Eight). This promotion, writes Palit, was despite "at least two senior brigadiers openly aspiring to this most coveted of appointments...[and myself being] by formal standards...one of the least qualified among my contemporaries..."<sup>57</sup> He does not, however, count himself among those Kaul "subordinates, mainly those of mediocre

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<sup>52</sup> Verma, op.cit., pp. 100, 101.

<sup>53</sup> Palit, op.cit., p. 72.

<sup>54</sup> Verma, op.cit., p. 102.

<sup>55</sup> See Maxwell, op.cit., p. 188; Kaul, op.cit., pp. 215-217, 224-225; Khera, op.cit., p. 222; Praval, op.cit., pp. 222; Thorat, op.cit., p. 173; and Verma, op.cit., p. 103.

<sup>56</sup> Maxwell credits General S.H.F.J. Manekshaw with originating the term. See Maxwell, op.cit., p. 194.

<sup>57</sup> Palit, op.cit., pp. 70-71.

capability, from whom he demanded and obtained a personal and almost feudal commitment, and whom he did not on occasion scruple to use as his confidential henchmen".<sup>58</sup> "For the moment Kaul had made his mark and was believed to be one of the chosen few of Krishna Menon", writes Verma, "and he made full use of it".<sup>59</sup> "'Are you pro-K. or anti-K.?' needed no spelling out in most messes", concludes Maxwell.<sup>60</sup>

Three months after Kaul was appointed QMG, Thimayya could no longer tolerate the DM's personal rudeness or professional disregard.<sup>61</sup> On the afternoon of 31 August 1959, writes Katari, he

walked into my office...with his letter of resignation in his hand and his mind made up...he had come to the conclusion that the only honourable course left for him was to quit. He was on his way to hand in the letter, and there was nothing I could say or do to alter his decision.<sup>62</sup>

Katari immediately sent off an encrypted message to IAF Chief Air Marshal Subroto Mukherji, abroad at the time, relating Thimayya's decision and "including the fact that I would most probably follow suit".<sup>63</sup> The next morning, The Statesman led with the news, adding that the "likely" resignation of all three service chiefs "is the result of prolonged but evidently unsuccessful efforts to keep politics out of the Army, Navy and Air Force...[and] other areas of disagreement, partly arising from reasons of temperament and personal preferences".<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*, p. 76.

<sup>59</sup> Verma, *op.cit.*, p. 103.

<sup>60</sup> Maxwell, *op.cit.*, pp. 189-190.

<sup>61</sup> See Katari, *op.cit.*, p. 101; and Thorat, *op.cit.*, p. 176.

<sup>62</sup> Katari, *op.cit.*, pp. 102-103.

<sup>63</sup> *ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>64</sup> The Statesman (Calcutta) 1 September 1959. See also Longer, The Defence and Foreign Policies of India, p. 82; and Kavic, India's Quest for Security: Defence Policies, 1947-1965, p. 161.

That evening Nehru summoned Katari to a private meeting. Katari, who had decided to "put in my paper [of resignation] if Timmy went",<sup>65</sup> describes the PM opening their conversation with

"Well, I have received Thimayya's letter of resignation. I understand that you also intend to resign. Is that true?"

I told him that I was considering doing so.

He then remarked that he was grieved that the three Chiefs of Staff should gang up against the Defence Minister.

I...pointed out that if the three of us, individually, were working under such severe disabilities that we found it difficult to function honourably, it could hardly be termed ganging up...

[Nehru] went on to say that he realised that Krishna Menon was not the easiest of men with whom to get on. But, he said, Menon possessed one of the finest intellects that he, Nehru, had had come across, and it should be utilised for the benefit of the country.

At that I quite spontaneously blurted out, "But why as Defence Minister, Sir?"

I was relieved to find that he laughed at that. We then talked for some while...as I was taking my leave at the end of about an hour, he revealed that Thimayya had agreed to withdraw his resignation...The question of resigning was no longer immediate. [My indents.]<sup>66</sup>

Thimayya, the "simple soldier"<sup>67</sup> and long-time admirer of Nehru, had apparently been unable to resist the PM's promise of personally looking into every one of his complaints against Menon.<sup>68</sup>

Instead, Nehru castigated Thimayya and praised Menon in the next day's session in Parliament. Thimayya, he said, had come to him a week ago "not feeling very happy about various matters connected with the Defence Ministry" but these were "rather trivial and of no consequence". The general's resignation the day before yesterday was "peculiarly unwise". With the exception of Kaul's promotion to CGS, Nehru denied his Government had interfered with the army's recommendations in the

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<sup>65</sup> Katari, op.cit., p. 103.

<sup>66</sup> Katari, op.cit., p. 103.

<sup>67</sup> Thorat, op.cit., p. 178.

<sup>68</sup> See Maxwell, op.cit., p. 191; Kavic, op.cit., p. 160; and Verma, op.cit., p. 121.



promotion of senior officers. In any case, the government was entitled to have the final word as under the Indian Constitution and in practice, "civil authority is and must remain supreme". Nehru concluded by praising Menon for the "great energy and enthusiasm he has put in his work and which has resulted in so much progress". Only after being pressed by opposition members did the PM acknowledge that "Thimayya and our senior officers, especially the Chiefs of Staff, are people who have done good service, whose experience and gallantry we have appreciated and we appreciate...That is why I went out of my way to get him to withdraw his resignation".<sup>69</sup>

KCIOs suffered two shocks. The first, writes Thorat, came when Nehru "humiliated [General] Thimayya in Parliament and in the press".<sup>70</sup> The second occurred when Thimayya subsequently refused to re-submit his resignation. "Many of us", writes Katari, "felt that if there ever was total justification for him to resign it was then, in protest against such merciless castigation of him".<sup>71</sup> "It was a mystery why even after this public castigation Timmy did not press his resignation again", adds Thorat; "Failure to do so tarnished his own image in the eyes of civilians and armymen alike".<sup>72</sup> Even Kaul saw the "action of Thimayya—of resigning first and withdrawing his resignation later—did not enhance his popularity".<sup>73</sup> Thorat and Katari, respectively, recall how Thimayya's "word carried but little weight"<sup>74</sup> before he "retired [on 8 May 1961] practically unhonoured [sic] and unsung".<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> The Statesman, 3 September 1959.

<sup>70</sup> Thorat, *op.cit.*, p. 178. See also Katari, *op.cit.*, pp. 104-105.

<sup>71</sup> Katari, *op.cit.*, p. 104.

<sup>72</sup> Thorat, *op.cit.*, p. 178.

<sup>73</sup> Kaul, *op.cit.*, p. 219.

<sup>74</sup> Thorat, *op.cit.*, p. 199.

<sup>75</sup> See Katari, *op.cit.*, p. 105; and Thorat, *op.cit.*, p. 214.

If KCIOs needed any further reminders that Menon and Kaul effectively controlled the civil-military decision-making hierarchy, they got them in early 1961 with three contrasting promotions. The first used strict seniority to justify designating Lieut.-General P.N. Thapar and not Thorat as successor to Thimayya as army chief. Palit describes the decision as

a disappointment to many senior officers. Upright and conscientious by reputation, professionally well-groomed, Thapar's was nevertheless a lacklustre personality and he did not possess the *réclame* and professional reputation of Thorat who, though a name lower in the army list, was a more charismatic figure and one of a handful of Indian officers who had had operational experience at battalion-command level during the Second World War. Most people had expected that Thorat would be nominated as the next Army Chief. Thus, Thapar's appointment was regarded as another example of the Menon-Kaul axis.<sup>76</sup>

In contrast, seniority was discarded in a second promotion when Verma, associated with Thimayya and Thorat as an anti-Menon and Kaul officer, was superseded twice in the appointment of two army commanders (and so promptly resigned).<sup>77</sup> The third promotion involved Kaul's move to OGS after Thimayya had apparently "given in"<sup>78</sup> by allowing the incumbent, Lieut.-General Sen, to supersede Verma and take up the post of GoC East.<sup>79</sup>

All of the above machinations were taken to be the work of what had emerged as a Menon-Kaul nexus. On 5 April 1961, Current printed a letter from "Demoralized Army Officers" which accused "the evil genius" Menon of tampering with military promotions in order to create a group loyal

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<sup>76</sup> Palit, op.cit., p. 73. See also Katari, op.cit., p. 105; Longer, op.cit., pp. 128, 134; Thorat, op.cit., pp. 178, 191-200, 204; and Verma, op.cit., p. 122.

<sup>77</sup> See Kaul, op.cit., p. 266; Praval, op.cit., p. 228; Thorat, op.cit., p. 214; and Verma, op.cit., pp. 107, 122.

<sup>78</sup> Longer, op.cit., p. 99.

<sup>79</sup> See Longer, op.cit., p. 99; and Maxwell, op.cit., pp. 202, 295.

to himself and warned of Kaul being cleared a path to Indian Army Chief.<sup>80</sup> Six days later, former Congress President Archarya Kripalani confronted Menon in Parliament:

I charge him with having created cliques in the Army. I charge him with having lowered the morale of our armed services. I charge him with having wasted the money of a poor and starving nation. I charge him with the neglect of the defence of the country against the aggression of Communist China [see Chapter Eight].<sup>81</sup>

Menon managed to face down these accusations and Nehru himself replied with a spirited defence of Kaul.<sup>82</sup> The DM and the new OGS were free to cleanse the military of officers perceived hostile to their rule.

Kaul's reign as OGS began with witch-hunts against those officers who crossed his and/or Menon's path. The first target was Thimayya, on leave pending retirement but formally Indian Army Chief until 8 May 1961. Palit reveals that

one of Kaul's first acts as OGS had been to institute a secret Intelligence Bureau inquiry into Thimayya's alleged treason, citing a number of careless and indiscreet remarks made by him on various occasions, while he was still in service, regarding the army's possible role in a political emergency. I do not know if Menon had a hand in this shabby attempt to persecute Thimayya...but I doubt it. The *faux pas* was pure Kaul and earned him nothing but calumny [sic] for a bungled intrigue.<sup>83</sup>

Although nothing came of this investigation (and Thimayya died soon afterwards while serving as commander of the UN peace-keeping force in Cyprus),<sup>84</sup> Thorat and Verma also had to endure retributive attention from Menon and Army HQ at the end of their military careers.<sup>85</sup> (Then Major-General) S.H.F.J. Manekshaw was perhaps Kaul's most significant

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<sup>80</sup> As used in Maxwell, op.cit., p. 193.

<sup>81</sup> Lok Sabha Debates, vol. LIV, no. 41, col. 10577 as used in Maxwell, op.cit., pp. 193-194.

<sup>82</sup> See Kaul, op.cit., pp. 265-268; and Maxwell, op.cit., p. 194.

<sup>83</sup> Palit, op.cit., p. 74.

<sup>84</sup> Katari, op.cit., p. 105.

<sup>85</sup> Verma, op.cit., pp. 123-126.

witch-hunt target in that he was still a serving officer and a rising star. Like Thimayya, Thorat and Verma, Manekshaw was the antithesis of Kaul: although an IMA graduate, he was "British" in bearing, had won the Military Cross fighting in Burma, openly criticized military officers—especially Kaul—mixing with politicians, and stood up to Menon's attempts at driving a wedge between senior officers and their subordinates.<sup>66</sup> While chief, Thimayya had chosen Manekshaw to head the Staff College and announced his selection for promotion to lieutenant-general. Kaul, however, had other plans and in a passage from his autobiography which appears to single out Manekshaw but which is also reminiscent of his dealings with Thimayya and Thorat, he describes how

Some of our senior army officers were in the habit of making tenacious and indiscreet remarks openly against our national leaders and extolled the erstwhile British rulers of India. They suggested, at times, that some sort of dictatorial rule was the only way to get our affairs out of the mess in which they were [see below]...I came to know of specific cases of anti-national and indiscreet utterances...on the part of a few senior officers. I, accordingly, brought them to the attention of my Army Chief, General P.N. Thapar, in writing, who put this matter to Defence Minister Menon, who, in turn, reported it to the Prime Minister.<sup>67</sup>

A military board under Lieutenant-General Daulet Singh dismissed the charges against Manekshaw (including one of hanging portraits of British Viceroy, Governor-Generals and C-in-Cs in his office) as ridiculous and recommended disciplining the accusing officers. While Kaul escaped formal censure—he had had some of his junior sycophants accuse Manekshaw—the latter continued to suffer, being twice superseded before the former resigned (see Chapter Eight).<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> See Maxwell, op.cit., pp. 194-196; and Praval, op.cit., pp. 228, 230.

<sup>67</sup> Kaul, op.cit., pp. 317-318.

<sup>68</sup> See Maxwell, op.cit., pp. 194-196; Palit, op.cit., pp. 319, 334-335; and Praval, op.cit., pp. 228-230.

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### III.C. Questionnaire Respondents

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Most respondents, in opinions culled from Table 7.2 and in follow-up interviews, agree with the KCIOs' negative assessment of the Menon-Kaul nexus. Air Chief Marshal 18 cites Kaul's closeness to the DM as "instrumental in his acquiring an importance much beyond healthy norms". Kaul "pandered to [the] politicians' willingness to believe that all other senior military commanders were fools", adds Brigadier 44, and "the mildest term that could be used to describe him is 'show-boy'". For Lieut.-General 17, Kaul "got into the politics more than the functions of command".<sup>89</sup> "As someone very rightly put it", continues Brigadier 60, "'B.M. Kaul, when he was amongst the politicians, he was a General and when amongst Generals, he was a politician'". "He was the sycophant-in-chief", concludes Lieut.-General 56.

The respondents also saw Kaul's extraordinary influence attracting a number of their comrades. "Though the large majority of officers were behind [General] Thimayya", recalls Lieut.-General 17, "they were a few who got onto B.M. Kaul's bandwagon because he was seen as a rising star...A shame because some of these men were very good officers and would have gone far anyway. But they were in too much of a hurry".<sup>90</sup> Kaul, argues Brigadier 41, "tried to build his own empire which ultimately caused his downfall". "His team was weak, did not have the courage to contradict him and basked in his glory and political backing", agrees Brigadier 31.

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<sup>89</sup> From a follow-up interview with Lieut.-General 17; London, 26 November 1987.

<sup>90</sup> From a follow-up interview with Lieut.-General 17; London, 26 November 1987.

The respondents are most forthcoming about Thimayya's resignation episode. Uniquely, Major-General 85 calls Thimayya's resignation "a very bad thing".<sup>91</sup> Lieut.-General 10 is unhappy that Thimayya resigned over a "trivial issue, the disputed promotion of a major-general [Kaul] to lieut.-general...He should have chosen a more substantial disagreement like the Himalayan policy"<sup>92</sup> (see Chapter Eight). While Lieut.-General 95 thought Thimayya's resignation honourable, he also appreciated his subsequent decision to "stay on for the good of the nation". But, he adds, he and his comrades were "very upset" when Nehru censured Thimayya in Parliament: "We didn't forgive him [the PM] for it".<sup>93</sup>

Yet, like their seniors, many respondents fault Thimayya himself for not re-submitting his resignation after his public dressing-down. "He should have stuck to his guns",<sup>94</sup> says Major-General 105. Lieut.-General 10 agrees:

When Nehru castigated him in Parliament Thimayya should have resigned. Not one, not a hundred Nehrus should have been able to convince him otherwise...When he did not [resign], he became a different person in office. Afterwards, [Lieut.-General] Kaul used to openly flaunt him.<sup>95</sup>

Lieut.-General 4 argues that Thimayya withdrew his resignation

because he was a very simple man who believed the entreaties of Nehru...[and] because the government had a file on him... [and] may have had some pictures of him...Thimayya was a reputed womanizer and Nehru was not above using this method. But even if this was the case, Thimayya should have said publish and be damned.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> From a follow-up interview with Major-General 85; New Delhi, 16 August 1989.

<sup>92</sup> From a follow-up interview with Lieut.-General 10; Patna, 29 September 1989.

<sup>93</sup> From a follow-up interview with Lieut.-General 95; New Delhi, 13 September 1989.

<sup>94</sup> From an interview with Major-General 105; New Delhi, 12 September 1987.

<sup>95</sup> From the questionnaire and a follow-up interview with Lieut.-General 10; Patna, 29 September 1989.

<sup>96</sup> From a follow-up interview with Lieut.-General 4; Pune, 12 October

Lieut.-General 17 reports that Thimayya, after having withdrawn his resignation, asked one of his junior officers:

"Why didn't you tell me to offer my resignation a second time?"

He had not realized the depth of feeling in the army about the withdrawal of his resignation. But it was not the junior officer's place to advise him either...Thimayya was a broken man...The withdrawal of his resignation shocked the army."

It was a "terrible shame, [a] mistake when Thimayya withdrew his resignation", agrees Major-General 98; "Indian officers all knew of his clashes with Menon and if he had held firm I am sure that the other two Chiefs would have followed his example".<sup>97</sup> Like the KCIOs, respondents recognized their best chance of countering the influence of the Menon-Kaul nexus ended with Thimayya's refusal to re-submit his resignation.

The respondents were well aware of the machinations taking place at senior levels. Their sympathy went out to Thorat, "a good man, a good commander" (Lieut.-General 17),<sup>98</sup> when he failed to become Indian Army Chief. Lieut.-General 4 describes Thorat as

a simple man...happy that his honour was vindicated after 1962 with his inclusion on the Defence Planning Commission [DPC or National Defence Council (NDC)]. Nevertheless he stood up to politicians. There was a certain order he refused to carry out. He also refused other jobs from the government immediately after retirement. He should have refused the DPC post as well.<sup>100</sup>

The respondents were equally sure Thorat's rival, Thapar, would be an unsuitable chief. For Lieut.-General 108 and Major-General 105,

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1987.

<sup>97</sup> From a follow-up interview with Lieut.-General 17; London, 26 November 1987.

<sup>98</sup> From an interview with Major-General 98; New Delhi, 15 September 1989.

<sup>99</sup> From a follow-up interview with Lieut.-General 17; London, 26 November 1987.

<sup>100</sup> From a follow-up interview with Lieut.-General 4; Pune, 12 October 1987.

respectively, the latter was "thoroughly weak...ineffective", "incompetent and everyone knew this".<sup>101</sup> It was obvious why Thapar was promoted, add Major-General 97 and Lieut.-General 17, respectively; "he was only brought in on Menon's desires", "it was Krishna Menon's sway all the way".<sup>102</sup>

One respondent, Lieut.-General 108, volunteers information on the Manekshaw witch-hunt. Kaul instigated an inquiry against [Major-General] Manekshaw for "trivial reasons" (calling the famous Mahratta commander Shivaji a "mountain rat" and for "being more British than the British") and got "some lieut.-colonels" to speak against him. Although Kaul eventually "lost this round of the power-play between himself, Manekshaw and Chaudhuri. Still, Manekshaw was on his way out and only the '62 debacle saved him [see Chapter Eight]".<sup>103</sup> (Manekshaw became Indian Army Chief in 1969 and was appointed the country's first Field Marshal for his leadership during the 1971 Bangladesh War.)<sup>104</sup>

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### III.C.1. Menon

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Did the respondents think the above incidents added up to the politicization of the Indian armed forces? See Table 7.3.

A small minority (14.58%) of respondents say "No", Menon did not politicize the armed forces. "It was not he who politicized the army", writes Brigadier 41; "an ambitious general [Kaul?] went out of his way

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<sup>101</sup> From interviews with Lieut.-General 108; Meerut, 14 September 1989; and Major-General 105; New Delhi, 12 September 1987.

<sup>102</sup> From an interview with Major-General 97; New Delhi, 15 September 1989; and a follow-up interview with Lieut.-General 17; London, 26 November 1987.

<sup>103</sup> From an interview with Lieut.-General 108; Meerut, 14 September 1989.

<sup>104</sup> Manekshaw was the first IMA-trained officer appointed India Army Chief. See Praval, *op.cit.*, pp. 421, 432-434, 488, 585.



to politicize it and Krishna Menon unwittingly got into the fray. The general had his own 'chamchas' [sycophants] whom the rest detested". While Kaul "and his fans...[were] overambitious square pegs in round holes", concedes Brigadier 69, "They had no politics. Many were not capable of understanding...politics. They were not brought up that way".

TABLE 7.3

Did Menon politicize the military?	
	Percent(No.)
Yes	50.00 (48)
Qualified Yes	29.17 (28)
No	14.58 (14)
No Answer	6.25 (6)
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Total	100.00 (96)

Most other "No" respondents think any rumours of politicization were spread by disgruntled officers. Menon, argues Brigadier 37, "wanted quick results and was an impatient man, so many times he antagonised senior commanders". "I don't believe there was any politicizing", writes Brigadier 90 of a DM who only "accepted the right people for the right job. He was intolerant of the incompetent and some thus affected spelt this as politicizing". Menon, adds Vice Admiral 6,

hand-picked his team and in the process superseded quite a few senior officers that must have been displeased as they belonged to that category that were of the firm view that promotions should go by seniority and not by such subjective judgements as "performance ratings"...those adversely affected [thought Menon] politicized the services.

"Menon's objective in placing his own officers was to get his own way done faster", adds Lieut.-General 4, "nothing more complex or sinister than that".<sup>105</sup> "It cannot be said", continues Major-General 85,

<sup>105</sup> From a follow-up interview with Lieut.-General 4; Pune, 12 October 1987.

that Churchill had politicized the army when he replaced first Wavell by Auchinlek and later, Auchinlek by Montgomery... [Although] everyone in the army knew of his special treatment of Kaul...[and] Menon was also tainted by the jeep scandal...he was also a great man, a thinker...the man had magic in him and was responsible for beginning indigenous defence production capacities...We owe a lot to Menon.<sup>106</sup>

"To show that government in power is supreme seems correct", concludes Colonel 79.

Nonetheless, close to a third (30.21%) of respondents opt for a "Qualified Yes", conceding Menon played favourites among officers but refusing to term this "politicization". For Major-General 33, it was "not so much politicizing, as patronizing a chosen few". Politicization "was just not possible", continues Major-General 20, although Menon "did have his favourite officers who were prepared to toe his line ignoring professional soldiering". The DM, admits Lieut.-General 17, "did surround himself with a chosen few who generally tended to say only what they felt he would be responsive to". Despite describing his refusal to "play along" with Menon's attempt to consult him without going through (then IAF Chief) Air Marshal Mukherji, Air Chief Marshal 1 says "we can't say that he politicized the military...The major fault he had [was that] he adopted...favourites...that undercut [the] chain of command and to some extent eroded the authority as exercised in the defence services. This proved ruinous".<sup>107</sup>

Why, according to the "Qualified Yes" respondents, did Menon favour selected officers? "More than [as] a deliberate action", writes Brigadier 40, "I feel his efforts were due to his own sense of ego—a sense of being [sic] a superior brain". For Brigadier 70, Menon's

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<sup>106</sup> From the questionnaire and a follow-up interview with Major-General 85; New Delhi, 16 August 1989.

<sup>107</sup> From the questionnaire and a follow-up interview with Air Chief Marshal 1; New Delhi, 9 September 1987.

behaviour while he was Defence Minister appeared to me to be that of a boy who has received a large set of toys with which he plays around at random. I do not think he had any other motive but his whim to motivate him. A man unused to power suddenly invested with control of a mighty machine just went berserk.

Other respondents saw a definite purpose in Menon's methods. For Brigadier 43, the DM "played favourites...at higher levels. The action was deliberate and more to show his authority rather [than to] politicize the military". Menon, adds Brigadier (Dr.) 55, interfered in promotion to "some top posts...to have a better control over the army".

Unlike their "Qualified Yes" counterparts, the "Yes" half (50.00%) of respondents say Menon politicized the military precisely by playing favourites. "He encouraged fawning and advanced the sycophants", writes Vice Admiral 2 (although "this is a historical failure of Indian ruling classes rather than a specific failure of Menon"). Other respondents are less charitable. Vice Admiral 8 accuses Menon of "planting non-professionals as lackeys", while Major-General 36 blames him for "not heeding the advice of the military leadership and breaking the chain of command which is so important for the well-being of the armed forces". Although it was "very well known that he played favourites", argues Lieut.-General 94, "this affected only the officers at the highest levels".<sup>108</sup> Not so, counters Major-General 106:

Probably his intentions were good...the military was in a bit of a rut and needed some shaking up...[But Menon] did politicize the army and everyone (save the men who were certainly not affected in the way which their more knowledgeable counterparts of today would be) knew it...It was demoralizing hearing all the gossip.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> From a follow-up interview with Lieut.-General 94; New Delhi, 15 August 1989.

<sup>109</sup> From an interview with Major-General 105; New Delhi, 12 September 1987.

Lieut.-General 16 agrees "the military was well aware of Menon's doings. Look to the trial of [Major-General] Manekshaw who was completely vindicated by an internal military board".<sup>110</sup>

The "Yes" respondents offer further details on Menon's favourites and working relations. "[Lieut.-General] Kaul [and] Air [Vice] Marshal Harjinder Singh [were] favoured", recalls Lieut.-General 10. "Once an individual enjoyed [the DM's] confidence he could not, in Mr. Menon's eyes, be wrong", writes Air Chief Marshal 18. Moreover,

his favourites were instrumental in undermining discipline and established codes of conduct...Such names as Air Vice Marshals Harjinder Singh and Ranjan Dutt...[Lieut.-]General B.M. Kaul...and Vice Admiral [D.] Shankar... come to mind. These individuals and their pet boys were Mr. Menon's blue eyed boys.

If Menon's ways had continued, there could have been trouble in the sense that under his system officers were jockeying for power. They could have collected men under them personally and become very powerful.<sup>111</sup>

Although "Menon politicized the top levels [of the armed forces and]..used Kaul and others, and through them a network of officers and men", adds Lieut.-General 49,

He and his supporters made the cardinal error of miscalculating the basic resistance of the army to such "favoured" infiltration and compounded this by opposing Gen. Thimayya who, as an individual, was the one and only senior military leader universally respected.

Yet senior officers themselves were also to blame for Menon's domination of the armed forces. While "the military was very well aware of what was going on", says Lieut.-General 19, there remained the

tendency of senior military officers to sit back and sulk...They are brought up in the tradition of not going straight to the political leadership but through proper channels of hierarchy.

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<sup>110</sup> From a follow-up interview with Lieut.-General 16; New Delhi, 3 September 1987.

<sup>111</sup> From the questionnaire and a follow-up interview with Air Chief Marshal 18; New Delhi, 3 September 1987.

[This was] unfortunate because the army is very dependent on [the] Chiefs to present the military's views.<sup>112</sup>

Lieut.-General 17 was "shocked and ashamed to see that [General] Thimayya was scared of Menon". He describes serving as a military attaché in the Middle East in 1959 when Thimayya stopped by on his way back from a meeting in London. Realizing that he had forgotten to pick up "some trifle" for a friend back in India, the army chief asked "What shall I do"? Lieut.-General 17's suggestion that he himself could get the item and send it along via diplomatic pouch was "adamantly opposed" by Thimayya who worried "if Menon ever found out...?"<sup>113</sup>

Somewhat surprisingly, those "Yes" respondents who opine as to Menon's motives for politicizing the armed forces do not cite ulterior ambitions. Like several "Qualified Yes" respondents, Brigadier 91 thinks any political measures were undertaken "mostly for self-glorification". Menon played favourites, adds Brigadier 31, because he "was an egoist, approved yes-men, did not like anyone opposing him and ill at ease with strong men and views". "It was his style due to his political leanings", continues Brigadier 46, but "I doubt if it [politicization] was deliberate". Brigadier 76 agrees "it was not a deliberate action. He [Menon] was too overbearing and the military leadership rather weak (with [a] few exceptions like Thimayya, Manekshaw and Thorat) to resist him. Besides, he was then number two only to Nehru".

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### III.C.2. Personally Affected?

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<sup>112</sup> From a follow-up interview with Lieut.-General 19; New Delhi, 10 September 1987.

<sup>113</sup> From a follow-up interview with Lieut.-General 17; London, 26 November 1987.

Did the intrigues of the Menon-Kaul nexus enmesh the respondents?

See Table 7.4.

TABLE 7.4

Were you affected by political favouritism during Menon's tenure as Defence Minister?	
	Percent(No.)
No	82.29 (79)
Yes	16.67 (16)
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Indirectly	81.25 (13)
Directly	18.75 (3)
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No Answer	1.04 (1)
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Total	100.01 (96)

Of the four-fifths (82.29%) of respondents who say "No", most were then too junior to be affected by upper level political machinations. Others, like Major-General 20 remained unaffected

primarily because I was one of the frontline commanders. Rumours did filter [through] that...Menon is backing his favourite officers for higher command and that there was a witch-hunt against Thimayya and Manekshaw. We also knew that comparatively inefficient officers who were known to bend were posted in Delhi. But these had no effect on the rank and file of the army.

The "No" respondents also include those officers on Table 7.3 who argue that Menon did not politicize the armed forces.

Of the small minority (16.67%) of "Yes" respondents who acknowledge being affected by political favouritism under Menon, four-fifths (81.25%) were involved "Indirectly". Brigadier 29 recalls how "a psychological feeling had permeated that all was not functioning well in the services". Although "not personally [affected]", Major-General 52 felt "professionally...demoralized and frustrated". Two respondents were almost caught up in the intrigues of the Menon-Kaul nexus. "Nearly", writes Air Chief Marshal 1, "but [I] refused to go along". Brigadier 9

admits the politicization of the armed forces affected him in that he refused to "join sides". All closely followed the ill-treatment of their seniors. Lieut.-General 49 recalls how, although

the talk [of politicization] was psychologically bad, it had no effect on the vast majority of officers and men. What did have widespread effect was the clash of Nehru/Menon with Gen. Thimayya. The chief himself [Thimayya] took steps to allay this reaction by touring and speaking to officers of all ranks.

Brigadier 70 adds that "the injustice to Thimayya, who I held in great esteem having served with him, hurt me intensely".

Finally, three officers (18.75% of "Yes" respondents) were "Yes, Directly" affected by political favouritism in the armed forces.

"Menon's proteges were directed to put me in my place", writes Lieut.-General 4, and "they very nearly did":

After commanding my battalion for five years with distinction, [and having] been GSO 1 (Ops) Eastern Command, and Dy Leader of India's first mission to Bhutan, I was deliberately posted to command a girl's battalion on the NOC [National Cadet College] as a snub. I have personal knowledge that this posting was contrary to the Military Secretary's plan for my career, and occurred due to the personal intervention by [Lieut.-General] B.M. Kaul. I was rehabilitated only because of the Sino-Indian conflict [see Chapter Eight].

Air Chief Marshal 18

was Air Officer in Charge of Policy and Plans at Air HQ in 1960 when I came into active and close contact with Mr Menon. Due to his interest in R&D, he became instrumental in my having to serve a three year period with R&D much to my unhappiness and resulted in some misunderstandings with my superiors...He summarily ordered me back to my job at I.A.T. [Indian Air Transport?] Poona, after Air HQ had deputed me to work in Assam with the Eastern Command.

The third respondent directly affected by the Menon-Kaul nexus, Lieut.-General 92, was one of the KCIOs described above whose open defiance of political machinations led to his early exit from the army.

The results of Table 7.4 are somewhat misleading. For, although a few among the majority of four-fifths (82.39%) of "No" respondents explain their choice by saying that no political favouritism existed, most appear to have understood the question as "Were you *directly* affected...?" and refer to their relatively junior rank at the time as shielding them from the political intrigues they knew were going on at senior levels. In contrast, the small minority (16.67%) of "Yes" respondents seem to have read the question as "Were you *indirectly* affected...?" since over four-fifths (81.25%) of these officers describe general psychological and/or professional concerns with political favouritism under Menon, while only three officers (one a KCIO) say they were "Directly" affected. Despite this apparent misinterpretation, it is evident most respondents agree political favouritism existed during Menon's tenure as DM.

Table 7.3 reinforces the above conclusion. Although the third (29.17%) of "Qualified Yes" respondents refuse to call what they admit was Menon's deliberate favouritism of selected officers "politicization", the half (50.00%) who answer "Yes" define "politicization" as just that. Adding these two groups together shows that, despite their relatively junior rank, the vast majority (79.17%) of respondents shared their superiors' belief that Menon promoted his favourite officers, bypassing the military's established decision-making hierarchy and advancing sycophants to the detriment of the armed forces' corporateness and professionalism.

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#### IV. Coup D'État?

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#### IV.A. Corporate Grievances

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The third coup prediction theory sees military interventions as the result of officers acting to defend and/or enlarge any number of what they perceive to be their corporate interests. Four of Thompson's ten "corporate" grievances leading to a coup are particularly relevant to Menon's tenure as DM:

[a] Hierarchy: Military coup-makers apparently perceive a threat to the military's organizational chain of command...Disrupting hierarchical stability is a threat to the military leadership's continued capacity for both self-control and organizational effectiveness.

[b] Cohesion: Military coup-makers apparently perceive a threat to the military's organizational unity...Perceived attempts to render military organizations less cohesive or united are seen as threats to the stability of its authority system as well as continued organizational effectiveness.

[c] Political Position: Military coup-makers apparently perceive a threat to the military's organizational relationship with the political system...Odd as it may seem, civilian attacks on an "apolitical" preference can bring about a military coup.

[d] Resource Conflicts Type A: Military coup-makers are apparently dissatisfied with the state of one or more of the following concerns: pay, promotions, appointments, assignments, and/or retirements...The less political and more professional personnel are aggravated by policies favouring incompetent and unqualified but loyalist officers, while those most directly affected by the personnel policies may realize that they must remove the incumbents before their own political control capabilities are seriously weakened. Either group or both in coalition may resort to the coup in order to eliminate a very direct threat to their career possibilities.<sup>114</sup>

Did the Menon-Kaul nexus' disregard for the armed forces' decision-making hierarchy, promotion of officers personally loyal to it and persecution of those opposed endanger civil supremacy-of-rule in India?

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#### IV.B. Thimayya

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<sup>114</sup> Thompson, The Grievances of Military Coup-Makers, pp. 14-20.

Just before he was due to go on leave pending retirement, a rumour circulated in government circles that Thimayya was planning a coup for 30 January 1961. S.S. Khera describes how both Nehru and Home Minister Govind Ballabh Pant became concerned about

an order given by Thimayya moving a Division from Ambala to Delhi. At the same time an Armoured brigade was located at Mathura, 90 miles from Delhi on the Agra Road, a Brigade which was part of the Armoured Division at Jhansi under the command of Gen. Thorat. Kaul, who was then QMG [but already officiating as OGS], was asked to ascertain from Thimayya about the purpose of the move; it appears that the order had been sent from Army HQ direct to the Divisional Commander, and the PSOs did not know of it. In any event, the order was countermanded.<sup>115</sup>

V.I. Longer adds that Lieut.-General Sen, upset at being "pushed out" of the office of OGS in order to free it for Kaul, was said to be Thimayya's coup co-conspirator.<sup>116</sup>

The government was already nervous. Field Marshal Ayub Khan's 1958 Revolution in Pakistan had shaken India's political and administrative elite and caused a number of civilians openly to wonder why their own officers did not "do something". Although he retired as Indian Army C-in-C in 1953, General Cariappa's vocal public support for right-wing policies during this decade already had become more than just a nuisance.<sup>117</sup> The ex-chief had suggested "it would do good to have military rule under civil control in places where things had gone bad" and "democracy and socialism could wait till India's teeming millions were assured of a square meal a day".<sup>118</sup> Cariappa also admired some aspects of Ayub's military regime but stopped short—just—of advocating an Indian copy. Instead, he "preferred President's rule in India for at

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<sup>115</sup> Khera, op.cit., p. 74. See also Maxwell, op.cit., p. 194.

<sup>116</sup> Longer, op.cit., p. 99.

<sup>117</sup> Muthanna, General Cariappa, pp. 82-90.

<sup>118</sup> ibid., pp. 85-86.

least two years with the assistance of the Army, civil administration being made subordinate to the Army".<sup>119</sup> With Cariappa also critical of Menon, Kripalani derided Nehru as "our Hamlet [who] is terribly afraid of an expert man of action like General Cariappa, showing up the skeletons in the cupboard of the Defence Minister..."<sup>120</sup> Did Cariappa's opinions reflect the mood of Thimayya and his admirers in the military?

Thimayya and his followers did have a history of speaking "out of turn". Major-General 104 says that when Thimayya was promoted from GoC West in May 1953, he "did say...that you chaps must be ready to take over".<sup>121</sup> When Thimayya later offered his resignation as chief, Verma, "certain that my telephone was tapped and my mail censored under orders of Menon and Kaul...rang him up to say that we were all with him. That was held against me as it transpired later".<sup>122</sup> Two months after the supposed date of Thimayya's rumoured coup, Khera reports Thorat making

a somewhat remarkable statement...[for] a serving officer, criticising the Government, and appealing to the troops for their loyalty to the Army Chief, with no word about loyalty to the Government or to the Constitution of India...[The] general theme of Gen. Thorat's statement was "Do not let Thimayya go away".<sup>123</sup>

Verma also relates being "accused of having tried to incite the officers and men against the government in my farewell speeches, when I was leaving XV Corps [subsequent to his resignation]".<sup>124</sup>

A number of respondents agree Thimayya was the one officer who may have had the stature and popularity to lead a military coup in independent India. Brigadier 61 writes that

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<sup>119</sup> *ibid.*, p. 86.

<sup>120</sup> *Vigil*, 21 November 1959, as used in *ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>121</sup> From an interview with Major-General 104; London, 24 June 1989. See also Evans, *op.cit.*, pp. 289-290.

<sup>122</sup> Verma, *op.cit.*, p. 121.

<sup>123</sup> Khera, *op.cit.*, p. 74.

<sup>124</sup> Verma, *op.cit.*, p. 125.

when this general [Thimayya] put in his resignation letter and later had to withdraw it at the instance of Nehru, Nehru chided him like a school boy in parliament. The general taking it like a man...showed tremendous moral courage and professional military leadership. This was the only occasion when his popularity in the army and the forces' reaction was so strongly felt...[that it] might lead to a military takeover.

Thimayya, adds Air Chief Marshal 18, "might have been able to pull off a coup because of his immense popularity and respect [among officers]".<sup>125</sup>

"Thimayya was an excellent professional officer and a great gentleman", continues Lieut.-General 108, and the "one and only chief who could have pulled off a coup with the military and civilians behind him".<sup>126</sup>

Despite the government's fears, all of the above events and opinions have more than sufficient counter-arguments. Although he reports Thimayya as having warned army personnel to "be ready to take over", Major-General 104 adds that "Kaul started the rumours about Thimayya and a coup".<sup>127</sup> Perhaps Thimayya was advising his troops to be prepared to follow the orders of their next chief? He was most unlikely to have been referring to the men intervening against the government. Indeed, Lieut.-General 94 recalls Thimayya

talking to a closed-door session of army officers about the example of the Pakistani military coup. He asked, "If soldiers saved Pakistan from chaos, why shouldn't we?"

He illustrated the answer with a story. "If a soldier is wounded in battle we give him immediate first aid to keep him alive for as long as it takes to get him to hospital. If we do not give him first aid he will die. If the hospital doctors do not treat him properly, he will die. To each his own speciality. We soldiers are trained to give first aid but we are not doctors".<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> From a follow-up interview with Air Chief Marshal 18; New Delhi, 3 September 1987.

<sup>126</sup> From an interview with Lieut.-General 108; Meerut, 14 September 1989.

<sup>127</sup> From an interview with Major-General 104; London, 24 June 1988.

<sup>128</sup> From a follow-up interview with Lieut.-General 94; New Delhi, 15 August 1989:

Finally, however popular with the armed forces, Thimayya's reputation hardly matched that of India's outstanding PM. "If Nehru and Menon were worried about the popularity of Thimayya regarding leading a coup it was very silly", says Major-General 105, "there was no comparison between the standing and esteem of Nehru versus that of Thimayya".<sup>129</sup>

Neither were Thimayya's comrades trying to force him to lead a military intervention against his convictions. In telephoning Thimayya with his support, Verma was only expressing a widely held feeling that Thimayya was in the right over his dispute with the Menon-Kaul nexus. And, although Verma remembers Thimayya as "quite bitter about being let down by Mr. Nehru after he had withdrawn his resignation at the latter's behest",<sup>130</sup> the chief did not think to re-submit his offer. As described above, this failure to judge the depth of his colleagues' resentment with the Menon-Kaul nexus caused Thimayya's once formidable prestige in the armed forces to rapidly drain away. Thus Thorat's call for "loyalty to the Army Chief", coming as it did during a Kumaon Regiment officers-only reunion mess dinner with Thimayya as the special guest in virtually his last official function,<sup>131</sup> may be read simply as a personal wish for officers not to forget their once beloved leader.

Thorat and Verma also dismiss suspicions that they themselves harboured any post-military ambitions. Thorat acknowledges that "Thapar was one term ahead of me at Sandhurst, so I had no cause to nurse a

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<sup>129</sup> From an interview with Major-General 105; New Delhi, 12 September 1987.

<sup>130</sup> Verma, op.cit., p. 121. Thimayya was used to getting his way; his biography includes five separate instances where threatening to resign and/or refusing to follow conventional procedure resolved matters to his liking. See Evans, op.cit., pp. 95, 125, 158-161, 183-186, 226-227, 247, 251-252.

<sup>131</sup> S.R. Johri, Chinese Invasion of Ladakh (Lucknow: Himalaya Publications, 1969), p. 191.

grievance against the government—certainly none against Pran [Thapar]".<sup>132</sup> Verma refutes any accusation that he "tried to incite the officers and men against the government" by suggesting "that a cross-section of the people who listened to my speeches might be examined on oath as to what they had heard me say. Of course, it was never done".<sup>133</sup>

In the end, the rumour that Thimayya (and/or Verma and Thorat) was (were) planning to stage a coup was, as Longer writes, "wild and malicious".<sup>134</sup> Although Thimayya and Katari—and, most likely, Air Marshal Mukherji—were prepared to resign in protest at the Menon-Kaul nexus' interference in the armed forces' chain of command, promotions and appointments, neither contemplated violating their ultimate professional responsibility to their client, the legitimate government of India, because of such grievances. "Those who at that time...spread stories about a projected coup did so out of sheer mischief and self advancement",<sup>135</sup> concludes Katari.

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#### IV.C. Kaul

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Did Kaul envisage a political career? Kaul, writes Hangen, has "an Indian's respect for horoscopes, and his foretells that he will one day rule India...He has none of the Indian officer's traditional disdain for politics. He is political to the end of his swagger stick".<sup>136</sup> Kaul's only autobiographical reference to political ambition comes in response to the 1961 Current editorial quoted above which mentions him possibly replacing/succeeding Nehru. He describes how various "politicians and

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<sup>132</sup> Thorat, op.cit., p. 204.

<sup>133</sup> Verma, op.cit., p. 125.

<sup>134</sup> Longer, op.cit., p. 99.

<sup>135</sup> Katari, op.cit., p. 104.

<sup>136</sup> Hangen, op.cit., pp. 245, 247.

soldiers...out of jealousy, wanted to rule out this possibility and took steps to assassinate my image in public by all possible manner and means".<sup>137</sup> Of course, there would be nothing unprofessional about Kaul going into politics after retiring from the army.

Yet there did exist the spectre of Kaul attaining the leadership of India through military intervention. In conversation, writes Hangen,

Kaul makes no secret of his sympathy with what the military has done in Pakistan and Burma [i.e., assumed power]. He thinks the Army is mistaken to leave power in civilian hands in Indonesia.

At the height of the Hindu-Moslem-Sikh communal slaughter in 1947, Kaul suggested privately to Jayaprakash Narayan that a "strong" government was needed to prevent Indian drowning in blood. Narayan interpreted this as a suggestion for army rule and he rejected it.

Kaul might find more sympathetic listeners if India were again plunged into chaos. He has made it clear in private talks recently [1962] that the Army should not hesitate to seize power if the civil government were incapable of ruling or India were about to fall prey to Communists, foreign or domestic. [My indents, my italics.]<sup>138</sup>

Kaul, warns Thorat, had "unbridled ambition—in the pursuit of which he was ruthless".<sup>139</sup>

Unsurprisingly, Kaul never publicly acknowledged the possibility that he or any other officer might end civil supremacy-of-rule in India. In his only comment on the subject, he writes that when asked about the chances of a coup in India by a member of a Harvard University audience to which he had been invited to speak soon after his resignation from the army (see Chapter Eight), he

snapped back at my questioner whether a coup was likely to succeed in a big democracy like [the] USA. Also, whether he had seen a picture recently exhibited called "Seven days in May". I said if a coup could fail in [the] USA—as shown in this movie—it was unlikely to succeed in democratic India.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Kaul, op.cit., p. 286.

<sup>138</sup> Hangen, op.cit., p. 246.

<sup>139</sup> Thorat, op.cit., p. 177.

<sup>140</sup> Kaul, op.cit., p. 462.

Was the possibility of failure the only factor holding Kaul back?

If Kaul did entertain the notion of ruling India as a man on horseback he would have had to have been certain of the backing of his fellow officers. Would the Kaul-boys suffice? With Kaul as CGS, recalls Katari, there

were already signs that a parallel line of command was insidiously developing in the army with its own power group gradually taking shape. It was the fortuitous shake-up created by the Chinese invasion of 1962 [see Chapter Eight] that fortunately arrested what was becoming an alarming split down the middle in that service.<sup>141</sup>

Katari is unduly pessimistic. Despite Thimayya's loss of prestige and retirement, Thorat's retirement and Verma's resignation, the Indian Army still contained many officers--like Manekshaw and the vast majority of respondents--opposed to Kaul for all his background, political and career factors listed above. Hangen quotes a "Delhi editor who professes to know" saying "Kaul is a house-builder, not a military man. He couldn't pull a coup because the army wouldn't follow him". Hangen (writing in 1961) says this statement is "probably true today and for the next year or two".<sup>142</sup> "Armed forces with high internal cohesion have a greater capacity to intervene in domestic politics than armed forces with lesser cohesion..."<sup>143</sup> write Welch and Smith. The Indian armed forces' officer corps in the months and years leading up to the 1962 Sino-Indian War was anything but internally united.

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IV.D. Menon

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<sup>141</sup> Katari, op.cit., pp. 101-102.

<sup>142</sup> Hangen, op.cit., p. 270.

<sup>143</sup> Welch and Smith, Military Role and Rule, p. 14.



Despite the uproar caused by charges of politicizing the armed forces' officer corps, Menon was becoming increasingly indispensable to his PM. "Somehow, Nehru could never see anything wrong in Krishna Menon",<sup>144</sup> writes Verma. "Indeed", adds Gopal,

as Menon became the chief figure in the demonology of Indian politics and many at home and abroad saw him as Nehru's chief advisor in such matters as Goa, the Prime Minister's defence of him became correspondingly more vigorous and unqualified. He thought Menon was a substitute target for himself and saw in criticism of Menon a general assault on the policies of the Congress.<sup>145</sup>

In the 1962 general election, Nehru's spirited support of Menon against Kripalani, the candidate supported by all the right-wing parties and even significant sections of Congress, resulted in the DM increasing his Bombay North majority by almost 100,000.<sup>146</sup> Menon now had to be treated as one of the favourites to succeed Nehru as PM.

How far was Menon willing to go to ensure his succession to Nehru?

Air Marshal 12 reports hearing from

two brigadiers at the time that Menon deliberately wanted China to invade India and create chaos. Then he would take over with the aid of his loyal military officers [e.g.,] Admiral Shankar, Major-General Ram Kapoor and Air Marshal Ranjan Dutt.

I can't believe it...[although] I wouldn't put anything beyond Krishna Menon ...he's a Rasputin.<sup>147</sup>

Lieut.-General 17, one of the "Qualified Yes" respondents on Table 7.3, recalls how Menon's "aim seemed to be to place officers who he could trust in places of power and who were amenable to his dictates. My own suspicion was that it was being done to take over with the help of the military after Jawaharlal Nehru". Brigadier 38, among the "Yes"

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<sup>144</sup> Verma, op.cit., p. 104.

<sup>145</sup> Gopal, Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography: Volume III, p. 210.

<sup>146</sup> George, op.cit., p. 242.

<sup>147</sup> From a follow-up interview with Air Chief Marshal 12; Pune, 11 October 1987.

respondents on Table 7.3, argues that Menon politicized the military because "perhaps he thought he might succeed Nehru with the assistance and support of top brass in [the] defence services".

Yet, among those respondents offering an opinion, a more popular belief is that Menon politicized the armed forces to counter the threat of any military coup. Despite his comments above, Air Chief Marshal 12 says "Menon appointed his own military men partly to counter any possibility of a military coup".<sup>148</sup> For Major-General 97, Menon

had a swollen head [and] harboured ambitions to become the next prime minister...[he] promoted his own favourites, his "yes-men"...[and] went over the heads of senior officers to instruct their juniors...[because of] some lurking fear that the military would take over.<sup>149</sup>

Three "Yes" respondents on Table 7.3 concur. Lieut.-General 56 writes:

If it [politicization] had a purpose other than to build his own self-esteem and importance, it was to cause a rift in the higher echelons, in the army especially. In this he succeeded. Possibly he suspected an internal threat from the military which didn't exist, and he ignored the external threats.

Menon politicized the army, adds Brigadier 29, "by deliberately creating a cleavage among the higher echelons of senior officers with a view to minimise any chances of a military coup imaginary or otherwise". Major-General 96 agrees the DM wanted "to create dissension among senior officers so that any chance of a military take-over was obviated".

While there were worries that turmoil might follow Nehru's exit from office, fears that Menon would use his ties with certain senior military officers to ensure his ascent to PM were unfounded. Air Chief Marshal 12 argues that any coup "plot would have failed since Menon had too few

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<sup>148</sup> From a follow-up interview with Air Chief Marshal 12; Pune, 11 October 1987.

<sup>149</sup> From an interview with Major-General 97; New Delhi, 15 September 1989.

personally loyal military officers to effect a takeover...<sup>150</sup> Also, as described above, the DM's most ambitious ally, Kaul, harboured his own hopes in this direction before the debacle of the 1962 Sino-Indian War intervened (see Chapter Eight). Finally, while an enemy of Congress' right-wing and unusually dependent on Nehru's patronage, Menon commanded respect among the left of the party and was considered a serious candidate to become PM by the normal democratic process.

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### Conclusion

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Although Indian civil-military relations seemed poised for a fruitful era with the almost simultaneous elevation of Menon to DM and Thimayya to army chief, it was not to be. Operation Vijay, successful peacekeeping duties, military reforms, the promotion of an indigenous defence production capability were just the beginning, writes Air Chief Marshal Lal; Menon "could have achieved even more if only he had been able to curb his impatience and arrogance with some self-discipline... The Service Chiefs he treated worse than school boys, with no consideration, fairness or courtesy".<sup>151</sup> More worrying was his disregard for normal civil-military decision-making procedure, by-passing senior officers resistant to his ideas in favour of flattering their subordinates into carrying out his wishes. His "basic design", observes Verma, "appeared to be to create a rift between senior officers by playing one against the other. Insinuations, sly references, [and] disinformation would be passed round by word of mouth".<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> From a follow-up interview with Air Chief Marshal 12; Pune, 11 October 1987.

<sup>151</sup> Lal, op.cit., p. 85.

<sup>152</sup> Verma, op.cit., p. 101.

Menon found a ready partner in Kaul. Highly ambitious, Kaul used his close relationship with Nehru, undoubted talent for administration, and willingness to obey Menon against the wishes of his superiors to surmount numerous professional liabilities in a quest to reach the office of OGS and beyond. Sycophantic Kaul-boys became a real threat to the careers of their brother officers openly critical of what appeared as a Menon-Kaul nexus. "A spy system seemed to operate at this time within the Army, with certain officers clandestinely sending reports to Kaul about the activities of their seniors who did not belong to his circle",<sup>153</sup> writes Major K.C. Praval.

Although only a small minority of the relatively junior questionnaire respondents were directly affected by the machinations of the Menon-Kaul nexus, the great majority were well aware of the turmoil going on above them. The Thimayya resignation episode, the preference for Thapar over Thorat for army chief, the supersecessions of and witch-hunts against various senior officers all contributed to the respondents' sharing their superiors' belief that the officer corps was being politicized by Menon and Kaul manipulating personnel to their will. In the words of ex-ICS officer Vira,

There is no wonder that there was complete demoralization in the ranks of our armed forces because Krishna Menon was functioning in the Defence Ministry according to his own whims and fancies. Even senior promotions and appointments were determined by his whims and fancies, with the result that there were a large number of disgruntled officers in the armed forces.<sup>154</sup>

Might such disgruntlement lead to a military coup?

Despite several (unfounded) rumours, no, for any number of reasons. For one, although the armed forces had performed creditably abroad (in

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<sup>153</sup> Praval, op.cit., p. 228.

<sup>154</sup> Vira, op.cit., p. 82.

Korea, Laos, Lebanon, Gaza and the Congo) and at home (in Junagadh, Hyderabad, J&K, Goa, Daman and Diu), their non-participation in the independence struggle continued to limit public respect for them as agents for positive change—especially when compared to the towering authority and popularity of Nehru. "Could he [Thimayya] have challenged Nehru? asks Lieut.-General 108; "Not really".<sup>155</sup>

Moreover, the nature, if not extent, of the Menon-Kaul nexus' disregard for India's formal civil-military decision-making processes was not without precedent. Although many officers resented Kaul's frequent and informal access to Nehru, recalls Palit, a "similar relationship, though not quite as exceptionable, existed between Nehru and Thimayya...The latter was no way a 'political' general, but Nehru grew fond of him and 'Timmy' did not scruple to exercise his presumed right of access to the PM".<sup>156</sup> Thorat agrees that Nehru, who had known Thimayya "since 1947 when he was serving in the Boundary Force...had much respect for his ability...[and] treated Timmy as a friend".<sup>157</sup>

Palit includes the PM in the blame for the Menon-Kaul nexus' politicization of the armed forces:

Menon was greatly in awe of the Prime Minister and it is unlikely that he would have dared breach military procedure so blatantly had he not had Nehru's precedent before him...Thus, if anyone was to blame for breaches of propriety and procedure that had crept into the Defence Ministry, it was Jawaharlal Nehru. Menon exploited the precedent for his own purposes.<sup>158</sup>

Lieut.-General 10 even criticizes Thimayya for not using his initially good relationship with Nehru more effectively:

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<sup>155</sup> From an interview with Lieut.-General 108; Meerut, 14 September 1989.

<sup>156</sup> Palit, op.cit., p. 74. See also Khera, op.cit., pp. 74-75.

<sup>157</sup> Thorat, op.cit., p. 176.

<sup>158</sup> Palit, op.cit., p. 74. See also Kaul, op.cit., p. 210.

Thimayya should have fought harder against the putting down of the army's importance by the civil servants and the politicians. He had a golden opportunity with his big name and a big background...plus he was initially on a very good wicket with Nehru. But he lacked vision...he was a very poor chief.<sup>159</sup>

Thimayya's failure to stick to his resignation further revealed his weakness as an independent actor and, as such, he was hardly likely to lead a military coup against the government.

Also, however disgruntled, RMC and IMA graduates continued to adhere to the British notion of a professionalism based on perfecting "management of violence" skills at the expense of political awareness and/or activity. Despite his intention to resign along with Thimayya and his sadness at the extent of Nehru's subsequent Lok Sabha castigation of the army chief, Katari acknowledges that the PM

quite properly sought to emphasise the supremacy of the civil authority over the military. None of us in the armed force [sic] had the remotest doubts about this, nor was there even any thought of defying it...I can say with absolute honesty that any idea that they should take the law into their own hands, despite frustrating provocations sometimes, never entered their heads and, God willing, never will.<sup>160</sup>

"I do not think that Thimayya would have wanted to disturb the running of the country, agrees Air Chief Marshal 18; "it is quite clear that the military cannot successfully run a country and that once in, democracy is gone forever".<sup>161</sup> Chapter Six showed that Pakistan's 1958 "Revolution" did anything but inspire Indian armed forces' officers.

Most importantly, though now tarnished with the failures inevitable to governing, Congress' convincing victory in the 1962 general

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<sup>159</sup> From a follow-up interview with Lieut.-General 10; Patna, 29 September 1989.

<sup>160</sup> Katari, op.cit., p. 104.

<sup>161</sup> From a follow-up interview with Air Chief Marshal 18; New Delhi, 3 September 1987.

elections<sup>162</sup> showed the party and its leader still commanded respect. For Welch and Smith, "The ease with which the armed forces assume political power varies inversely with the legitimacy enjoyed by the existing civilian government".<sup>163</sup> India's government—and the democratic process which placed it in power—continued to be seen as moral and effective. Officers would not be pulled into governing as "saviours" of an incompetent civil regime struggling to modernize (the first set of coup prediction theorists), nor push their way into power as a result of general political and/or socioeconomic chaos (the second group of military intervention theorists). Neither would the corporate grievances engendered by the Menon-Kaul nexus provide sufficient cause to propel officers into seizing the reigns of power (the third set of coup prediction theorists). Rumours that Kaul, or even Menon, might use their clique of Kaul-boys to displace the elected civilian government (the fourth military intervention theory) could also—for the time being—be confidently dismissed.

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<sup>162</sup> Edwardes, Nehru, p. 295.

<sup>163</sup> Welch and Smith, *op.cit.*, p. 30.

Civil-Military Relations in British and Independent India, 1918-1962,  
and Coup Prediction Theory

CHAPTER 8

Test Five: The 1962 Sino-Indian War

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## CHAPTER 8

### Test Five: The 1962 Sino-Indian War

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#### Introduction

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The 1962 Sino-Indian War posed the supreme test of civil supremacy-of-rule as Indians exposed for the first time to the psychological burden of defeat in battle openly called into question the competence of their civilian regime. Whether this government would remain in power or be forcibly replaced depended in great part on who armed forces' officers—and the public—held responsible for the debacle. To help understand postwar attitudes, this chapter first will examine how the civil-military hierarchy first countered the growing threat of Chinese aggression in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and then performed during wartime. It will then look at the factors which decided the future of civilian rule in India.

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#### I. The "Forward Policy"

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##### I.A. The Build-Up

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The build-up to the 1962 War was slow but steady.<sup>1</sup> The 29 April 1954 agreement in which India recognized China's suzerainty of Tibet and

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<sup>1</sup> The period leading up to the 1962 Sino-Indian War is perhaps the most closely examined in Indian civil-military relations; see the review of works in S. Cohen, "India's China War and After", Journal of Asian Studies (Ann Arbor, Michigan) August 1971, pp. 847-857. Unless otherwise noted, the following text is taken from Akbar, Nehru, pp. 533-559; Gopal, Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography: Volume III, 1956-1964, pp. 78-83, 127-144, 204-214, 218-221; A. Kundu, "Civil-Military Relations in India: Why No Coup?" Asian Affairs (Dhaka) 7:3 July-September 1985, pp. 12-15;

bound Asia's two great powers to the *Pancha Sheela* (Five Principles) of mutual respect and peaceful coexistence ostensibly ushered in a mid-1950s period of co-operation characterized by Nehru's slogan "*Hindi-Chini, bhai-bhai*" (Indians and Chinese are brothers).<sup>2</sup> But tensions over the demarcation of their shared borders in NEFA (Northeast Frontier Agency) and Ladakh continued to grow. By November 1959, nine months after Chinese brutalities in Tibet had been publicized by the Dalai Lama's post-Kampa Rebellion flight to India, news that the NEFA frontier post of Longju had fallen to the Chinese on 25 August and that fighting forty miles inside Indian territory at Leh in Ladakh 20-21 October had claimed the lives of nine members of the paramilitary Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) forced Nehru to transfer responsibility for the defence of the northern borders from the Home Office to the Ministry of Defence and thus to the army. But the situation continued to deteriorate and border skirmishes continued through 1961.<sup>3</sup>

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#### I.A.1. "Non-Confrontational Containment"

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While welcoming the Indian Army's Eastern and Western Commands respective takeovers of the defence of NEFA and Ladakh, respectively (the Assam Rifles in NEFA and the CRPF in Ladakh remained deployed in some advanced positions), top KCIOs effectively disregarded the

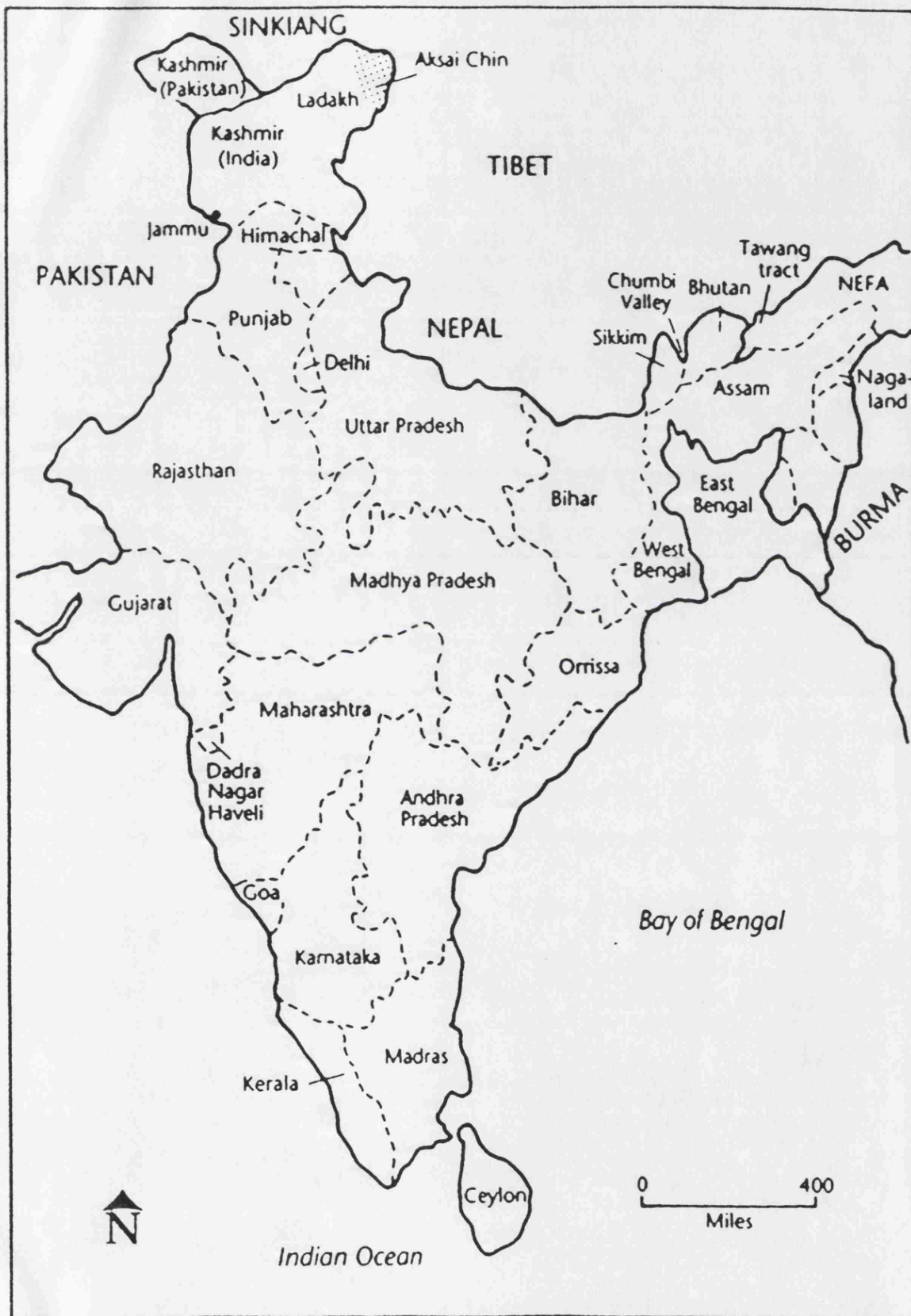
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Maxwell, India's China War, pp. 19-179, 199-225, 232-256; and Palit, War in High Himalaya, pp. 22-45, 52-53, 155-236.

<sup>2</sup> Lal, My Years in the IAF, p. 90.

<sup>3</sup> See Akbar, op.cit., pp. 481, 547-551; Chaudhuri, General J.N. Chaudhuri, pp. 168-172; Kaul, The Untold Story, pp. 178-179, 225-227, 231-232, 244; Lal, op.cit., p. 91; Longer, The Defence and Foreign Policies of India, pp. 84-88, 89-90; Palit, op.cit., pp. 43-44, 52, 90, 107-108, 231; Praval, Indian Army after Independence, p. 251; Thorat, From Reveille to Retreat, p. 200; Maxwell, op.cit., p. 79; and Verma, To Serve with Honour, pp. 110, 115.

The Northern Borders



Source: S.A. Hoffmann, *India and the China Crisis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

government's defensive strategy. Local commanders repeatedly complained about the poor tactics of the policy which may be described as "Non-Confrontational Containment"—in NEFA patrols were ordered not to enter a self-imposed, three-kilometre buffer zone behind the McMahon Line while in Ladakh, small outposts were to be established as far forward as possible without confronting Chinese encampments—and their lack of resources to implement it.<sup>4</sup> For (then GoC XV Corps) Lieut.-General Verma, governmental instructions ordering him to add the defence of Ladakh (from China) to his existing commitment of protecting J&K (against Pakistan) were

almost comic...Firstly, where exactly was the Indian territorial boundary? The small maps available were vague and inaccurate... Secondly, how were we to man this additional area? I already had approx [sic] 750 miles of the cease-fire line with Pakistan to look after. Now this additional 450 miles of border with Tibet was given to me, but no additional troops or equipment, except one newly raised J&K militia battalion.<sup>5</sup>

Lieut.-General Thorat, appointed GoC East in 1957, had an "unshakeable conviction that if I were to listen to the Defence Minister [Menon]... and send troops to the McMahon Line without adequate maintenance cover, I would be sending them to certain defeat and death".<sup>6</sup> Agreeing that the army was logistically unable to support anything but the smallest "penny-packets"<sup>7</sup> of troops in forward positions, army chief General

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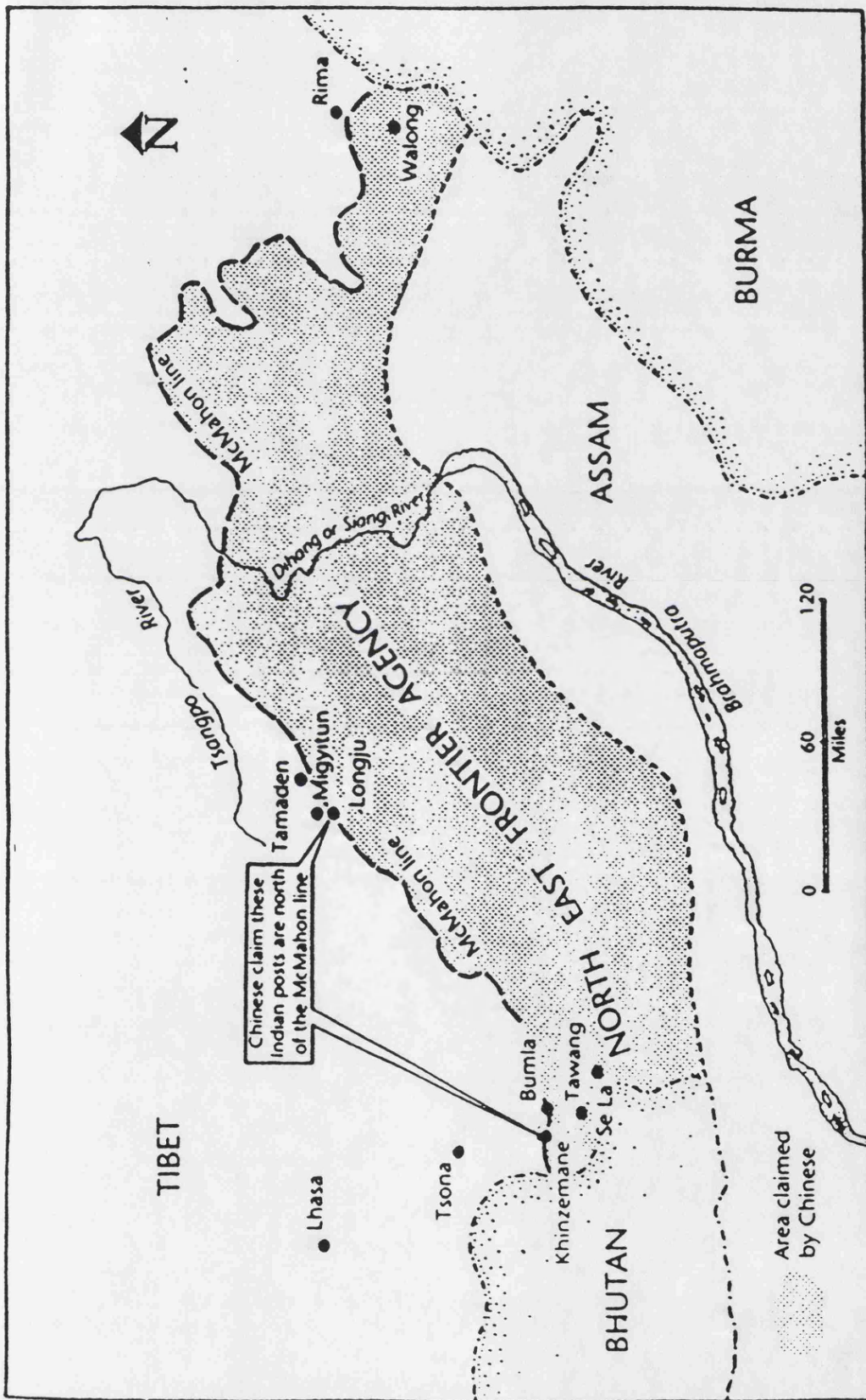
<sup>4</sup> Non-Confrontational Containment was not the only possible defence. Lieut.-General Thorat's "Vital Points" Plan would establish easy-to-supply defensive points at rail and/or air heads in an east-west line running through the middle of NEFA. Above the line would be the Assam Rifles, on and below it the army, all lines of supply and reserves. The Assam Rifles would "put up maximum resistance" before either closing off the retreat lanes of enemy forces deliberately allowed through, or using delaying tactics while falling back to the Vital Points where, promised Thorat, the army would "stop the enemy and proceed to drive him back across the McMahon Line". See Thorat, op.cit., pp. 190, 196-199.

<sup>5</sup> Verma, op.cit., p. 115.

<sup>6</sup> Thorat, op.cit., p. 202.

<sup>7</sup> Palit, op.cit., p. 165.

The North East Frontier Agency (NEFA)



Source: S.A. Hoffmann, *India and the China Crisis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

Thimayya deliberately "toned down" operational instructions to his commanders in the field.<sup>8</sup>

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#### I.B. Formulation

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Although the army could not meet the essentially defensive commitments of Non-Confrontational Containment, Nehru's worsening relations with the Chinese leadership and the discovery of further Chinese encroachments in 1961 led to the adoption of a more offensive strategy for NEFA and Ladakh which became known as the "Forward Policy".

At a 2 November 1961 meeting,<sup>9</sup> Nehru laid out his strategy:

(a) So far as Ladakh is concerned, we are to patrol as far forward as possible from our present positions towards the international border. This will be done with a view to establishing our posts which should prevent the Chinese from advancing further and also dominating any posts which they may have already established in our territory. This must be done without getting involved in a clash with the Chinese, unless this becomes necessary in self-defence.

(b) As regards UP [Uttar Pradesh] and other northern areas [i.e., NEFA], there are not the same difficulties as in Ladakh. We should therefore, as far practicable, go forward and be in effective occupation of the whole frontier. Where there are any gaps, they must be covered either by patrolling or by posts.

(c) In view of numerous operational and administrative difficulties, efforts should be made to position major concentrations of forces along our borders in places conveniently situated behind the forward posts from where they could be maintained logistically and from where they can restore a border situation at short notice.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> See Dalvi, *Himalayan Blunder*, p. 70; and Palit, *op.cit.*, pp. 92, 201.

<sup>9</sup> In attendance was India's top civil-military decision-making hierarchy: Nehru, Menon, Foreign Secretary M.J. Desai, Joint Secretary (Defence) Harish Sarin, Intelligence Bureau Director B.N. Mullik, IB Joint Director Dave, Indian Army Chief Thapar, CGS Kaul, DMO Palit, and Director of Military Intelligence Brigadier Bim Batra. See Akbar, *op.cit.*, pp. 556-557; S.A. Hoffmann, *India and the China Crisis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 97-99; Maxwell, *op.cit.*, pp. 221-222; and Palit, *op.cit.*, pp. 84, 86, 105.

<sup>10</sup> See Maxwell, *op.cit.*, pp. 221-222; and Palit, *op.cit.*, p. 107.



While this Forward Policy might appear perfectly reasonable—how could any country, asked Menon later, be said to have a "forward" policy on its own territory?<sup>11</sup>—it effectively changed Indian military strategy in Ladakh and NEFA from one of Non-Confrontational Containment to one of confrontational advance and hold. With highly respected KCIOs like Thimayya, Verma and Thorat deliberately neglecting to carry out the former strategy, how did India's civil-military decision-making hierarchy come up with the more demanding Forward Policy?

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#### I.B.1. The Political Leadership

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To a large extent, numerous mistakes made in the build-up to the 1962 War may be ascribed to Nehru's towering authority. While democracy had flourished, collective cabinet decision-making had not; it was left to the PM and a few trusted advisors to decide India's approach to international issues. Nehru's belief that Pakistan remained the chief threat led the former to dismiss Field Marshal Ayub Khan's 1959 proposal of a joint Indo-Pak defence of the subcontinent with the question: "Joint defence—against whom?"<sup>12</sup> In contrast, writes Thorat, the PM and Menon "refused to believe that China would make any inimical move against us, and, therefore, saw no reason why they should make warlike

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<sup>11</sup> See Brecher, Indian and World Politics, p. 153, as used in Gopal, op.cit., p. 138; and Krishna Menon's talk with Inder Malhotra, "Black November and After", published in a 1968 Supplement of The Statesman, as used in both Dalvi, op.cit., p. 127 and B.N. Mullik, My Years with Nehru: The Chinese Betrayal (Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1971), pp. 318-319. Akbar says China authored the aggressive phrase. See Akbar, op.cit., p. 556.

<sup>12</sup> Rajya Sabha 4/5/59; P.M.S.I.R. I i, p. 42 as used in Maxwell, op.cit., p. 206. See also Gopal, op.cit., p. 104; Hoffmann, op.cit., pp. 56-58; Khera, India's Defence Problem, p. 200; and Palit, op.cit., pp. 255, 302-303.

preparations...which, they feared, might annoy China".<sup>13</sup> Nehru, argues V.I. Longor, believed that in the unlikely eventuality of attack, his success on the world stage would protect India:

China will not attack; if China attacked there would be a large scale war which would become international; no limited military action was possible; India could, through its diplomacy, skilfully steer itself to a position of safety where international forces would be exerted to its advantage and would block any Chinese aggressive moves; China would be deterred by fear of the Soviet Union and China would not want to alienate international opinion by attacking China.<sup>14</sup>

That Nehru never assessed the Chinese threat in proper military terms was also due to his continued abhorrence of violence as a means of settling international disputes.<sup>15</sup> The political leadership's belief that negotiation was superior to violence reached absurd heights: Menon, recalls Thorat, "said that...in the most unlikely event of there being one [a Sino-Indian War], he was quite capable of fighting it himself on the diplomatic level".<sup>16</sup>

To the political leadership's dismissive attitude towards the Chinese threat was added the parsimony of the treasury. For example, while a 1960 study of Italian alpine troops had led Thimayya to recommend raising some lightly equipped and mobile mountain divisions which would have proved vital in the 1962 War, his proposal was refused on grounds of expense and the unlikelihood of such formations ever being used.<sup>17</sup> Replacing Non-Confrontational Containment with the Forward

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<sup>13</sup> Thorat, op.cit., p. 196. China's numerous and pressing domestic and international problems also conspired against Nehru and his the administration taking the Chinese threat seriously. See Kaul, op.cit., p. 339; and Palit, op.cit., pp. 160-161.

<sup>14</sup> Longor, op.cit., p. 110.

<sup>15</sup> See Gopal, op.cit., p. 203; and Rao, India's Defence Policy and Organisation since Independence, p. 6.

<sup>16</sup> Thorat, op.cit., p. 191.

<sup>17</sup> Kavic, India's Quest for Security, p. 96.



Policy only compounded the army's shortfall in resources. For Lieut.-

General Kaul, the army was

in a vicious circle. On the one hand, we were required to raise additional Forces at the earliest, failing which there was risk of our territory being occupied by our potential foes; on the other hand, our shortages in weapons, equipment and ammunition were so great that we found it impossible to equip the additional Forces we raised.<sup>18</sup>

Moreover, adds Kaul, when any of his and Chief Thapar's representations for additional resources along the northern borders finally did get the backing of the the civilians of the Defence Ministry, the "clash of personalities"<sup>19</sup> between Menon and the parsimonious Finance Minister Morarji Desai (on the Congress right and in competition with the DM as a successor to Nehru)<sup>20</sup> produced an "impasse...at this critical juncture. The Finance Ministry, therefore, must also bear responsibility for the Army remaining unprepared for war".<sup>21</sup>

Finally, the success of Operation Vijay stilled many claims that the armed forces were being mismanaged and/or under-resourced. Despite the limited scale of the operation, the political leadership's repeated assurances that the army was in top condition now combined with the public's delight with the defeat of Portuguese forces to create a popular demand that China be expelled from Indian territory.<sup>22</sup>

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## I.B.2. Intelligence

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<sup>18</sup> Kaul, op.cit., p. 329. See also Palit, op.cit., p. 89.

<sup>19</sup> Kaul, op.cit., p. 332.

<sup>20</sup> See Council of Ministers, 1947-1948, pp. 4-5; and Hangen, After Nehru, Who?

<sup>21</sup> Kaul, op.cit., p. 332. See also pp. 242-243, 320-321, 328-336, 337-339, 349; Akbar, op.cit., p. 551; Khera, op.cit., p. 201; and Palit, op.cit., p. 89.

<sup>22</sup> See The Hindu (Madras) as used in Palit, op.cit., p. 113; Hoffmann, op.cit., p. 100; Palit, op.cit., pp. 111-112; Praval, op.cit., p. 236.

The civil-military hierarchy's unpreparedness also stemmed from a lack of comprehensive intelligence gathering.<sup>23</sup> The political and military leadership became over dependent on the civilian Intelligence Bureau (IB),<sup>24</sup> an unenviable situation compounded by IB Director B.N. Mullik's long and close relationship with Nehru.<sup>25</sup> He had, Kaul says, "direct access to the Prime Minister at all times".<sup>26</sup> And "since in those days anyone operating within the reaches of that aura enjoyed automatic prestige and authority", adds DMD Major-General Palit, "B.N. Mullik became a sort of *eminence grise* within a small and *ad hoc* decision-making cell".<sup>27</sup>

Like Menon and Kaul, Mullik's special relationship with Nehru meant he had a disproportionate effect on formulating Indian defence policy.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> In 1951, internal and external intelligence duties had been transferred from Military Intelligence (MI) to the civilian Intelligence Bureau. By 1962, writes Palit, MI Director Brigadier Batra "deployed no agent, inside or outside the country; his sources of information were all second-hand". Even in the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC; chaired by a Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Joint Secretary and including Defence and Home Ministry representatives, the respective Directors of Intelligence of the three armed services, and a senior IB officer), continues Palit, the IB representative "was the only member who could make an original contribution...[He] had taken to presenting...reports as conclusions rather than as items presented for... assessment". See Maxwell, *op.cit.*, p. 310; Mullik, *op.cit.*, p. 305; Palit, *op.cit.*, p. 84-85; and Venkateswaran, *op.cit.*, p. 96.

<sup>24</sup> See Dalvi, *op.cit.*, p. 119.

<sup>25</sup> Mullik was appointed IB Director in July 1950. For his view of his relationship with Nehru see B.N. Mullik, My Years with Nehru: Kashmir (Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1971), My Years with Nehru, 1948-1964 (Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1972), and The Chinese Betrayal.

<sup>26</sup> Kaul, *op.cit.*, p. 273.

<sup>27</sup> Palit, *op.cit.*, p. 100. See also p. 163; and Maxwell, *op.cit.*, p. 310.

<sup>28</sup> Although his exact role may never be known, Mullik appears to have been greatly responsible for the rejection of Thorat's Vital Points Plan. Not until the major battles of the 1962 War were decided did Thorat learn that Nehru had never seen his plan, signed and submitted on 8 October 1959. The meeting at which Thorat makes this discovery also reveals a lot about Nehru's attitude towards Menon. Thorat, then Maharashtra Public Service Commission Chairman, describes being sent for by Nehru during the tail end of the 1962 War. The PM begins

At the crucial 2 November 1961 meeting, his assurances that the Chinese would not encroach on land nominally held by Indian units of "even a dozen soldiers"<sup>29</sup> led directly to Nehru's adoption of the Forward Policy. For Neville Maxwell, Mullik's "divination"<sup>30</sup> that the Chinese would not attack forward Indian outposts was based

on extra-sensory perceptions rather than on the regular disciplines of intelligence collections and assessment...[but] no doubt part of the explanation for the inordinate and indeed irrational trust placed in his predictions is that he was telling Nehru and his colleagues exactly what they wanted to hear.<sup>31</sup>

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"Thorat, how could this have happened? You were in Eastern Command, did you have any inkling of the disaster?"

Yes sir...The possibility had occurred to us in Eastern Command and the [Defence] Ministry was warned.

He said, "Of course I knew that we were having trouble with the Chinese over some border incidents, but I never thought that it would come to this".

Sir, the Army had foreseen this possibility and given a warning", I replied.

"When?" he asked sharply.

I said, "I had signed the note on 8 October 1959 and sent it to the Chief [Thimayya] who told me that he had forwarded it to the Defence Minister".

"It was never shown to me", the P.M. snapped.

"Would you like to see my copy?" I asked.

"May I?" he replied, and I placed the file in front of him.

He read the paragraphs indicated by me. Then he lit a cigarette, offered me one, and proceeded to read the note from the beginning. When at the end of about twenty minutes he finished reading the paper, he half rose in his seat and said, "Why was it not shown to me?"

"You may like to address this question to Mr. Krishna Menon, sir", I replied with ill-concealed sarcasm.

"Menon, Menon!" he exploded, "Why have you got your knife into him? You people do not realise what an intellectual giant he is".

I do not know from where I got the courage when I said, "If he is, sir, I have seen no evidence of it in the case under consideration".

See Mullik, The Chinese Betrayal, p. 317; Palit, op.cit., p. 55; and Thorat, op.cit., pp. 200, 203, 215-216.

<sup>29</sup> Palit, op.cit., p. 105. See also Akbar, op.cit., p. 556.

<sup>30</sup> Maxwell, op.cit., p. 310.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*, p. 311.

Mullick carried the day and in the final build-up to the 1962 War, Menon, Kaul and other senior KCIOs all came to predicate their strategy on his assurances that China would never attack in force.<sup>32</sup>

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### I.B.3. The Military Leadership

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Responsibility for India's unpreparedness is also shared by senior military officers. In some cases, ambitious army officers inhibited the full and frank disclosure of opinions contrary to the liking of the political leadership.<sup>33</sup> In others, the military leadership failed to recognize sound tactics even when prepared by one of their own number.<sup>34</sup>

Though he retired fully 18 months before the war, Thimayya must share the blame. Kaul accuses him of a "defeatist"<sup>35</sup> attitude after a MEA meeting at which Thimayya said: "Against Pak—total war; not against China. I cannot envisage taking on China in open conflict...it must be left to the politicians and diplomats to ensure our security".<sup>36</sup> Palit argues that this attitude towards the Chinese threat adversely affected Thimayya's professional responsibility to prepare for the worst.<sup>37</sup> Despite the overpowering influence of the Menon-Kaul nexus, as army chief Thimayya was the dominant member of the Chiefs of Staff (COS) and must take the lion's share of responsibility. It was not enough to modify the government's policy of Non-Confrontational Containment when issuing orders to his commanders in Ladakh and NEFA.

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<sup>32</sup> Palit, op.cit., p. 160.

<sup>33</sup> See Dalvi, op.cit., pp. 86-87; and Verma, op.cit., p. 122.

<sup>34</sup> See Maxwell, op.cit., pp. 305, 323-324; Palit, op.cit., pp. 51-52; and Thorat, op.cit., pp. 214-215.

<sup>35</sup> As used in Palit, op.cit., p. 80.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*, p. 80. Thimayya made a similar statement after retiring. See N.a., Seminar July 1962, as used in George, Krishna Menon, 249.

<sup>37</sup> Palit, op.cit., pp. 79-80.

Thimayya's retirement did not end Army HQ's unprofessional strategic planning. Palit describes a July 1961 meeting on the state of the army's equipment reserves. Deputy Chief Lieut.-General Wadalia said "if we ever found ourselves at war with China which might predictably be prolonged beyond six months, we could safely assume 'foreign intervention'".<sup>38</sup> For Palit, Wadalia's "wishful assumption"<sup>39</sup> of Western aid

represented an unconscious reversion to the colonial era when national security was not a function of Indian sovereignty but ultimately referable to Whitehall...This was also the case with senior bureaucrats in the ministries, the ICS clan...Even Prime Minister Nehru appeared at times to entertain this idea...<sup>40</sup>

Kaul, the youthful arch nationalist, also shared this "colonial" attitude. In March 1962, he told President Kennedy's Special Representative Chester Bowles that, in the now

likely...clash [with China]...in the summer or autumn of 1962 [he]...hoped, like most countries threatened with war, specially by a stronger enemy, powers-that-be in our country would also work out, at least as a deterrent, with some friends a basis of mutual co-operation to meet such a (serious) contingency in advance rather than too late or after the event...<sup>41</sup>

That many senior KCIOs—and civil servants—believed outside intervention would come to their aid in case of war with China stemmed not from any formal agreements but from Nehru's judgement that a Sino-Indian War would inevitably expand into a worldwide confrontation in which the West would side with the non-Communists.<sup>42</sup>

Kaul had long been the most influential officer in India's civil-military decision-making hierarchy and must take much of the blame for the inadequate defence of the northern borders. Before the fighting

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<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*, p. 88.

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*, p. 88.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*, p. 88.

<sup>41</sup> Kaul, *op.cit.*, p. 341.

<sup>42</sup> Palit, *op.cit.*, pp. 88-89.

started, he was not reticent in taking the credit: "As late as October 1962, [Lieut.-] General Kaul...told the writer [Maxwell] that the forward policy had been his own conception, 'sold to Nehru over the head of Krishna Menon'..."<sup>43</sup> Yet in his autobiography, Kaul writes that at the crucial 2 November 1961 meeting, it was Nehru who

said that whoever succeeded in establishing (even a symbolic) post, would establish a claim to that territory, as possession was nine-tenths of the law. If the Chinese could set up posts why couldn't we?...

A discussion then followed, *the upshot of which I understood to be that (since China was unlikely to wage a war with India,) there was no reason why we should not play a game of chess and a battle of wits with them, so far as the question of establishing posts was concerned. If they advanced in one place we should advance in another...This was how, I think, this new policy on our borders was evolved (which was referred to by some as 'forward' policy). [My italics.]*<sup>44</sup>

Kaul's autobiographical account of the meeting also states that he added his weight to Thapar and Palit's point that the logistical difficulties of establishing, supporting and reinforcing outposts in forward areas would render them highly vulnerable. Palit recalls him as having remained silent.<sup>45</sup> If, despite his brag to Maxwell, Kaul cannot not be blamed for thinking up the Forward Policy, neither can he take credit for trying to forestall it.

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#### I.C. Implementation

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One of the "more compelling"<sup>46</sup> accounts of how the Forward Policy came to be implemented blames Kaul for sending small units of troops into wholly indefensible, advanced positions. Palit has revealed that the policy's crucial third directive described above—"...to position

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<sup>43</sup> Maxwell, op.cit., p. 174.

<sup>44</sup> Kaul, op.cit., p. 280.

<sup>45</sup> See Kaul, op.cit., p. 280; and Palit, op.cit., p. 106.

<sup>46</sup> Hoffmann, op.cit., p. 98. See

major concentrations of forces along our borders... behind the forward posts..."--was not mentioned by Nehru at the 2 November 1961 meeting but later inserted into the official minutes of the meeting by Foreign Ministry officials seeking to create an alibi in case the Chinese did attack in force. When Palit protested to Kaul that this "brazen ploy at alibi-making" added logistical commitments which the army could not then fulfil, the latter "somewhat sheepishly confessed that he had been shown a draft of the Foreign Ministry minutes before their issue and...had already accorded his approval". Nor, continues Palit, did Kaul agree the third directive logically should be given priority over the first two; that is, that forward posts be established only after the provision of adequate logistical support.<sup>47</sup> When Palit then suggested forward posts might prove less provocative to China if occupied by IB personnel, Kaul

said that apart from the fact that such a course would cause loss of face for the army, it was quite unnecessary. The danger of the Chinese reacting militarily to our forward policy was minimal...*His only concession was that he agreed not to relay the contents of...(c) to Command HQs.* It was for us to provide back-up troops in Ladakh, not to advise Western Command to organise resources it did not possess. [My italics.]<sup>48</sup>

Acting on Kaul's advice, on 5 December 1961 Thapar ordered both Western and Eastern Commands to patrol as near to the border as possible, to establish posts blocking any further Chinese advances, and only then to make a fresh appraisal of the logistic requirements they might need.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Palit, op.cit., pp. 107-109. See also p. 108; and Hoffmann, op.cit., p. 98.

<sup>48</sup> Palit, op.cit., pp. 109-110.

<sup>49</sup> In his autobiography, Kaul omits any reference to his role in deciding Army HQ's final deployment orders to its forces in Ladakh and NEFA. Thapar later intimated that directive (c) was omitted because the required back-up bases would have taken too long to complete, giving the Chinese time to occupy even more Indian territory. See Akbar, op.cit., pp. 554-558; Hoffmann, op.cit., pp. 98, 283; Longer, op.cit., pp. 90-91, 100-101, 106-107; Maxwell, op.cit., pp. 221-224; Palit, op.cit., p. 110; and P. Thapar, "The Chinese Invasion", The Statesman, 9 January 1971, as

The pattern of the Forward Policy was soon set. Whereas concern for the logistical shortcomings had led Thimayya to water down the government's deployment orders of Non-Confrontational Containment, similar worries did not now prevent Thapar and Kaul from wholeheartedly embracing the Forward Policy.<sup>50</sup> When two minor Indian Army units in the Aksai Chin, Ladakh, faced down far superior Chinese forces in the spring/summer of 1962,<sup>51</sup> the press and public became convinced of the correctness of the Forward Policy—that the Chinese would not force their claim to border territories occupied by Indian personnel—and the civil-military leadership was lulled into believing the policy provided real security on the northern borders.<sup>52</sup> More could be tried. In Ladakh, orders were given for penny-packets of Indian forces in to push ever forward, and their orders of engagement modified from "fire only if fired upon" to "fire if the Chinese press dangerously close to your

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used in Gopal, Jawaharlal Volume III, p. 208;

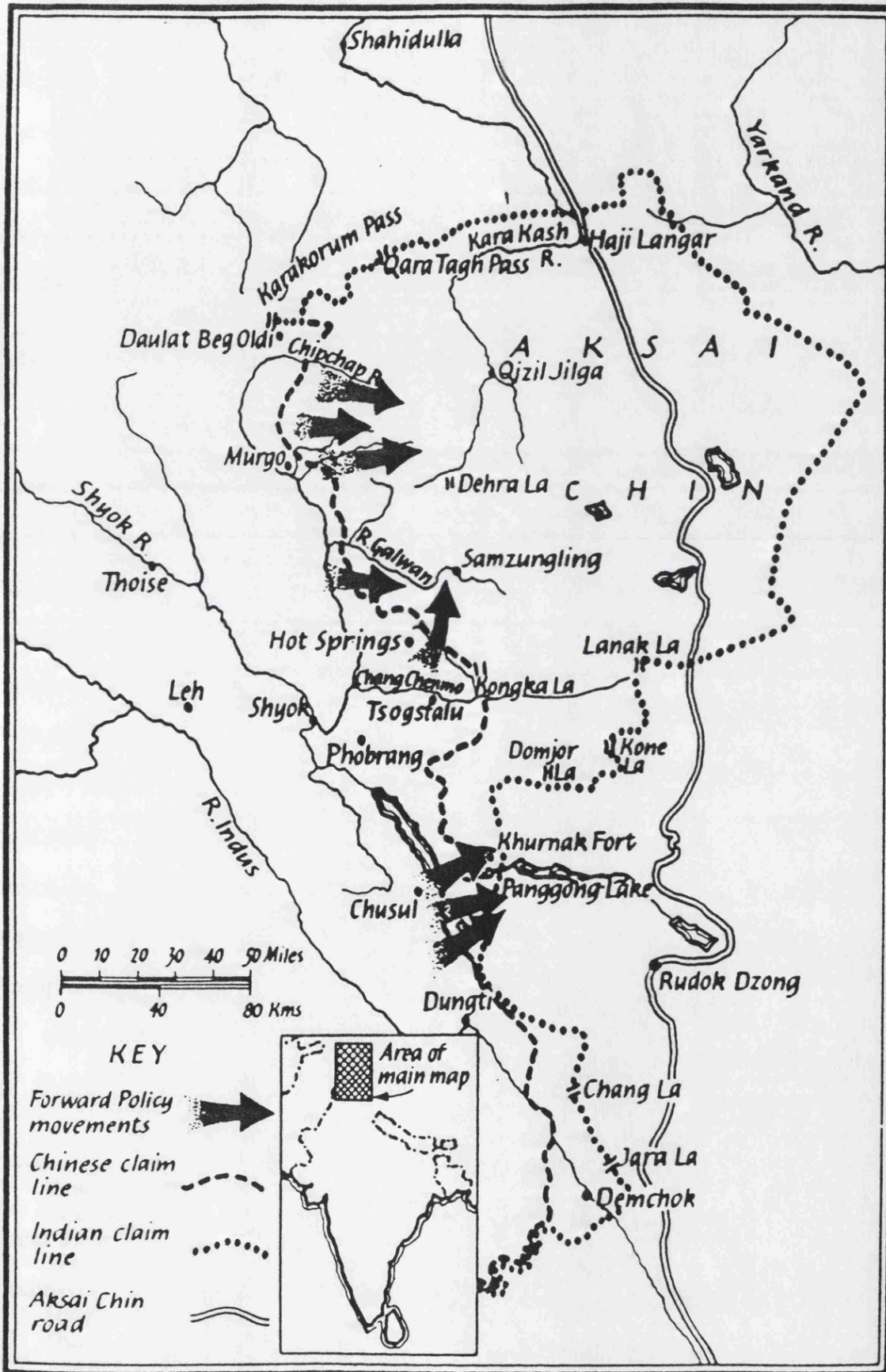
<sup>50</sup> By the end of 1961, over 50 forward posts had been established in Ladakh and NEFA. See Palit, *op.cit.*, p. 160; Kaul, *op.cit.* pp. 280-281; and Verma, *op.cit.*, p. 120.

<sup>51</sup> The first occurred in early May when GoC West Lieut.-General Daulet Singh asked for permission to withdraw an isolated outpost in the Chip Chap Valley which had been surrounded by Chinese "in assault formation". Thapar dismissed Daulet as "jittery" and, when Nehru agreed the outpost should stay put so as to study the "behaviour pattern" of the enemy, the Chinese withdrew from the immediate area. The second, more serious incident occurred in mid-July when a Chinese battalion surrounded a platoon of 1/8th Gurkha Rifles sent into the Galwan Valley (against Daulet's advice). With the Indian Army again in no position to retaliate, the civil-military leadership resorted to bluff. The MEA, writes Kaul, "warned the Chinese Envoy in Delhi that if they persisted in this attitude in Ladakh (or elsewhere) we would be compelled to shoot our way out of such trouble." When the Chinese refused to withdraw but failed to attack, "a wave of triumph swept the press and the politicians". See Gopal, *op.cit.*, p. 211; Maxwell, *op.cit.*, pp. 233, 235-236, 239; Kaul, *op.cit.*, p. 325; Palit, *op.cit.*, pp. 173-174, 177-179; and Praval, *op.cit.*, pp. 240-241.

<sup>52</sup> See Mullik, *op.cit.*, pp. 329-330; and Palit, *op.cit.*, p. 176-177, 182.



The 'Forward Policy' in Ladakh



Source: N. Maxwell, *India's China War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970).

positions".<sup>53</sup> In NEFA, "Operation Onkar", the establishment of up to 35 outposts along the McMahon Line to be occupied by Assam Rifles' personnel, commenced.<sup>54</sup> All this forward activity came in spite of local commanders' objections who saw the civil-military leadership in Delhi making decisions based on what it wanted to believe was true rather than on what they advised was the reality on the ground.<sup>55</sup>

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#### I.D. Final Days

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The beginning of the end of Indian civil-military overconfidence came on 8 September 1962 when an Assam Rifles' outpost near the Dhola Pass in eastern NEFA sent out a "frantic"<sup>56</sup> signal reporting being surrounded by 600 Chinese troops and asking for immediate reinforcements. In response, GoC 4th Division Niranjan Prasad sent a company on the five day march to the outpost and ordered the rest of the battalion to prepare to move to Lumpu, within easier reach of the pass.<sup>57</sup> The next day, 7th Brigade CO Brigadier J.P. Dalvi and his battalion commanders, all with first-hand experience of the local terrain, advised that unfavourable geography and the Chinese forces' superiority of arms and ease of supply made the Dhola Pass position "completely indefensible".<sup>58</sup>

The response of local commanders contrasts with the decision-making of India's civil-military leadership. On 10 September, GoC East Lieut.-

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<sup>53</sup> Maxwell, op.cit., p. 239.

<sup>54</sup> See Maxwell, op.cit., p. 298; Palit, op.cit., pp. 175-176, 186-187; and Praval, op.cit., p. 244.

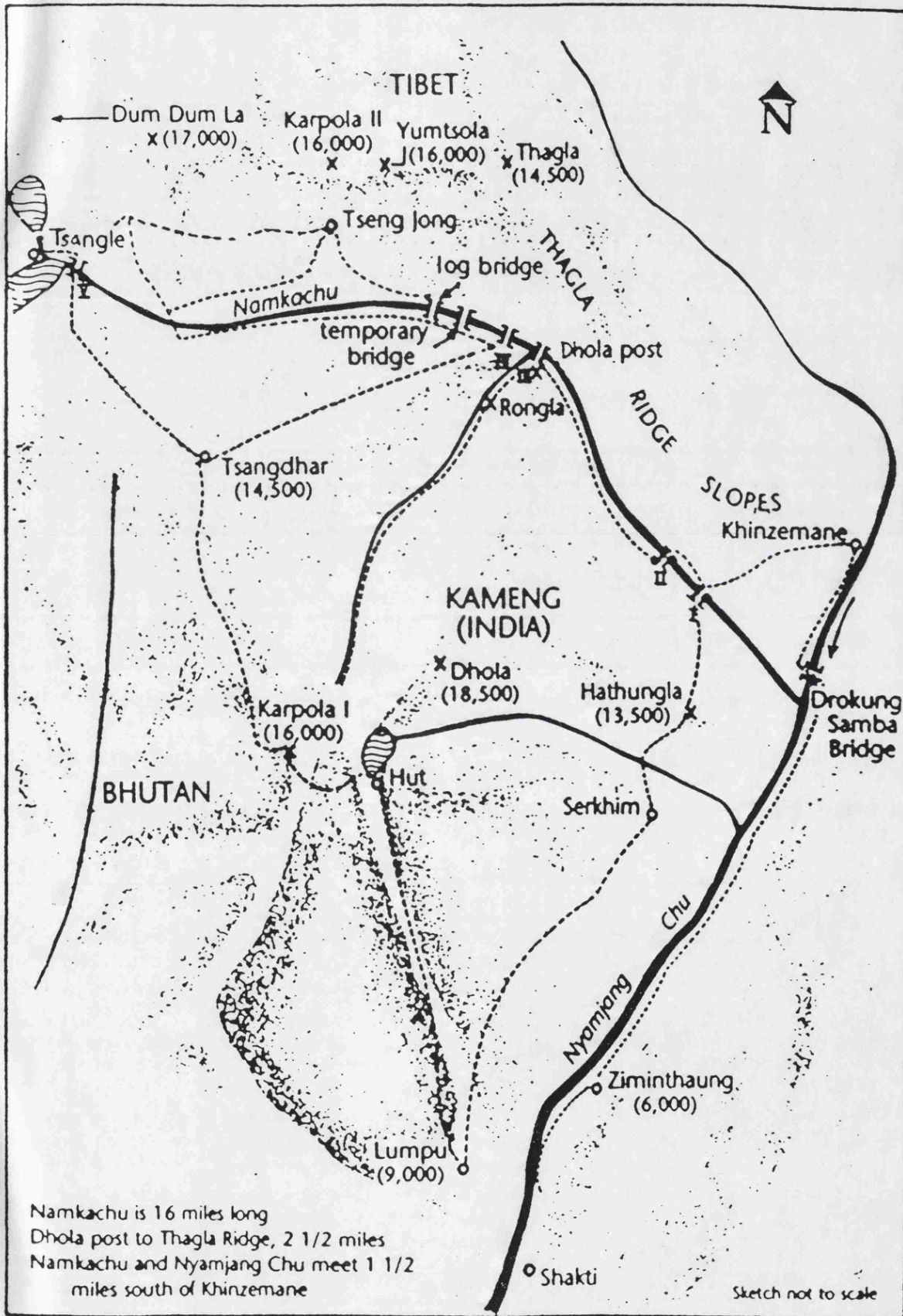
<sup>55</sup> See Dalvi, op.cit., pp. 151, 165-166; Hoffmann, op.cit., p. 134; Maxwell, op.cit., p. 295; and Palit, op.cit., p. 186-187.

<sup>56</sup> Long, Red Coats to Olive Green, p. 370.

<sup>57</sup> Dalvi, op.cit., pp. 154-155.

<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 157-158.

NEFA: The Thagla Ridge



Source: S.A. Hoffmann, *India and the China Crisis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

General Sen, the officer with ultimate responsibility for NEFA, conferred telephonically with Thapar and then ordered 9th Punjab to move immediately to Lumpu and 7th Brigade to prepare to leave in 48 hours to confront the Chinese at the Dhola Pass.<sup>59</sup> The two officers had just changed army strategy in the northeast from one of backing forward patrols to one of direct confrontation by a significant military force<sup>60</sup> without the benefit of any first-hand knowledge of NEFA and without consulting either the local commanders, CGS Kaul, or DMD Palit (all of whom knew the area from current/previous personal/command experience).<sup>61</sup>

On 11 September, the civil-military leadership went further, effectively changing the Forward Policy from aggressive self-defence to outright offence by ordering "Operation Leghorn", the forcible eviction of the Chinese menacing the Dhola Pass outpost and the capture of the local highground, the Thagla Ridge. Such was the poor state of India's civil-military decision-making that this momentous decision was taken in the absence of Nehru (since 8 September at the London conference of Commonwealth Prime Ministers), Finance Minister Desai (normally cabinet chair in the PM's absence but also in London) and Home Minister Shastri (the remaining senior member of the Cabinet Defence Committee). Instead, at a New Delhi meeting attended by Mullik, Foreign Secretary M.J. Desai, Cabinet Secretary S.S. Khera, Joint Secretary (Defence) H. Sarin, Thapar, and (with Kaul on holiday) Deputy CGS Major-General J.S. Dhillon, chairman Menon accepted Sen's assurance that within 10 days an

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<sup>59</sup> See Dalvi, *op.cit.*, p. 161; and Hoffmann, *op.cit.*, pp. 130-131.

<sup>60</sup> Hoffmann, *op.cit.*, p. 131.

<sup>61</sup> Kaul had had many adventures in NEFA, both on personal missions approved by Nehru and as 4th Division CO and CGS. Palit had commanded 7th Brigade in NEFA before being appointed DMD. See Kaul, *op.cit.*, pp. 160-169, 227-237, 276-277; and Palit, *op.cit.*, pp. 46-50.

infantry brigade could be concentrated below the Thagla Ridge to expel all Chinese forces in the area.<sup>62</sup>

NEFA commanders were incredulous at their senior's unprofessional advice to the political leadership. Dalvi

cannot understand the basis for [Lieut.-] General Sen's... guarantee... [which] he did so entirely on his own and without any assurance from the Corps, Divisional or Brigade commanders. I had given no such undertaking, nor was I in a position to do so. I did not have a brigade to concentrate...to support operations.<sup>63</sup>

What on a map seemed perfectly plausible to politicians and senior officers in Delhi and to Eastern Command HQ in Lucknow was unattainable in the extreme mountain conditions of NEFA. When Sen personally passed on the new deployment orders to Prasad and GoC 33rd Corps Umrao Singh on 12 September, both protested at the impossibility of evicting a Chinese force they now estimated as a full division and a half.<sup>64</sup> Yet Sen remained adamant. Nothing seemed to be thought impossible by senior commanders eager to please their civilian masters.

Four years into the reign of the Menon-Kaul nexus, such unprofessional behaviour had become the norm at Army HQ. For a number of months, no proper records of vital decisions had been kept at headquarters; now Operation Leghorn saw orders increasingly issued telephonically instead of in writing.<sup>65</sup> On 16 September, Palit returned from leave to find

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<sup>62</sup> See Dalvi, op.cit., p. 170; Hoffmann, op.cit., pp. 131-132; Kaul, op.cit., p. 356; Maxwell, op.cit., pp. 303-304; Mullik, op.cit., p. 341; Palit, op.cit., pp. 196, 203; and Praval, op.cit., pp. 245-246.

<sup>63</sup> Dalvi, op.cit., p. 169.

<sup>64</sup> See Dalvi, op.cit., pp. 173-177; Hoffmann, op.cit., pp. 132-133, 135; Kaul, op.cit., pp. 356-357; Maxwell, op.cit., pp. 302-310; and Palit, op.cit., p. 205.

<sup>65</sup> See Dalvi, op.cit., p. 176; Maxwell, op.cit., pp. 306-309, 312-314; and Palit, op.cit., pp. 195-200.



Military Operations Directorate...in a state of confusion...now merely relaying orders on behalf of the officiating GCS [Major-General Dhillon, who]...focused on the political decision [to evict the Chinese from Thagla Ridge]...rather than on the logistical and tactical factors that clearly denied the feasibility of that option.<sup>66</sup>

Even more unprofessional—and dangerous to the corporate cohesion of the Indian Army—was Army HQ's interference in the tactical deployment of troops in NEFA. Dalvi states the obvious: "In well regulated armies it is not the statutory function of superior commanders to order the moves of units, or to evict junior commanders from their HQs. A formation is given a task, and the formation commander executes it".<sup>67</sup> Yet his brigade's deployment south of the Thagla Ridge was orchestrated down to the smallest detail by his superiors.<sup>68</sup>

Also now typical of Army HQ was senior officers' supineness to government civilians. On 22 September, Thapar, worried that a fatal exchange of fire across the *de facto* border of the Namka Chu river two days earlier presaged a attack on vulnerable Indian outposts in NEFA and/or Ladakh, sought written confirmation of the "eviction" order given at the 11 September New Delhi meeting chaired by Menon.<sup>69</sup> In the absence of Nehru (still in London), Menon (at a UN Security Council session in New York), Finance Minister Desai (in Washington), and Home Minister Shastri (in Kerala), it was left to Joint Secretary (Defence) Sarin to sign an order confirming the government's directive that the army expel the Chinese from Dhola and the Thagla Ridge.<sup>70</sup> Thapar accepted this

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<sup>66</sup> Palit, *op.cit.*, pp. 195, 199.

<sup>67</sup> Dalvi, *op.cit.*, p. 176.

<sup>68</sup> See Dalvi, *op.cit.*, pp. 176, 188-191, 193, 206-207; Kaul, *op.cit.*, pp. 359-360; and Palit, *op.cit.*, pp. 90, 211-212.

<sup>69</sup> See Dalvi, *op.cit.*, pp. 195-197; Hoffmann, *op.cit.*, pp. 143-144; Kaul, *op.cit.*, p. 362,

<sup>70</sup> Maxwell's assertion that a telephone call was made by to Menon in New York before the issuance of this order is disputed by Hoffmann. See

confirmation and the same day issued the relevant orders to his commanders in NEFA.<sup>71</sup>

Many officers saw Thapar's acceptance of Joint Secretary (Defence) Sarin's authority as a failure of leadership. Kaul, an exception to the majority of his comrades who believed Thorat had been the best candidate to succeed Thimayya as army chief, felt Thapar "had the courage of his convictions and was not afraid of expressing his opinions, even though unpalatable, in the presence of those above him".<sup>72</sup> But for Palit, the chief's acceptance of Sarin's order showed otherwise:

I could not understand Thapar's thought processes. The very fact that he asked for a written order from the Minister indicated that he was not wholly in agreement with the content of the verbal one...clearly he was alarmed about a possible riposte in both Ladakh and NEFA, and he must have known that in either event our forward posts stood no chance of a co-ordinated attack. Furthermore, since Menon was away he would not have to face any browbeating; so why did he not resist the pressure on him to amount [sic] a reckless offensive at Thag-la?<sup>73</sup>

Dalvi found it "unbelievable...that the Chief was satisfied with this order and passed it on. 'To be right and overruled is not forgiven to persons in responsible positions!'"<sup>74</sup>

Yet, as before, those in responsible positions who contradicted the received wisdom of the Menon-Kaul nexus soon found themselves in trouble. The latest victim was Umrao Singh who had repeatedly protested against army HQ's thoughtless deployment of forward posts.<sup>75</sup> Simply

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Dalvi, op.cit., p. 203; J.K. Galbraith, Ambassador's Journal An American View of India (Pbk. ed., Bombay: Jaico Publishing House, 1972. Published by arrangement with Hamish Hamilton Ltd, London, 1969), p. 123; Hoffmann, op.cit., p. 144; Maxwell, op.cit., p. 315; Mullik, op.cit., pp. 352-353; and Palit, op.cit., p. 214.

<sup>71</sup> Palit, op.cit., pp. 215-216.

<sup>72</sup> Kaul, op.cit., p. 271.

<sup>73</sup> Palit, op.cit., p. 214.

<sup>74</sup> Dalvi, op.cit., p. 203.

<sup>75</sup> See Dalvi, op.cit., pp. 209, 212, 213, 223-224; Hoffmann, op.cit., p. 147; Maxwell, op.cit., p. 321; and Palit, op.cit., p. 217.

sacking him would have raised suspicions that sections of the army were either incompetent and/or displeased at government policy in NEFA (and left his successor with a potentially hostile staff). Instead, after meetings on 2-3 October between Nehru, Menon, Thapar, Sen and Kaul, it was announced that Umrao's 33rd Corps would be given exclusive responsibility for the Sikkim, Nagaland and East Pakistan fronts, while Kaul would be made GoC of a "new" 4 Corps headquartered in Tezpur with orders to carry out the eviction order in the Thagla Ridge forthwith.<sup>76</sup>

Replacing the respected Umrao Singh and his experienced 33rd Corps with Kaul and a new (in name only; see below) 4 Corps stunned the armed forces.<sup>77</sup> Not only was Kaul the one senior officer derided for having no combat experience, he had been on leave in Kashmir since 3 September and was out of touch with recent developments.<sup>78</sup> Palit was "as surprised as aghast at the news. What new corps? Why him? Who would do the OGS's job when he left?"<sup>79</sup> Kaul himself describes the immensity of his task:

[4th Corps] was to consist at the moment of only...two (5 and 7) Infantry Brigades, (with the possibility of a third Brigade joining me later) whereas normally there are six to twelve Infantry Brigades in a Corps...There was also another Division to be formed which would be given to me, apart from other reinforcements, later...

Normally it takes between six months and a year to raise and train and a Corps Headquarters in its operational and administrative functions. It takes another six months to a year...after units and formations have been made available, to make a Corps battle-worthy...I, on the other hand, was given command of a Corps which was practically non-existent on the ground and the headquarters of which had yet to be raised. I

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<sup>76</sup> Accounts of the meetings vary slightly. See Dalvi, op.cit., p. 222; Hoffmann, op.cit., p. 148; Kaul, op.cit., pp. 336, 364-365; Maxwell, op.cit., pp. 319-323; and Palit, op.cit., pp. 219-221.

<sup>77</sup> See Hoffmann, op.cit., p. 148; Maxwell, op.cit., p. 322; and Palit, op.cit., p. 219.

<sup>78</sup> See Kaul, op.cit., pp. 337-338, 340-348, 353; Mullik, op.cit., pp. 338, 348; and Palit, op.cit., pp. 191, 211.

<sup>79</sup> Palit, op.cit., p. 220. See also Dalvi, op.cit., pp. 220-224.



was, thus, expected to perform a miracle and begin to operate immediately. [My indents.]<sup>10</sup>

General Chaudhuri, unusually silent in his autobiography on the events leading to the Chinese invasion, stops to disparage Kaul's complaints:

The newly-appointed Corps Commander had many complaints when things went wrong. He complained that though he was the Corps Commander, the Corps HQ did not exist on [the] ground forgetting that whatever the acts of omission and commission, he was himself to blame, being the Chief of the General Staff.<sup>11</sup>

Whatever Kaul's recorded complaints, Palit, in discussion with the new GoC 4th Corps on the night before his departure for NEFA on 4 October,

could see that Bijji was greatly pleased with himself and I could imagine why. He was going to war at last, and at the top level. Here was his chance to make up for the past, to fill in the blanks in his credentials and to give lie to his detractors. There would be no holding him back.<sup>12</sup>

A commander inexperienced in battle but desperately eager to prove himself, flying to the front with a staff of "yes-men"<sup>13</sup> to take over a severely under-resourced corps was never going to give India's civil-military leadership the quick victory they still believed possible. Yet such was Nehru's belief in the abilities of his favourite officer that Kaul left for the front bearing just such expectations.<sup>14</sup>

Despite his hopes, Kaul committed an error of judgement on the evening of 11 October which was to prove the undoing of Indian Army defences in NEFA. The day before, he had been shocked at the force of a Chinese attack on several Indian positions along the Namka Chu river:

I had now seen with my own eyes the superior resources of the Chinese...and the untenability of our position...Frankly speaking, I had now fully understood all the implications of our

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<sup>10</sup> Kaul, op.cit., pp. 336-367.

<sup>11</sup> Chaudhuri, op.cit., p. 173.

<sup>12</sup> Palit, op.cit., p. 222.

<sup>13</sup> See ibid., p. 222.

<sup>14</sup> See Dalvi, op.cit., pp. 225, 231; and Palit, op.cit., p. 223.

predicament and...I thought we should reconsider the whole of our position in this theatre [NEFA].<sup>55</sup>

Kaul agreed with local commanders Prasad and Dalvi that their forces should pull back to more defensible and easily supplied positions, but refused to authorize this move until he could present the hopelessness of their present situation to his superiors in Delhi.<sup>56</sup> Yet, at a meeting the next night attended by top civil-military decision-makers including Nehru, Menon, Mullik, Thapar and Sen,<sup>57</sup> Kaul offered the PM three choices: (a) launch an attack despite the overwhelming odds; (b) hold present positions; or (c) retreat to more defensible locations.<sup>58</sup> While accounts vary, it is apparent that when both Thapar and Sen, neither with any first-hand knowledge of the relevant terrain, scoffed at Kaul's assessment of the precariousness of the Indian positions and advised that the troops along the Namka Chu river hold their present positions, he did not protest. Nehru agreed and allowed the troops to remain overexposed to the enemy.<sup>59</sup> In giving the civil-military leadership three choices where only one—retreat—was reasonable, Kaul ignored the first duty of a commander to do what is best for his men.

Nehru also seemed unable to admit to Indian frailties on the northern borders. On 13 September, he told reporters at Delhi airport who had come to see him off to Colombo that "Our instructions [to military forces in NEFA] are to free our territory...I cannot fix a

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<sup>55</sup> Kaul, op.cit., pp. 383-384. Dalvi writes that the Chinese caused Kaul to exclaim "Oh my God...You are right, they mean business". See Dalvi, op.cit., p. 255.

<sup>56</sup> See Dalvi, op.cit., pp. 255-258; and Kaul, op.cit., p. 383,

<sup>57</sup> See Kaul, op.cit., p. 385; Mullik, op.cit., pp. 361-364; and Palit, op.cit., pp. 226-227.

<sup>58</sup> Kaul, op.cit., p. 386.

<sup>59</sup> See Hoffmann, op.cit., pp. 153-154; Kaul, op.cit., pp. 385-386; Mullik, op.cit., pp. 361-364; and Palit, op.cit., pp. 226-228.

date, that is entirely for the Army".<sup>90</sup> Although he went on to discuss some aspects of the situation which favoured China—their forces were more numerous and held the higher ground, their main supply base was closer to the disputed border, and wintry conditions limited Indian mobility—he made no mention of his decision to temporarily suspend Operation Leghorn because of Indian Army deficiencies. How could he, after years of asserting the opposite? While Nehru's statement may have been meant as an innocuous (if naively worded) reiteration of publicly-stated policy, the international, Chinese and Indian press and people took it as a virtual declaration of war.<sup>91</sup>

In the few days left before war, the civil-military leadership continued to stumble from one bad judgment to another,<sup>92</sup> the most notable being the 19 September decision to retain Kaul as GoC 4th Corps even though he had just been diagnosed as suffering from pulmonary oedema and flown back to Delhi for "complete rest".<sup>93</sup> (Following procedure would have seen him replaced by the NEFA theatre's next-ranking officer, Prasad).<sup>94</sup> Why, too, when his illness had been diagnosed as too serious to be treated at the army hospital in Tezpur, Kaul was allowed to recuperate at home?<sup>95</sup> Nonetheless, urged on by the cream of India's civil-military decision-makers constantly in attendance

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<sup>90</sup> See The Statesman, 13 October 1962, as used in a number of sources, including Gopal, op.cit., p. 220; and Longer, op.cit., p. 374.

<sup>91</sup> See Hoffmann, op.cit., p. 154; Maxwell, op.cit., pp. 342-344; Longer, op.cit., p. 374; and Verma, op.cit., p. 127.

<sup>92</sup> See Hoffmann, op.cit., pp. 156-158; Kaul, op.cit., pp. 388-389; Mullik, op.cit., pp. 368, 370; and Palit, op.cit., p. 231.

<sup>93</sup> Kaul, op.cit., p. 391.

<sup>94</sup> When Palit confronted Thapar on the "bizarre parody of military practice" of letting Kaul remain as GoC 4th Corps, the chief "merely said that the Defence Minister had so ordered". See Palit, op.cit., p. 236.

<sup>95</sup> Edwardes, Nehru, p. 304.

at his sickbed, Kaul continued to order his commanders in NEFA to remain in what he knew were untenable positions.<sup>96</sup> It was there that he heard news of the Chinese invasion along the northern borders on 20 October.

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I.E. Questionnaire Respondents

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India's top civil-military decision-makers had insisted on implementing the Forward Policy despite the opposition of any number of senior commanders in the theatres concerned. What of the men who served under them? How did the Indian armed forces' field officers whose units would bear the brunt of the civil-military leadership's strategy for the defence of the northern borders, see the Forward Policy? In 1962, most of the questionnaire respondents were at or around the field rank, and their responses may be seen on Table 8.1.

TABLE 8.1

What was your opinion of the Forward Policy?	
	Percent(No.)
Negative	59.38 (57)
Positive	20.83 (20)
No Answer	19.79 (19)
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Total	100.00 (96)

While a fifth (19.79%) of respondents say their relatively junior rank in 1962 meant they could give "No Answer", an equal number (20.83%) describe having had a "Positive"—though qualified—view of the Forward Policy. Some, like Air Chief Marshal 1, fault only its "insufficient preparation". Others, like Brigadier (Dr.) 55, use historical qualifications: a "badly prepared army and poor leadership does not mean

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<sup>96</sup> See Hoffmann, *op.cit.*, pp. 158-159; Kaul, *op.cit.*, pp. 388-392; Maxwell, *op.cit.*, pp. 355-357; Mullik, *op.cit.*, pp. 372-373; and Palit, *op.cit.*, pp. 234-236.

the policy was bad. Rather, Tibet should never have been allowed to be occupied by the Chinese". Officers also blame the civil-military leadership for compromising the Forward Policy. Brigadier 40 argues that

as a policy there was nothing wrong with it. What was wrong was that execution was also being sought to be influenced by the "non-professionals" like Krishna Menon. Because of the then commander's [Thapar] weakness in not resisting such interference, the policy came under criticism.

Nonetheless, "Positive" respondents agree that "something had to be done" (Vice Admiral 8) and there was "no other alternative" (Air Marshal 7) to the Forward Policy.

The almost two-thirds (59.38%) majority of respondents who describe the Forward Policy as "Negative" disagree. For Lieut.-General 17, Brigadier 76 and Colonel 24, respectively, the Forward Policy was "ill-conceived and miscalculated", "rank bravado", and "premature and stupid". Specifically cited are failures in diplomacy—"an agreement to 'exchange' Aksai Chin with other areas would have given long-term benefit...and would have shown pragmatic and mature political ability rather than emotional reactions" (Lieut.-General 49)—intelligence—"a political policy based on inadequate/faulty intelligence...in spite of warnings given by the more professionally competent senior army officers" (Brigadier 29)—and strategic thinking—"it was forced on the generals to placate political thinking, 'not an inch of Indian soil will be surrendered'. This is where both Nehru and Menon went wrong. This was a job for generals not politicians" (Lieut.-Colonel 80). In the final analysis, argues Brigadier 73, "there was no immediate danger to the country. We forced the Chinese to enter India".

Some "Negative" respondents acknowledge the military leadership's complicity in the Forward Policy. For Lieut.-General 10,

the whole thing was totally non-professional. There was no strategy behind this policy and there was a childish belief that there [would] not be any military conflict between China and India. The military hierarchy had acquiesced in this and was mesmerized into thinking that it was a politically infallible policy.

Some officers, recalls Brigadier 69, tried to protest:

I was in [the] Bomdila, Sela, Towang area. We tried to tell [Major-]Gen Amrit Singh that it will be foolish to send troops forward without roads and supplies. He said "I know...[but] what can you do! Everyday Menon rings up to find out how far have we advanced".<sup>97</sup>

Despite their field grade positions, most questionnaire respondents understood it was civil-military leadership's poor decisions which were, in the words of Lieut.-Colonel 25, "unnecessarily creating a critical situation for the defence".

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## II. War

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### II.A. Invasion to Ceasefire

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Just how critical the situation had become became apparent on 20 October when Chinese forces attacked Indian positions all along the northern borders and, writes Verma, "most of the troops deployed in penny packets in pursuance of the so-called 'Forward Policy' advocated by Krishna Menon and Biji Kaul...[were] swept away like driftwood before a torrent".<sup>98</sup> In eastern NEFA, the 7th Infantry Brigade "virtually ceased to exist"<sup>99</sup> and within days Prasad and his HQ abandoned Towang, over 20 miles inside Indian-claimed territory. Fierce fighting also broke around Walong in the previously quiet western end of NEFA.

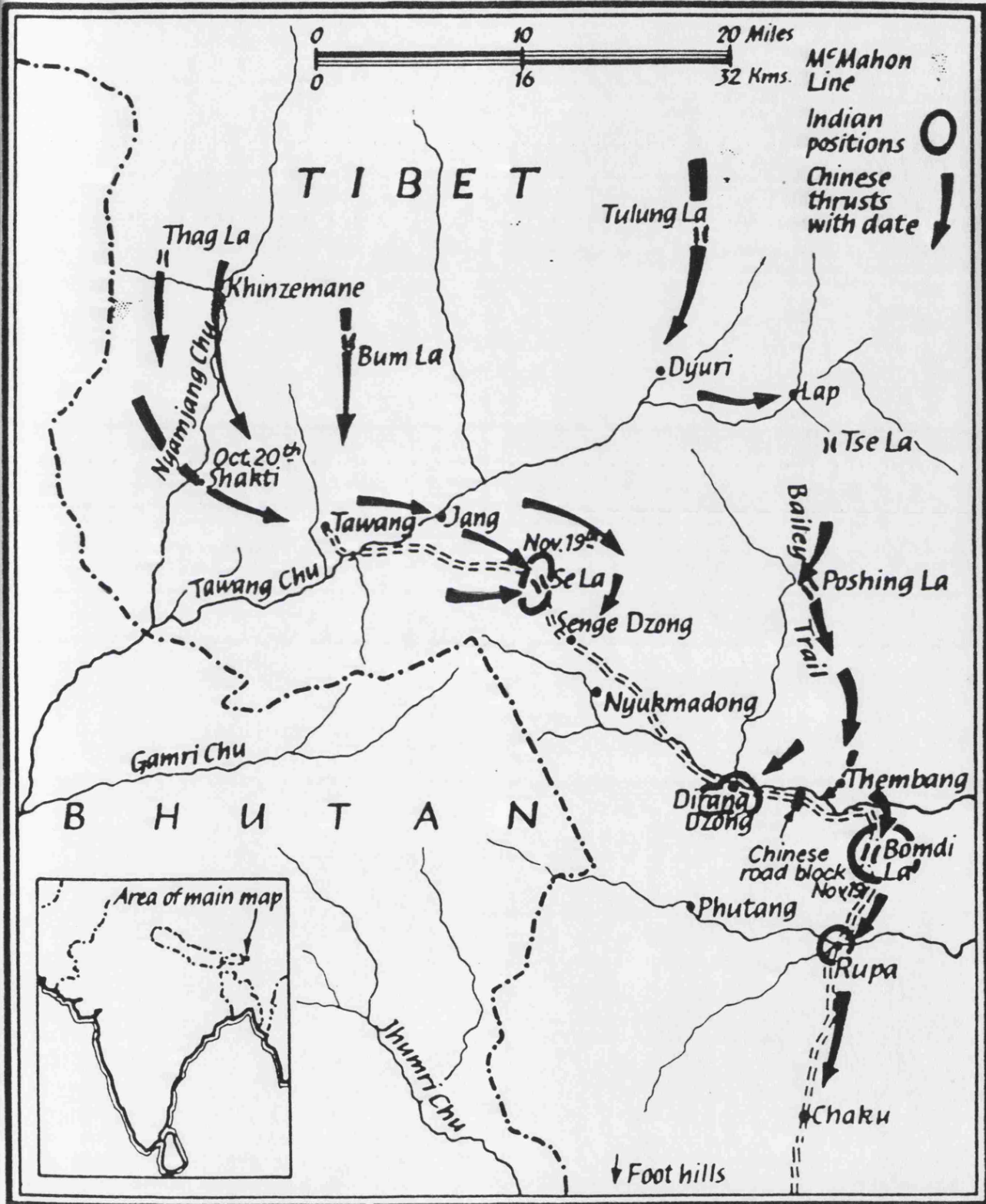
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<sup>97</sup> From an interview with Brigadier 69; London, 9 December 1989.

<sup>98</sup> Verma, op.cit., p. 120.

<sup>99</sup> Palit, op.cit., p. 242.

NEFA: The Indian Retreat



Source: N. Maxwell, *India's China War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970).

Although isolated Indian Army and J&K Militia outposts offered stiff resistance in Ladakh, they were eventually overwhelmed by the enemy's superior numbers. By 24 October, the Chinese were secure enough in their gains to offer peace if India respected a 7 November 1959 "line of actual control" (which effectively ceded the former 12,000 square miles of northern border land). Although India refused this offer, there occurred a brief lull in hostilities.<sup>100</sup>

The Chinese attacks shocked India—and Nehru. He declared a state of Emergency, labelled the Chinese offensive a "major invasion"<sup>101</sup> in which the fate of Asia and the world was at stake, appealed for (and received) US and other Western military aid and, under severe pressure from Parliament and the press, took over the defence portfolio from Menon (demoted to the new post of Minister for Defence Production).<sup>102</sup> Nehru also handed back to Army HQ responsibility for military tactics and deployment: "It is a matter *now* for the military to decide—where and how they should fight" [My italics].<sup>103</sup> From 24 October, he began to chair the daily defence meetings introduced by Menon the month before.

Despite these changes, the lull allowed the political leadership to convince itself that only the surprise and overwhelming numbers of the Chinese attacks were to blame for Indian reverses and, if the army could be allowed sufficient time to regroup, civil-military decision-making could remain unchanged.<sup>104</sup> Tactics continued to be decided by small

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<sup>100</sup> See Dalvi, op.cit., pp. 105, 316-325; Hoffmann, op.cit., p. 163; Maxwell, op.cit., pp. 360-371; Longer, op.cit., pp. 375-378, 396; Mullik, op.cit., pp. 374-377.

<sup>101</sup> Kavic, op.cit., p. 178.

<sup>102</sup> See George, op.cit., pp. 252-254; Longer, op.cit., pp. 382-385; and Maxwell, op.cit., pp. 360-267.

<sup>103</sup> Palit, op.cit., p. 246. See also Hoffmann, op.cit., p. 164; and Maxwell, op.cit., p. 368.

<sup>104</sup> See Edwardes, op.cit., pp. 306-307; and Hoffmann, op.cit., pp. 170-



groups of senior civil-military leaders—Nehru, Menon (decreasingly until the acceptance of his letter of resignation on 7 November; see below), Foreign Secretary Desai (increasingly), Minister of Economic and Defence Coordination T.T. Krishnamachari (increasingly),<sup>105</sup> Thapar, Sen, Kaul, and Palit—with little mutual consultation and/or regard for formal procedure. Perhaps the most glaring example of "business as usual" came when Kaul, who had been formally replaced as GoC 4th Corps on 24 October returned to his post on 29 October.<sup>106</sup> That Kaul's reinstatement was likely to harm India's fighting efficiency—he replaced the capable and respected Lieut.-General Harbakhsh Singh—and morale—frontline troops openly scoffed at their commander's "timely" evacuation and "political" rehabilitation—did not deter Nehru from foisting upon the army his favourite commander.<sup>107</sup>

Nowhere is the disastrous effect of the civil-military leadership's over-reliance on personal contact better illustrated than in Palit's record of the "nightmarish"<sup>108</sup> days of 17-18 November at 4th Corps HQ, Tezpur. (Unless otherwise noted, the quotes below are Palit's own.)<sup>109</sup> On 17 November, Army HQ received from Walong a signal in which Kaul

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<sup>105</sup> See Hoffmann, op.cit., pp. 164, 205.

<sup>106</sup> See Hoffmann, op.cit., pp. 181-182; and Kaul, op.cit., p. 395-396, 398.

<sup>107</sup> See Hoffmann, op.cit., pp. 171-173, 180-183; Maxwell, op.cit., pp. 389-390; Kaul, op.cit., pp. 396-398; and Palit, op.cit., pp. 236, 244-255.

<sup>108</sup> Palit, op.cit., p. 324.

<sup>109</sup> Of the two published narratives which describe the events of 17/18 November, Palit's recent War is far more authoritative than Kaul's The Untold Story as it draws upon his official General Staff report "Summary of Events and Policies" compiled after the war from his daily notes, Military Operations files, and TOPSEC [Top Secret] documents. From private correspondence between myself and Palit, 1995; and Palit, op.cit., pp. 248-249, 259, 261, 301-335.

"sounded so desperate as to be almost demented".<sup>110</sup> Thapar and Palit responded by proceeding to 4th Corps HQ to join Sen and await Kaul so as to bolster his confidence. (Just how ill-suited the "frail and distraught"<sup>111</sup> Thapar was for this task became evident on the flight up when he intimated he was pondering his resignation/dismissal.) Neither suspected they were about to fight the crucial battle of the 1962 War.

The lull in fighting had allowed the Indian Army to quickly reconstitute a 4th Division of ten battalions for the defence of eastern NEFA. While deficient in high-altitude training and reserves, these battalions could draw upon artillery and other heavy weaponry, and the military leadership was confident of checking the Chinese at the high ground of Se La Pass held by the 62nd Brigade with the 65th in close attendance at Senge. Further defensive insurance was provided by the 48th Brigade, stationed 60 miles back at the other end of the Se La-Senge-(Nyukmadong)-Dirang Dzong-(Thembang)-Bomdila road.

Yet, within hours of Thapar and Palit's appearance in Tezpur, the Indian Army's planned defence of eastern NEFA began to collapse. Immediately upon their arrival, Sen informed them that 4th Division Major-General Anant Pathania (who had replaced Prasad on Sen's orders and was now in Bomdila) had ordered the 4th Garhwali Rifles to withdraw from their position on the outer defences of Se La (at Narangang) despite the battalion just having repulsed four successive attacks by "motley"<sup>112</sup> Chinese forces. Soon afterwards came information that GoC 48th Brigade Gurbax Singh had okayed the retreat of 5th Guards

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<sup>110</sup> Palit, op.cit., p. 301. See also Edwardes, op.cit., p. 307; Hoffmann, op.cit., pp. 183-185; and Kaul, op.cit., pp. 403-410.

<sup>111</sup> Palit, op.cit., p. 304.

<sup>112</sup> *ibid.*, p. 308.

battalion, located just off the Se La-Bomdila road at Thembang, after it had been surrounded by Chinese troops. Thapar and Palit also learnt that Pathania already had persuaded Kaul to let him move 4th Division HQ—accompanied by 65th Brigade—down from Senge, just below Se La, to the Border Roads camp at Dhirang Dzong so as to alleviate his high altitude headaches. Palit "could scarcely believe what we were told. None of the commanders seemed to have the stomach for a fight".<sup>113</sup>

Matters did not improve when Kaul arrived from Walong to complete, with Thapar and Sen, the ruling triumvirate of India's military leadership. Already, Palit had taken a telephone call from Pathania in which the latter asked for permission to retreat from Dhirang Dzong because he feared the Chinese taking the Se La-Bomdila road and cutting off his escape route. Sen pleaded for Pathania's request to be granted:

"If 4 Infantry Division can make a clean break now...it will have a clear chance of getting away intact".

Before Thapar could be influenced by this specious argument I [Palit] asked the the Army Commander what the Division's operational role was: to fight the enemy at Se-la or to keep itself intact?<sup>114</sup>

It was becoming obvious India's top three military decision-makers—and assorted field commanders—were not up to battle command. Soon after Kaul's arrival, Palit discovered that a signal had been issued granting Pathania's request to retreat. When neither Thapar, Sen nor Kaul admitted to its authorship, Palit implored the chief that "we could never face the nation if 12,000 [Indian] troops... 'ran away' without even facing the enemy",<sup>115</sup> and persuaded him to cancel the message. Kaul now ordered 4th Division "to remain at Se-la and to fight it out to the

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<sup>113</sup> *ibid.*, p. 309.

<sup>114</sup> *ibid.*, p. 311.

<sup>115</sup> *ibid.*, p. 315.

best of its ability and withdraw only if its position became untenable".<sup>116</sup> Yet just over an hour later, Pathania was on the line again demanding permission to withdraw. Palit, who had answered the telephone, made Pathania confirm that there had been no frontal assault on Se La, only various minor activities in the Dhirang Dzong-Bomdila area. Then Kaul,

in words which will surely remain a classic *double entendre* in our military history books...[told Pathania]

"For tonight you hang on to your defences. Have another chat with me in the morning"

How far that unconventional enjoinder would stand up as an imperative to a jittery subordinate to stay and fight, I need not comment upon—but it was too late to do anything about it.<sup>117</sup>

In any case nothing was done and, as India's top military leaders slept that night in Tezpur, Pathania acted as if he understood Kaul's words to mean he could begin pulling out.

The next morning exposed the consequences of the previous night's irresolution. Kaul informed Palit that in the night 62nd Brigade CO Brigadier Hoshiar Singh had ordered his troops to pull out of their prepared defences around Se La, and that at 0630 Pathania had telephoned to say that "he was closing down his headquarters at Dhirang Dzong, because of the Chinese threat, and was moving—though he could not state what his destination would be".<sup>118</sup> Discovering that all communication links with the forces defending the Se La-Bomdila Road silent, Palit was now in "no doubt that everybody was on the run. 4[th] Infantry Division had ceased to exist".<sup>119</sup> Informed of these developments, Thapar and Sen "looked stunned". With the Chinese seemingly advancing at will, Palit

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<sup>116</sup> *ibid.*, p. 315.

<sup>117</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 317-318.

<sup>118</sup> *ibid.*, *op.cit.*, p. 319.

<sup>119</sup> *ibid.*, p. 321.

advised preparing for the defence of Assam. But the top triumvirate of India's military leadership could only hold

a number of discussions in which opinions gyrated freely but were seldom to the point. In the midst of the most acute military crisis the nation had faced in centuries, none seemed able to stretch his strategic horizon to take in the full significance of the situation.<sup>120</sup>

At mid-afternoon, with no effective orders yet issued, Sen scraped the bottom of India's military decision-making barrel, saying to Thapar,

"Sir, there is no option left for us but to ask for a ceasefire!"

"What!" I [Palit] blurted out, "Surrender?"

"If it comes to that, I suppose, yes," he [Sen] replied.

"Never! What are you talking about...If the Chinese come down into to the plains, that's the time to get our own back on them—not to put out hands up!"

I looked at Thapar and thought I sensed support, but he said nothing.<sup>121</sup>

This conversation immediately was followed by news that Bomdila, defended by 48th Brigade, was under attack. Leaving Sen and Kaul to organise what was left of the 4th Infantry Division's defence of eastern NEFA, Thapar and Palit left for Delhi to brief the political leadership on the prospects of protecting Assam from a Chinese invasion.

The humiliation heaped on India's civil-military leadership seemed limitless. Already, Nehru had had to ask for Western military aid and been forced to accept Menon's resignation from the government (see below). Now, on 19 November, a day after the collapse of the Se La-Bomdila defences, he wrote to US President Kennedy requesting American aircraft and pilots provide air cover for Indian cities.<sup>122</sup> With little news of any effective armed resistance, the senior military leadership under Thapar came close to recommending the evacuation of Assam, and the

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<sup>120</sup> *ibid.*, p. 324.

<sup>121</sup> *ibid.*, p. 327.

<sup>122</sup> Akbar, *op.cit.*, p. 560.

Home Ministry signalled its personnel in Tezpur and other northeastern cities to prepare for a scorched earth policy of defence.<sup>123</sup> Thapar then resigned on grounds of ill-health to make way for (then GoC South Lieut.-General) Chaudhuri. (Nehru was dissuaded from his original intention of replacing Thapar with Kaul by some forceful persuasion by President Radhakrishnan).<sup>124</sup> In a national broadcast that evening, Nehru seemed to be preparing "our friends in Assam"<sup>125</sup> for imminent invasion, giving rise to public panic. But Chaudhuri's first act as chief, his 20 November order that his commanders must stand and defend Assam,<sup>126</sup> became redundant the very next day when the Chinese added the final humiliation of declaring a unilateral ceasefire on all fronts and a withdrawal, to begin on 1 December, to positions behind the same "line of actual control" which Nehru had refused to accept earlier. To reach this ignominious end had cost the Indian Army 1,423 killed, 3,078 wounded, 1,655 missing believed dead.<sup>127</sup>

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## II.B. Performance

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India's political leadership was not keen to expose its decision-making failures to public scrutiny. The only official inquiry into the debacle of the 1962 War, a wholly military affair instigated by Chaudhuri and compiled by GoC 11th Corps Major-General Henderson-Brooks and IMA Commandant Brigadier P.S. Bhagat, was severely restricted in its access to both officers and documents.<sup>128</sup> Nonetheless, the "Henderson-

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<sup>123</sup> See Hoffmann, *op.cit.*, pp. 196-210; Maxwell, *op.cit.*, pp. 408-414; and Palit, *op.cit.*, p. 336-348.

<sup>124</sup> Edwardes, *op.cit.*, p. 308.

<sup>125</sup> Maxwell, *op.cit.*, p. 409.

<sup>126</sup> Chaudhuri, *op.cit.*, pp. 174-175.

<sup>127</sup> Longer, *op.cit.*, p. 397.

<sup>128</sup> For instance, the enquiry did not ask for nor receive Palit's

Brooks Report<sup>129</sup> proved so disagreeable to the government that its findings remain secret to this day. The only official reaction came on 2 September 1963 when new Defence Minister Y.B. Chavan (sworn in on 21 November),<sup>130</sup> stating that the purpose of the inquiry had never been "in any way [to] undertake a witch-hunt into the capabilities of those who were concerned with or took part in these operations",<sup>130</sup> gave Parliament only a most general description of its findings, He did admit that the inquiry's report contained recommendations including:

- (i) The need for more realistic battle training, especially in mountain warfare.
- (ii) The urgency of eliminating shortages of equipment.
- (iii) The need for curbing the tendency among senior officers to interfere in the tactical handling of troops at lower levels.
- (iv) The requirement of preparing troops adequately before committing them to a theatre of operations.
- (v) The requirement of better communications (signals and equipment).
- (vi) The need for a better intelligence set-up.<sup>131</sup>

Although Chavan added that the report recommended political directives be more closely related to the army's size and equipment, he neglected to say that it had apparently traced the roots of the defeat to the "higher direction of war".<sup>132</sup> For the political leadership, the sooner the 1962 War was forgotten, the better.

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## II.B.1. KCIOs

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The KCIOs are not reticent in noting the causes of defeat. Thorat holds Kaul "responsible for the chaos in N.E.F.A.....It was also he who,

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"Summary of Events and Policies", the only contemporaneous record of events written by an officers at Army HQ. See Maxwell, op.cit., pp. 437-438; Kaul, op.cit., pp. 454-455; and Palit, op.cit., pp. 376, 388-391.

<sup>129</sup> Longer, op.cit., p. 392.

<sup>130</sup> Statement in Lok Sabha, 29.9.63 as used in Maxwell, op.cit., p. 437.

<sup>131</sup> Praval, op.cit., pp. 326-327. See also Hoffmann, op.cit., pp. 221-222.

<sup>132</sup> Maxwell, op.cit., p. 438.

while he was commanding the forces in N.E.F.A., left the battlefield on the plea of ill-health and flew to the safety of New Delhi leaving his troops to perish in the Himalayas".<sup>133</sup> When Kaul, adds Verma,

got sick, jumped into a helicopter and rushed back to Delhi, to command operations from his bedroom in York Road, the troops could not be blamed for losing confidence and heart. The famous 4th Indian Division was routed, and some of the finest units...threw away their weapons and ran for safety. What an ignominious blot on the name of the finest army in the world!

And all because of lack of true leadership at the top, both civil and military. In any other democracy, those responsible would have been put on trial. Our heroes were only removed from their posts and are still being eulogised. [My indent.]<sup>134</sup>

Admiral Katari also blames the debacle of defeat on the civil-military leadership as a whole. The political leadership failed because

a lack of probity...One cannot play favourites and still expect to command universal loyalty or provide purposeful control...in war, it can be disastrous, as indeed it proved to be.

The leadership failure at the military level was more difficult to understand. Some at least of the senior officers had proved themselves as good fighting leaders in the past. My only conclusion is that they were a demoralized lot, an extension to the individual level of the general demoralization that had been creeping into the army.

Also I believe that the functioning of the intelligence machinery was far from effective.

Whatever the reasons, it resulted in a grave loss to the country's prestige and a shattering of the reputation of our fine army. [My indents.]<sup>135</sup>

Thorat, Verma and Katari all had their differences with the Menon-Kaul nexus and perhaps may be expected to be over-critical of the civil-military leadership's performance during the 1962 War.<sup>136</sup> What of those officers who had risen to top under this regime?

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<sup>133</sup> Thorat, op.cit., pp. 199-200.

<sup>134</sup> Verma, op.cit., p. 127.

<sup>135</sup> Katari, A Sailor Remembers, pp. 116-117.

<sup>136</sup> In 1967, Thorat's Vital Points Plan effectively was admitted by Menon to have been the tactically wise choice for the defence of NEFA when he stated that Chinese forces should have been allowed "come into Indian territory in depth before giving them a fight". This is exactly what Thorat's Vital Points Plan envisaged. This was not done, said Menon, because "this is a kind of thing which we were unable to persuade



Of the three main military protagonists in the debacle at NEFA—Thapar, Sen and Kaul—only the last has put his thoughts into writing. While Thapar himself has remained silent, Sen is quoted as to why he, as army commander, did not sack Kaul for incompetence:

It is all very well for you to say this...but do you know what his stature was then? He never talked to me; he would just pick up the phone and talk to the Prime Minister. He never even consulted the COAS [Thapar]. I would have got no support from anyone. Krishna Menon and Bijjy Kaul were running the armed forces of the country.<sup>137</sup>

Kaul blames all manner of factors, including the political leadership's continued faith in non-violence (which stifled spending on the armed forces), failure to provide "clear policy directions to the Army as to what its responsibilities are concerning important areas", and extraordinary concern with public opinion vis-a-vis border incursions. Particular civilians faulted include Nehru—for formulating the Forward Policy and issuing inflammatory remarks—Menon and his civil servants—for promoting the indigenous defence production of tomorrow at the expense of importing weaponry to meet the needs of today—and Finance Minister Desai—for providing insufficient funds when Menon did approve military resource requests. Kaul also censures fellow officers Sen—for a poor grasp of tactics—Pathania—for misleading him about the strength of the Chinese attack on 17-18 November and for not putting up enough resistance—Dalvi—for insufficient preparation of his unit's defences—and assorted field commanders—for not having "displayed greater

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our public opinion to accept them...Public opinion was [so] built up by various parties sometimes under the influence of foreign propaganda that we were never able to look at things objectively." Apparently public opinion and not the political leadership had dictated the border defence policy. See N.a., "Black November", The Statesman supplement, November 1967 as used in Dalvi, op.cit., pp. 66-67; and Maxwell, op.cit., p. 391.

<sup>137</sup> Praval, op.cit., p. 325.

determination" in fighting the enemy. While all of Kaul's criticisms may be argued to be correct, he himself repeatedly refuses to accept any personal responsibility for the debacle—despite acknowledging the degree to which the public and his fellow officers held him responsible for the defeat. He admits only to that "collective accountability which may be attached to all members of the General Staff for their troops' lack of training, acclimatization, or shortage of resources".<sup>138</sup> But then, adds Palit, Kaul "seemed to spend a large part of his life in disguise, even from himself".<sup>139</sup>

Palit himself places responsibility for the defeat on the nature of India's civil-military decision-making hierarchy. Because meetings were ad hoc, policy decisions were made with little or no staff analysis. Decisions based on false or misguided assumptions were then compounded by the tendency, as the crisis on the northern borders developed, for the "the decision-making cell in the government...[to grow] not larger but smaller and, consequently, not more but less accountable...Few authoritarian systems could have spawned a more exclusive policy-making apparatus."<sup>140</sup> For all these faults, continues Palit,

the main responsibility for the disasters of 1962 lies squarely on the shoulders of the high command and their staffs, for their unawareness or disregard of operational and logistical constraints on the Himalayan front, for their failure to impress on the politicians the impossibility of the operational tasks demanded of them, and, above all, for their insensitivity to the plight of the officers and men in the battalions witlessly pushed up into the high mountains—insufficiently armed, clothed or provisioned—at the mercy of an enemy well-prepared for war.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Kaul, *op.cit.*, pp. 279-280, 320, 327-333, 336-340, 342-344, 348-349, 368-369, 374-376, 379, 381, 387, 393, 406, 408, 414-417, 425-426.

<sup>139</sup> Palit, *op.cit.*, p. 77.

<sup>140</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 124, 275-276.

<sup>141</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 354-355.

Palit could hardly be more damning: "If the fighting had continued on 20 November, I feel sure that there would have been few left among the top ranks who could, or would, have effectively directed the army in war or led army corps in battle".<sup>142</sup>

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## II.B.2. Questionnaire Respondents

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As DMO, Palit was at the heart of India's senior military leadership—what was the view further down the ranks? In 1962, the armed forces' field grade officers who experienced first-hand the bloody battle results of poor civil-military leadership decisions were the questionnaire respondents. Who and/or what did they perceive as having performed badly during the defeats in Ladakh and NEFA? See Table 8.2.

TABLE 8.2

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Which factors acquitted themselves worst in the 1962 Sino-Indian War?

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	Percent(No.) of Total Vote <sup>a</sup>
Military Equipment and Training	26.97 (82)
Political Leadership	23.69 (72)
Military Leadership	20.07 (61)
Intelligence	18.75 (57)
Military Field Officers	5.92 (18)
Jawans	3.29 (10)
Other	0.99 (3) <sup>b</sup>
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Total Votes Cast	99.96 (304)

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<sup>a</sup> 85 respondents cast multiple votes; 11 respondents cast no votes.

<sup>b</sup> JCOs (1); Lethargy & Panic (1); Roads (1).

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With over a quarter of the vote (26.97%), "Military Equipment and Training" was held by respondents as most responsible. For Brigadier 29, "officers and jawans in the field acquitted themselves the best they could but were handicapped by substandard equipment, lack of suitable

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<sup>142</sup> *ibid.*, p. 352.

training and hostile elements for which they were unprepared". Brigadier 29 is the exception in that few other officers offer any further comment on this topic; for most the sad state of the military's preparation for war with China appears self-evident.

The respondents are more forthright describing the shortcomings of their second-most culpable factor, India's "Political Leadership" (23.69%). For Brigadier 90, "Nehru's rhetoric of 'throwing out the Chinese' was emotional and typical of an autocrat". Lieut.-General 10 asks one to

compare Churchill in 1940 to Nehru in 1962. In 1940 the British Field Army had been destroyed in Dunkirk and Great Britain had no allies. But Churchill was was moved to make his speech: "I've nothing but blood, sweat and tears to offer. We'll fight on the beaches, we'll fight on the streets..." In 1962 Nehru had lost only 25-30,000 [sic] men. India still had an army of 500,000 and allies in the US and UK. Yet he made a radio address which practically resigned Assam to the Chinese. He should have and could have fought back.<sup>143</sup>

Despite such sentiments, most respondents naming a particular individual as a poor performer point not to Nehru, but to his defence minister. Air Chief Marshal 12 explains how the "debacle happened because of Krishna Menon who told Nehru that he would take care of Pakistan and China and watch the defence forces".<sup>144</sup> "The army was prevented from any preparation for war in that particular area [NEFA] by Krishna Menon who had implicit faith in the peaceful intentions of the Chinese", adds Major-General 34.

Although Major-General 36 argues that one "should not blame the military leadership or the officers and men...political decisions [are] taken and orders have to be obeyed", "Military Leadership" (20/07%)

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<sup>143</sup> From an interview with Lieut.-General 10; Patna, 29 September 1989.

<sup>144</sup> From an interview with Air Chief Marshal 12; Pune, 11 October 1987.

comes in for almost as much blame as the "Political Leadership". For Brigadier 40, the

military leadership at divisional and higher levels acquitted itself very poorly. Both insofar as surrendering tactical direction to the political leadership and executing the military manoeuvres were concerned. Especially as far as the latter is concerned, there was to my mind, utter panic...causing incalculable damage to troops and equipment.

Lieut.-General 93 "was MA [Military Attaché] to COAS [Thapar] at the time and I just could not believe the behaviour of senior military leaders at the time". Lieut.-General 16 is more specific:

Worst were Kaul who failed to understand the military problem and played into the hands of Krishna Menon, Lt Gen. L.P. Sen of Eastern Command who did not support his field commanders, Gen. Thapar whose stand against the forward policy was not strong enough and last but not least, Maj. Gen. A.S. Pathania who let down the famous 4th Division by pulling out without fighting from his prepared defences.<sup>145</sup>

For Brigadier 76, "military honour dictated that, rather than jeopardise the safety of his troops and the prestige of his country...General Thapar should have at the time threatened to resign.

Of all "Military Leadership" figures, it is Kaul who is most mentioned—and not always negatively. Kaul, argues Lieut.-General 95, was "a favourite of Menon and Nehru who tried to make up for his lack of combat experience...[by putting him] in at singularly inopportune time as Commander 4th Corps. Any other officer would have not been able to handle that bad a situation any better".<sup>146</sup> Brigadier 28, previously one of Kaul's PSOs "in a particular appointment when he was Major General" agrees that "any commander in NEFA would have then met the same fate due to our lack of preparedness there". Kaul was a "convenient scapegoat",

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<sup>145</sup> From the questionnaire and an interview with Lieut.-General 16; New Delhi, 3 September 1987.

<sup>146</sup> From an interview with Lieut.-General 95; New Delhi, 13 September 1989.

adds Major-General 96; "in that situation, Napoleon, Rommel and Zhukov rolled into one could not have done any better".

Yet most respondents who mention Kaul's performance in the Sino-Indian War disparage it. From the outset, argues Major-General 34, Kaul was "a politician in the garb of a military officer who carried favour with the Prime Minister and the Defence Minister and fooled them into thinking that the military was well prepared to face the Chinese". This was fatal, adds Lieut.-General 16 (who served with Kaul in NEFA), as he was "completely lacking in either strategic or tactical sense". Lieut.-General 10, a staff officer of Kaul's, "respected him for his drive and energy but I did not have a high opinion of his strategic or tactical skill". Thus, recalls Major-General 20, "on his appointment as general officer commanding NEFA we all knew that as a mere service corps officer Kaul will meet his Waterloo. No one was surprised when he failed".

"Intelligence" (18.75%) comes just after "Military Leadership" as a factor responsible for India's 1962 reverses. For Major-General 98, Mullik "poisoned [the] whole mind of Nehru [and was] the man behind the throne".<sup>147</sup> However, like "Military Equipment and Training", this factor is little commented upon by the respondents. One exception is Major-General 20 who thinks Mullik, "who had the full confidence of Nehru and could influence the national policy...was influenced by the CIA".

The respondents' most common response pattern is to nominate a combination of factors. Like Lieut.-General 4, most blame civil-military decision-makers equally: "failure of politicians to select sound military higher commanders. Failure of the good military commanders to

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<sup>147</sup> From an interview with Major-General 98; New Delhi, 15 September 1989.

win the confidence of the politicians". Brigadier 44 factors in differences in commissions:

The KCIOs, who guided the destiny of the army and who, as captains and majors had been mediocres [sic], never succeeded in climbing above "below average" in terms of military performance as Generals. The war-time commissioned officers, who had the run of the regiments and instructional schools, hadn't the background to succeed in their appointments, they just about "managed". The Indian soldier remained about the only one who had not lost his basic qualities but, unfortunately, the regimental leadership had not had the time to build itself up to the level required to meet the challenge of 1962. It was a failure of military and political intelligence, senior army and, most of all, regimental leadership.

Lieut.-General 17 describes how prewar civil-military decision-making led to ignoring the potential threat posed by the Chinese:

The politicians and the military did not see China as a threat through the 1950s. The military only became aware of impending trouble after 1958 the border incidents...the indications [were] fairly obvious. But nothing was done because of ineptitude on the part of the government and politicians.

Brigadier S.S. Mallik, the military attaché in Peking, went for himself to assess the border situation. He brought back reports that there indeed could be serious trouble. But Ambassador [to China] B.K. Nehru didn't repeat this to Nehru because he didn't want to contradict Nehru's own thinking on the subject.<sup>148</sup>

Whatever the order, most questionnaire respondents hold all Indian participants—save officers and jawans in the field—in the 1962 War as guilty of contributing to the debacle.

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### III. Aftermath

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#### III.A. Coup D'État?

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Never did India's civilian government seem more vulnerable to a military coup than in the immediate aftermath of defeat in the 1962 Sino-Indian War.

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<sup>148</sup> From an interview with Lieut.-General 17; London, 26 November 1987.

China's lightning victory had been helped at every turn by the "higher authorities"; they had given the military a very hard task and then underequipped [sic] it, told it when and where to deploy, forced incompetent officers upon its troops, [and] postured politically with no regard as to the military consequences...<sup>149</sup>

The first and second coup theories believe a government's failure to meet the challenges of modernization will pull or push armed forces' officers into taking over. Although such failings are usually described in the context of socioeconomic and internal political development, the first duty of any competent regime is to protect its territory and citizenry from external aggression. The third set of theorists, seeing coups as the result of officers' corporate grievances, are much more specific when predicting the effect on a civilian government of defeat in war. Thompson, for instance, includes as coup precipitants

instances of "psychological violence"...when civilian legislatures have laid the blame for defeat in war at the doorstep of the army" as a coup precipitant...[or] where officers feel that a regime's incompetence has made the nation—and thus its standard bearer, the military—a standing joke to the outside world.<sup>150</sup>

Thompson also argues that "coup-makers are apparently dissatisfied with...general military policy and/or the level and nature of support for military operations...during or in the aftermath of a defeat at war..."<sup>151</sup> Welch and Smith agree: "Defeat in war, particularly if accompanied by a belief that the government failed to give the armed forces sufficient support, increases the likelihood of military intervention".<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Kundu, "Civil-Military Relations in India", p. 15.

<sup>150</sup> Thompson, The Grievances of Military Coup-Makers, p. 16.

<sup>151</sup> *ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>152</sup> Welch and Smith, Military Role and Rule, p. 22.



The question of continued civilian rule in the aftermath of defeat depends more on the attitudes of the armed forces' field officers—majors, colonels, and brigadiers—than on their superiors.<sup>153</sup> The latter are more likely to have been spared the trauma of the battlefield, be content with their positions and perks, and, at least while working at military headquarters, command less personal loyalty among the men of the fighting arms. In contrast, field officers are more likely to be at the sharp end of any failures in civil-military decision-making, be envious of their superiors' position and perks, and command the personal loyalty of their men. Perhaps most importantly, disgruntled field officers are more likely to see the military leadership as part of the problem rather than the solution.

As field-grade officers in 1962, the questionnaire respondents post-ceasefire perspective on the Sino-Indian War would be crucial in determining whether civil supremacy-of rule continued. Table 8.2 shows these officers blaming everything and everyone but themselves and their men for performing poorly during wartime. How did this affect their perceptions of civilian rule? If blame centred on the political leadership, if the respondents felt distanced from their superiors, if they perceived public support for the armed forces and anger at the political leadership, a military coup in India was not unthinkable.

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### III.B. Attitudes Towards the Political Leadership

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For the respondents' postwar perception of the Nehru government, see Table 8.3. Due to the unusually high percentage (36.46%) of officers

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<sup>153</sup> "Military intervention is more likely to be planned and executed by field grade officers than by commanding officers, noncommissioned officers, or the rank and file". See *ibid.*, p. 21.

giving "No Answer" in Table 8.3 and the desire to compare Tables 8.3 and 8.4 in Table 8.5, the first two contain a column of figures "Adjusted" for the subtraction of their respective "No Answer" respondents.

TABLE 8.3

In the aftermath of the 1962 Sino-Indian War, what was the attitude of field officers towards the political leadership? <sup>a</sup>		
	Unadjusted	Adjusted
	Percent(No.)	
Negative	38.54 (37)	60.66 (37)
No Change	6.25 (6)	9.84 (6)
Positive	18.75 (18)	29.51 (18)
No Answer	36.46 (35)	00.00 (0)
Total	100.00 (96)	100.00 (61)

<sup>a</sup> In Questionnaire II, this question substituted "the military" for field officers". See Appendix B.

Despite their poor opinion of the political leadership in Table 8.2, fully a third (29.51%) of respondents in Table 8.3 recall a "Positive" post-ceasefire attitude towards their civilian leaders. Most, like Brigadiers 64 and 29, respectively, say this views sprang from seeing "increased civil-military understanding and cooperation" as "politicians started taking them [officers] more into confidence". Others saw civil-military relations benefiting from increased military professionalism as officers now "realized how important it was from [a] professional point of view to keep the politician away from matters concerning military alone" (Brigadier 38), "learnt to be more deliberate in getting involved with war-like operations" (Brigadier 62), and "resolved never to caught napping again" (Brigadier 40). With the country's immediate postwar civil-military relationship more equal, officers could feel more confident in their political masters.

Some of those few (9.84%) respondents who recall "No Change" in their attitude also note officers' increased confidence. For Lieut.-General 95, it was business as usual, "except that some commanders showed more moral courage in standing up to the political leaders in professional matters". Otherwise, says Lieut.-General 49, the "military did not change attitudes, they were earlier and continued to be neutral in politics".

That a two-thirds majority (60.66%) of respondents recall a "Negative" post-ceasefire view of the political leadership raises the question of how neutral Indian armed forces' officers could remain. Major-General 59 felt "disgust" and Air Chief Marshal 18 remembers "a lack of confidence...[in] the political leadership against whom there was resentment for a considerable amount of time". Nehru, adds Air Chief Marshal 12, "was exposed...[he] totally panicked...[as shown by] his desperate appeal for world-wide help to help fight the invasion. This upset many people..."<sup>154</sup> Major-General 106 (interviewed only) disagrees, saying that "anger was mainly directed at Kaul and Menon. Blaming of Nehru really didn't begin until after his death".<sup>155</sup> Brigadier 61 compiles a long list the culpable:

The military leadership certainly was very bitter about [the] political leadership and the senior civil service over the issues: a) politicising the army leadership—Kaul's example; [and] b) disregard of any intelligence of the Chinese and assessment of the Chinese intentions by the army and its field commanders at the highest level, and only going by [IB Director] Mr B N Mullik's assessment...

As before, the defence minister takes much of the blame. Brigadier 73 recalls how

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<sup>154</sup> From an interview with Air Chief Marshal 12: Pune, 11 October 1987.

<sup>155</sup> From an interview with Major-General 106; New Delhi, 12 September 1987.

We in the army felt that Menon and IAS officers should be *drowned in the dirty nullahs [ditches] of Delhi...*All in all, if China would not have acted in 1962, Menon would have ruined the armed forces and the country. We must thank the Chinese for getting rid of Menon. [My italics.]

The respondents were happy to see Menon go. How long could Nehru remain?

Despite the prewar machinations of the Menon-Kaul nexus, the Nehru government never had been under serious threat by the military because he and his party remained demonstrably popular. Did the humiliation of defeat in war change the peoples' opinion of their political leaders? More importantly, if so, how did military officers' understand this shift? See Table 8.4.

TABLE 8.4

In the aftermath of the 1962 Sino-Indian War, what was the attitude of the public towards the political leadership?		
	Unadjusted	Adjusted
	Percent(No.)	
Negative	81.16 (56)	96.55 (56)
No Change	1.45 (1)	1.72 (1)
Positive	1.45 (1)	1.72 (1)
No Answer	15.94 (11)	0.00 (0)
Total	100.00 (69)	99.99 (58)

With just two exceptions, every (96.55%) respondent feels the Indian people had a "Negative" post-ceasefire attitude towards the civilian government.<sup>156</sup> "Of course they blamed political leaders for short sighted policy [on the northern borders]", argues Brigadier 30. The "political leadership was in total disgrace", agrees Major-General 34.

<sup>156</sup> The two exceptions offer scant comfort to the government. While "No Change" respondent Lieut.-Colonel 80 says that the public continued to have an attitude of "Indifference" towards government leaders, "Positive" respondent Major-General 65 recalls that the "Political leadership did not suffer any disrepute, till the facts were known".

The public, add Brigadier (Dr.) 55 and Major-General 32, respectively, felt "disgust" and "anger" with their civilian rulers.

TABLE 8.5

In the aftermath of the 1962 Sino-Indian War, what was the attitude of field officers/the public towards the political leadership?		
	Field Officers	Public
	Percent(No.)	
Negative	60.66 (37)	96.55 (58)
No Change	9.84 (6)	1.72 (1)
Positive	29.51 (18)	1.72 (1)
Total	100.01 (61)	99.99 (58)

The respondents perceive the public as even more critical of the political leadership than they themselves. See Table 8.5 (extrapolated from Tables 8.3 and 8.4. Remember, the second set of coup prediction theorists believe officers will act like any other political actor and push their way into power when they detect a weakness at the centre. Coming on top, as it were, of their own "Negative" feelings towards India's civilian rulers, would the public's marked disapproval of the "Political Leadership" prompt officers to move against the government?

### III.C. Attitudes Towards the Military (Leadership)

After 15 years of uninterrupted democratic rule, the political leadership's unpopularity with both the public and the armed forces was insufficient motive for a coup. Such a momentous step also depended on military officers' understanding of their own popularity. Did they believe themselves to enjoy public support, even after the humiliation of defeat? Did their characterization of the military leadership's performance as poor distance field officers from their superiors? Did officers feel the political leadership blamed them for failure in war?

TABLE 8.6

In the aftermath of the 1962 Sino-Indian War,  
what was the public's attitude towards the military

	Percent(No.)
Positive	51.04 (49)
Mixed	7.29 (7)
Negative	36.46 (35)
No Answer	5.21 (5)
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Total	100.00 (96)

The answer to the first of these questions is shown in Table 8.6.

Unsurprisingly, almost half the respondents recall the public's attitude towards the armed forces as "Negative" (36.46%)—"one of disbelief and their immediate reaction was a loss of faith in the army and most blamed military officers, [and] military leadership for letting them down"

(Brigadier 61)—or "Mixed" (7.29%). For Brigadier 70, class was the key:

The public of India should be divided into two broad segments—the multitude of ignorants who comprise the bulk and thus the much larger vote-bank, and the few who [are] comprised of newspaper readers and are thus aware of what is happening. It is only a few of the latter who also stop to analyse the news. The latter sympathised with the dilemma of the services having to contend with the ignorant political leadership whose credibility had dwindled considerably.

Nonetheless, a slim majority (51.04%) of respondents believe the public displayed a "Positive" attitude towards the military. Air Chief Marshal 1 "did not hear anyone blaming the defences", Major-General 36 recalls "all the praise for the army and the way they fought against a formidable Chinese force", and Brigadier 44 remembers people as "unstintingly generous to the army and excused its failures". The public, argues Lieut.-General 10, understood the "military had been let down by the political leadership".

Might the Indian armed forces use this perceived public support to act as one against the government? Recall the fourth coup prediction theory's belief that officers stage a coup for personal/clientelist motives. In an Indian Army of huge numbers, nationally representative personnel and (in 1962) three commands,<sup>157</sup> it was always unlikely that any small group of officers united by personal/clientelist ties would be capable of acting alone to end civil supremacy-of-rule. Only an entire class of officers, thinking and acting together, might be able to threaten the government. Did such a class now exist in the ranks of Indian Army officers field officers?

The state of corporate unity in the post-ceasefire Indian armed forces is shown in Table 8.7. A tenth (11.46%) of respondents recall a "Positive" attitude towards the military leadership. Some, like Brigadier 90, say their sense of professional corporateness stemmed from an understanding of "the degree of impotency imposed on service chiefs by the political leadership". Others, like Lieut.-Colonel 14 and Air Marshal 78, respectively, felt "sympathy towards [the] military chiefs" because they "were seen as being made scapegoats of". Whatever Thapar's failings, adds Lieut.-General 87, "the Chief is at too high a level for field officers to have any 'attitude' towards him". Moreover, "loyalty to the institution is stronger than towards any individual".

For the three-quarters (75.00%) of "Negative" respondents, however, the manifest failures of the military leadership overshadow any loyalty to professional corporateness. Brigadier 83's attitude towards his seniors was "one of revulsion because the military chiefs were more

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<sup>157</sup> Kavic, op.cit., p. 242.

concerned with personal grandiosement [sic] and ambitions rather than serious training and soldiering". Brigadier 31 recalls how

field officers were generally bitter and they considered that chiefs did not provide proper leadership, they failed to highlight problems faced by field commanders and at no time cautioned the government of the unpreparedness of the forces from the point of view of logistics, training and equipment.

Brigadier 60 feels the "military chiefs should have resigned so that the nation would have known earlier that all was not well".

TABLE 8.7

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In the aftermath of the 1962 Sino-Indian War, what was the attitude of field officers towards the military leadership?"

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	Percent(No.)
Negative	75.00 (72)
No Change	9.38 (9)
Positive	11.46 (11)
No Answer	4.17 (4)
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Total	100.01 (96)

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Two in particular offended the "Negative" respondents. Officers, remembers Major-General 96, "had not taken kindly to the appointment of either Kaul or...Thapar, [and] they were relieved at their replacement". Lieut.-General 16 also cites these two:

It was felt that the army had been given an assignment for which it did not have the resources, for which no preparation had been made. Secondly, the Chief of Army Staff [Thapar] should have taken a firm stand. Thirdly it was felt that Kaul had swallowed the political line that China would not go to war and landed the army in a mess by adopting the forward policy.

The average field officer, concludes Lieut.-General 88, "felt sorry for his weak chief [Thapar] and cursed B.M. Kaul".

Field officers' post-ceasefire resentment with the military leadership signalled danger for both the army's corporate cohesiveness and civil supremacy-of-rule. Relatively junior officers are more likely



than their superiors to stage a coup. The majority of respondents' perception that senior officers contributed to the debacle could allow Indian field officers to unite, not as a small personal/clientelist group, but as an entire class against both the civil and military leadership—a coup to save both the army and the country. If senior officers, asks Lieut.-General 95, "knew of China's probability of acting and their recommendations to prepare for this were not heeded, why didn't they do the honourable thing and resign? Younger officers like myself felt to hell with the top field, *let us do our own thing to rectify the situation*". [My italics.]<sup>158</sup> Just what might they do?

TABLE 8.8

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In the aftermath of the 1962 Sino-Indian War,  
what was the political leadership's attitude towards the military?

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	Percent(No.)
Positive	60.42 (58)
Negative	26.04 (25)
No Answer	13.54 (13)
Total	100.00 (96)

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What other motivation did they need? Table 8.3 already revealed that a number of officers saw the government as blaming them for defeat. The quarter (26.04%) of respondents in Table 8.8 who think the political leadership held a "Negative" postwar attitude towards the armed forces only reinforces this attitude. The government was "suspicious" (Lieut.-General 19), "sceptical" (Wing Commander 26), and displayed a "lack of confidence" (Brigadier 43) in the military. Politicians, adds Brigadier 61, "kept blaming the armed forces for this debacle". In 1962, might this perception combine with military and public anger with the

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<sup>158</sup> From an interview with Lieut.-General 95; New Delhi, 13 September 1989.

government, public support of the armed forces, and field officers' disillusionment with their seniors to create an unprecedented challenge to civil supremacy-of-rule in India?

No; that civil supremacy-of-rule was not in danger is shown by the three-fifths (60.42%) of "Positive" respondents who argue that defeat provoked any number of beneficial changes for Indian civil-military relations. To begin with, recalls Major-General 96 and Air Chief Marshall<sup>12</sup>, respectively, "the politicians generally felt guilty" about their role in the debacle and had "an awareness that they themselves were to blame". In defeat, argues Brigadier 30, the political leadership finally "realized that [the] country's might is not only democratic socialism but also its military potential". This new understanding, adds Lieut.-General 94, made for

a sea change in the political leadership's attitude towards the military. After this conflict much greater attention and respect is [sic] paid to the views of the military on professional matters. Allocation of sufficient funds for the modernisation of the Armed Forces are [sic] now made available.

Lieut.-General 10 gives thanks that "the era of overbearing bureaucrats matching arrogance with ignorance and of a non-professional intelligence agency was over". Officers also got commanders they could respect.

Major-General 36 appreciated that "Chief of the Army Staff [Thapar] was changed and Gen. Kaul went on retirement", and Vice Admiral 2 hailed the "spectacular and welcome comebacks" of Chaudhuri and Manekshaw. The political leadership, concludes Major-General 34, "was in the doghouse and was in no position to apportion any part of blame for the debacle to the army...Kaul followed Krishna Menon into oblivion and the tragic memory was erased to some extent from peoples' minds".

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### III.D. Post-Ceasefire Changes

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The "Positive" respondents of Table 8.8 touch on all those factors which combined to ensure continued civil supremacy-of-rule. The rift between field officers and military leaders began to heal when vilified superiors resigned and were replaced by respected commanders. Within months of China's unilateral ceasefire, Thapar, Kaul and Pathania resigned from the army. Although Palit recommended to the new chief that Sen also be forced to retire, he continued in this post for some time (until also resigning for unrelated matters). In contrast, Prasad appealed his dismissal by Sen to President Radhakrishnan and was reinstated as a division commander in Western Command.<sup>159</sup> The real improvement in the Indian Army's morale and corporate cohesiveness came with the respective appointments of Manekshaw as GoC 4th Corps, and Chaudhuri as chief.

That many officers had been unfit was obvious. In Table 8.2, very few respondents cite "Field Officers" and/or "Jawans" as having performed worst in 1962, perhaps because the 40% casualty rate of those fighting in the north<sup>160</sup> let many believe that the military had defended stoutly. Yet, as only 24,000 of the Indian Army's approximately 550,000

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<sup>159</sup> In one of Nehru's last acts before his death, Thapar was appointed India's Ambassador to Afghanistan. Chaudhuri apparently offered to "rehabilitate" Kaul in some unspecified post in the civil-military hierarchy but was refused. In the 1965 Indo-Pak War, Prasad allowed to fall into enemy hands some of his papers which were sharply critical of his superiors and the government, and was forced to leave the army. In 1966, Dalvi was superseded in promotion to major-general and resigned. See Kaul, *op.cit.*, pp. 421-422; Maxwell, *op.cit.*, pp. 426-427; Palit, *op.cit.*, p. 331, 339, 347, 366, 375-376; and Praval, *op.cit.*, p. 323-325. 446-448.

<sup>160</sup> Praval, *op.cit.*, p. 321.

personnel took part in the war,<sup>161</sup> few officers could know of their comrades' mixed performance. On one hand, explains Verma,

the defended localities that we had established stood up to the Chinese assault, like the heroic fight put up by the 13th Kumaonis at Penzang La covering Chushul. They had lost more than 120 men of the company, but killed over a thousand Chinese and held the position to the last man.<sup>162</sup>

In other places, admits Brigadier 69, "the military ran away...so the military blamed itself for defeat".<sup>163</sup> Civil supremacy of-rule was helped both because this sense of responsibility tempered some field officers' negative attitudes towards the military and political leadership, and because any lingering resentment was "by and large confined to those troops and officers who fought in NEFA and Ladakh" (Major-General 89).<sup>164</sup>

That defeat in war had become "real" helped both sides of the civil-military "divide" to improve themselves and to strengthen civil supremacy-of-rule. For Welch and Smith, "The likelihood of military intervention diminishes with the emergence of a clear-cut, external focus for national defence."<sup>165</sup> China's arrival as a threat to national security "brought us in touch with reality", says Air Marshal 78, by making Indian officers focus their attention on developing and deepening their professional expertise and corporateness. The war also forced Indian politicians to reappraise national defence as, adds Lieut.-General 95, "the military's value as a deterrent was newly

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<sup>161</sup> See Kavic, op.cit., p, 242; and Praval, op.cit., p. 321.

<sup>162</sup> Verma, op.cit., p. 120

<sup>163</sup> From an interview with Brigadier 69; London, 9 December 1989.

<sup>164</sup> From an interview with Major-General 89; New Delhi, 18 August 1989.

<sup>165</sup> Welch and Smith, op.cit., p. 11.

discovered".<sup>166</sup> This new awareness of the military's importance also helped soothe officers' resentment with the civilian administration.

The political leadership's improved understanding of the armed forces as a vital component of national defence brought changes to the civil-military decision-making hierarchy as well. An improved rapport between civilian politicians and bureaucrats and military officers began when Chavan replaced Menon as defence minister. Joint Secretary (Defence) Sarin was also transferred, and Defence Secretary Pulla Reddy replaced by P.V.R. Rao, one of whose first acts was to take personal charge of General Staff matters.<sup>167</sup> To prevent poor civil-military communications, the service chiefs were now given a greater voice in defence policy, and were henceforth allowed to attend the Defence Committee of the Cabinet whenever necessary. The administration also created an advisory National Defence Committee (composed of the PM, the Emergency Committee of the Cabinet, the service chiefs, assorted retired officers—including Thorat—state chief ministers, and prominent citizens).<sup>168</sup> Hopefully, Indian civil-military decision-making would never again be so blinkered.

If only the seniormost officers appreciated the decision-making modifications, every field officer—and the public—could understand the other post-ceasefire changes in civil-military relations: money and size. Broadcasting over All-India Radio, the Minister for Planning stated: "We can safeguard peace only when we have the strength to make aggression a costly and profitless adventure...From now on, defence and

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<sup>166</sup> From an interview with Lieut.-General 95; New Delhi, 13 September 1989.

<sup>167</sup> Palit, *op.cit.*, p. 366.

<sup>168</sup> See Longer, *op.cit.*, pp. 382-383; Palit, *op.cit.*, p. 358; and Thorat, *op.cit.*, pp. 214-217.

development must be regarded as integral and related parts of the national economic plan".<sup>169</sup> In 1964-65, a five-year defence plan was for the first time formulated and implemented,<sup>170</sup> while immediately the defence budget leapt from 17.0% to 32.4% of total central expenditure and military personnel increased by over half, from around 550,000 in 1962-63 to over 850,000 in 1964-65.<sup>171</sup> The government, recalls Brigadier 40, "showed a healthy understanding of the military's handicaps and went all out to remedy them".

To all of the above anti-coup factors must be added the continued respect shown Nehru and the availability of Menon as a foil for post-ceasefire resentment. Despite defeat in war, the PM was still seen as the father of the country and remained almost above reproach. In contrast, the DM was blamed by the public, military officers and civil servants for misreading Chinese intentions, misleading Nehru, and politicizing and neglecting the training and equipping of the armed forces. So great was the feeling against Menon that when Nehru fought to keep his long-time colleague and friend in office, he himself was threatened with removal by the Congress Party.<sup>172</sup> When Menon went, anger with the political leadership dissipated, civil-military relations improved, and civil supremacy-of-rule was safe.

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<sup>169</sup> As quoted in R.G.C. Thomas, "The Armed Services and the Indian Defence Budget", Asian Survey XX:3, 1980.

<sup>170</sup> Y. Lakshmi, Trends in India's Defence Expenditure (New Delhi: ABC Publishing House, 1988), p. 69.

<sup>171</sup> See Lakshmi, *op.cit.*, p. 144; Major-General K.S.Pendse, "India's Defence Budget: A Case for Better Planning", Indian Defence Review, July 1989, pp. 158-173; and Praval, *op.cit.*, p. 321.

<sup>172</sup> See Edwardes, *op.cit.*, pp. 304-305; and Hoffmann, *op.cit.*, pp. 200-206. Air Chief Marshal 1 recalls the danger: "Nehru did not want to let Menon go but Congress, [the] opposition, the people demanded it. Anger and resentment focused on Menon. *I cannot predict what would have happened if Menon had been kept on*". From an interview with Air Chief Marshal 1; New Delhi, 9 September 1987.

Or was it? See Table 8.9 in which nine (9.37%) respondents say "Yes", "Civilians" (five) and/or "Military Officers" (four) spoke of a coup. Four of these officers point to "Civilians" as the sole source. Lieut.-General 66 recalls "only loose talk in public", Brigadier 45 reports discussion of a possible coup by "the common man in the street and often very subtly from the administrators and other Govt. employees", and Lieut.-General 49 remembers "talk amongst...the business community and some 'intellectuals'". But I found most were totally uninformed on the elements of military rule and were after stability/organisation only". Brigadier 46 also dismisses "civilians [who] used to irresponsibly mention so many times that army should take over. I do not think it was ever meant seriously. And I doubt if ever army senior brass thought of taking over the country".

TABLE 8.9

In the aftermath of the 1962 Sino-Indian War, did civilians/military officers feel the armed forces should move against the government?		
	Civilians	Military Officers
	Percent(No.)	
No	91.67 (88)	92.71 (89)
Yes	5.21 (5)	4.17 (4)
No Answer	3.13 (3)	3.13 (3)
	Total 100.01 (96)	100.01 (96)

Three respondents do report talk of a coup among "Military Officers" only. "Amongst young officers [the] feeling prevailed that something should be done to uphold dignity and status of armed forces", recalls Major-General 68. Such talk, adds Major-General 32 focused of "the need for military leadership to be insulated from political machinations..." Brigadier points out that these rumours had a finite shelf-life of "only

up to the time when the Prime Minister refused to remove his Defence Minister. Once that happened all dissidence against the government disappeared".

Finally, two respondents say both "Civilians" and "Military Officers" spoke out. Major-General 85 recalls how "a number of officers felt the military had been let down by the political leadership alone and *mistakenly* many felt that a government headed by the military would be the remedy. A number of civilians also held this idea" [my italics]. Brigadier 70 adds that such action was discussed "very vaguely among the major to brigadier level and very infrequently at that".

That just nine of 96 respondents recall "Civilians" and/or "Military Officers" talking of moving against the government, despite defeat in war, indicates just how strong civil supremacy-of-rule was embedded in India. Comparing Tables 8.9 and 6.4 shows respondents recall less talk of a military coup in the aftermath of the Sino-Indian War than after President Ayub Khan's 1958 Revolution in Pakistan. Both the public and armed forces' officers appear to have felt that the proper response to the gravity of defeat was not a revolution but reform. Thus, in Table 8.9, huge majorities (91.67% "Civilians" plus 92.71% "Military Officers") of respondents can remember no sector of society as desirous of an armed forces' coup. Brigadier 9's answer—"No! No! No!"—indicates the stability of civil supremacy-of-rule in India.

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## Conclusion

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In shattering any number of myths—the PM always knew best, *Hindi-Chini bhai, bhai*", negotiation and not military might could settle all international differences, national defence policy could be decided by a



tiny coterie of civil-military decision-makers operating ad hoc, China would never attack isolated forward outposts, the armed forces did not need additional resources, the Indian professional officer and his troops were the equal of any in the world—previously believed by the Nehru administration, the 1962 Sino-Indian War tested civil-supremacy-of-rule in India to the full. After China's unilateral and humiliating declaration of ceasefire, military field officers, that segment of any officer corps most likely to instigate a coup, held a negative opinion of the Forward Policy and felt their superiors had performed abysmally. They also perceived the public to be sympathetic towards the military and resentful of the political leadership. Yet, as seen in Table 8.9, hardly any respondent can recall talk of moving against the government.

Civil-supremacy-of-rule remained intact mainly because field officers' grievances were directly addressed. Disgraced senior officers were replaced. The government embraced the the armed forces as an integral part of national defence, showering them with money and men. The civil-military hierarchy was modified to include the opinion of senior officers and their staff, and the whole nation focused their attention not on internal revolution but external vigilance. In time, the army also admitted to some responsibility for not meeting the enemy with as much conviction as indicated by its previously outstanding combat record. In the eyes of field officers—and the public—the chief "villain of the piece", Defence Minister Menon was removed. With him, Nehru had been seen as part of the problem. Without him, the PM was free to, if not regain his prewar stature, then at least remain as the uncontested head of a civilian administration.

The 1962 War may be argued to have benefited India. The political leadership realized that the strength and numbers of the armed forces are an essential measurement of national defence, that professional merit and not personal connections should be the criteria for advancement, and that civil-military decision-making is best done in a formal structure and with proper staff support. For ex-Ambassador T.N. Kaul (no relation to the lieut.-general), the "Chinese invasion proved indeed to be a blessing in disguise. India woke up to the need to mend her defences, unite the people and harness her resources. India had lost a battle but not the war".<sup>173</sup> Victory in the 1965 Indo-Pak War would show the Indian Army "professional enough to reconstruct itself..."<sup>174</sup>

That victory lay in the future. For now, it was enough that those weeks after the Dhola Post's frantic 8 September 1962 signal characterised by Palit as "a time out of reality",<sup>175</sup> were over.

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<sup>173</sup> T.N. Kaul, Reminiscences Discreet and Indiscreet, p. 172.

<sup>174</sup> Cohen, "The Military and Indian Democracy", p. 112.

<sup>175</sup> Palit, op.cit., p. 200.

Civil-Military Relations in British and Independent India, 1918-1962,  
and Coup Prediction Theory

CONCLUSION

From 1918 to 1962, there was never any serious threat that Indian armed forces' officers would instigate a coup against the government. A brief review of the evidence provided in the thesis, using as a guide the four competing military intervention theories outlined in Chapter One, confirms this.

The first group of military intervention theorists see third world officers as supremely qualified citizens, only reluctantly pulled into assuming power so as to resuscitate their country's attempts at modernization. This somewhat idealized concept of officers is abstracted from the second of two methods of civilian control of the military as seen by Huntington. It is not subjective control which makes officers into a mirror of the ruling regime by maximizing their identification with governmental institutions, social classes and/or constitutional forms, but objective control which fashions officers into the tool of government by maximizing their professional characteristics of expertise, corporateness and responsibility.

Although Huntington himself bases his understanding of military professionalism on an analysis of Western militarism, the commissioned Indian officer equally may have been the idealized citizen envisaged by the first set of coup prediction theorists. Certainly, he and his comrades were subjected to both objective and subjective methods of control. Selected from the best of backgrounds, educated and trained to

British standards of an officer and gentleman, Indian officers' loyalty to the Raj came from their identification with the ruling elite and desire to perfect their professional expertise and corporate izzat.

Responsibility was a trickier notion. With the rise of the independence movement, just who was the legitimate voice of the subcontinent?

Led by Finer, the second set of coup prediction theorists highlights this question of professional responsibility when arguing that commissioned officers are simply political actors, using their organizational skills and monopoly of force to replace a regime made vulnerable by the pressures of modernization. Here, if professional responsibility is not internalized as an explicit principle, it may encourage coups by leading officers to understand their duty as loyalty to the nation rather than the legal government. Again, only independence would reveal the nature of commissioned Indian officers' understanding of their professional responsibility.

Except for some youthful involvement in nationalist activities, the struggle for *swaraj* barely touched commissioned Indian officers. The non-violent nature of the independence movement, the indifference of public and nationalist leaders to military matters, officers' privileged backgrounds and physical separation; all contributed to their loyalty to the Raj throughout the interwar years. With the singular but ultimately ineffectual exception of the Indian national armies, this allegiance remained unquestioned even during the Quit India movement of WWII.

When independence arrived, Nehru's seemingly naive assumption that with political control would come civil supremacy-of-rule proved true. That this astonishingly smooth (compared to newly independent nations throughout the third world) transference of professional responsibility

took place despite the multiple challenges of Partition and the Transfer of Power was due to commissioned officers' demonstrated confidence in their own professional competence and in the skills of the new political and administrative elite, all of which continued to be practised largely according to British norms. India would not "flounder" on the path to modernization. Politicians continued to lead, bureaucrats to administer and the country to develop. Subjective control of the military also remained effective as, for the most part, officers, politicians and bureaucrats continued to be drawn from the same socioeconomic strata and believe in the same values of democracy, secularism, and development. This shared background and belief manifested itself in officers' indulgent attitude towards the government in the first decade of independence.

The third set of military intervention theorists, such as Thompson and Welch and Smith, understand coups as an officer corps' reaction to perceived interference in their corporate sphere of influence. Yet, despite widespread dissatisfaction with their pay, share of national budget, downgrading in the warrant of precedence, and perception of political and bureaucratic indifference to their organizational worth, Indian officers remained in their barracks. Even the example of their former comrades in Pakistan taking over power failed to stir their ire. Although Price's reference-group theory of military intervention may have applied to Pakistani officers' involvement with the American armed forces, it had limited resonance with Indian officers under a non-aligned movement and very conscious of their superior professionalism.

Decalo proposes a fourth theory of military intervention which sees officers' personal and/clientelist ambitions as motives behind coups

became relevant during the rise of the Menon-Kaul nexus. Any number of personal—as well as corporate—grievances were generated as the expertise of senior officers was disputed, their corporate sphere of decision-making invaded, and the civil-military decision-making process ignored and/or manipulated for personal ambition.

Yet, even as officers began to be identified as being for or against Menon-Kaul, the possibility of a coup remained small. Opponents of Menon-Kaul had also circumvented formal civil-military decision-making procedures and their champion, General Thimayya, had meekly withdrawn his resignation. Any officers thinking of offering themselves as popular alternatives to the Nehru government continued to be hampered by their non-participation in the nationalist movement and, especially, Congress' continued electoral strength.

Defeat in the 1962 Sino-Indian War challenged all these notions by openly exposing governmental ineptitude. The Indian Army's field officers blamed the political leadership's Forward Policy and its craven implementation by their military superiors, while perceiving the public as sympathetic towards them and resentful of the administration. Yet, in this potentially ultimate test of civil supremacy-of-rule, hardly any officers can recall talk of moving against the government.

On the face of it, civil-supremacy-of-rule remained intact because of quick and decisive decisions by the political leadership. Field officers' grievances were assuaged as disgraced senior officers were replaced, the civil-military hierarchy modified, and the armed forces invigorated with money and men.

Yet, underpinning the ease with which these changes could be implemented and incorporated was the ingrained professionalism and long

tradition of commissioned Indian officers. As stated in Chapter One by Ruth First, "The virginity of an army is like that of a woman...once assailed, it is never again intact". From independence to 1962, Indian officers were content—and proud—to remain spinsters.

The sureness of civil supremacy-of-rule in India during that period in which civilian regimes are most vulnerable—the transition to an independent state and the first years of self-government—may suggest lessons applicable to civil-military relations in other third world countries. See Table 0.1 in which the respondents rank those factors they believe contributed to India never having experienced a military coup. Four of the 17 factors ranked may be seen as common to many developing countries:

- 7th: Widely-held belief in democracy
- 8th: Wisdom and stature of national leaders
- Joint 14th: Example of ineffectiveness of military rule in Pakistan and Bangladesh
- 17th: Political unawareness of masses

Another five factors, *including three of the top four*, are found in a number of third world countries:

- 1st: Professionalism of armed forces
- 3rd: Initial political stability, quality and/or democratic rule
- 4th: Nationally representative military personnel
- Joint 11th: Institutionalization of diverse centres of power
- Joint 11th: Logistics unfavourable: five regional army commands, troops dispersed nationally, etc.

The apparent commonality of these anti-coup factors is, however, misleading. Take the crucial 1st-, 3rd- and 4th-place factors described above. Other than India, which third world state can be argued to enjoy/have enjoyed a professional officer corps, stable democratic rule at independence and armed forces containing a representative mix of personnel? Many enjoy the first two, but most fail to have the third.

Moreover, the remaining factors ranked by respondents in Table 0.1 are unique and/or virtually unique to India. Two apply to India alone:

6th: Dominant Hindu culture inherently against military rule

Joint 14th: Independence struggle's non-violent nature

Another three, applicable *individually* to other developing countries, are not found *together* elsewhere:

Joint 8th: Administrative efficiency

Joint 8th: Political awareness of masses

Joint 11th: 40-year old habit of democracy

Leaving out "16th: Other", the two remaining factors, *both in the top five*, further illustrate the uniqueness of the Indian experience:

2nd: Diversity of peoples, cultures, languages

5th: Sheer size of India

These two factors have hitherto not been specifically highlighted in the thesis (although both are related to the 4th-place factor discussed in Chapter Five) since the unparalleled scale and complexity of India's social mix and size is obvious. Officers are well aware of the immensity of the task of governing such a state as well, if not better, than any civilian regime.

Of course, the questionnaire respondents are by no means the only judges of which factors have resulted in India never having experienced a military coup. Nonetheless, as the ultimate arbiters of any such action, their understanding of coup inhibitors must be respected. And their particular list *in its entirety* seems inapplicable to *all* other third world countries. Is it?

While the particular mix of coup-inhibiting factors on Table 0.1 may suggest that India has remained free from a military coup by chance, this is not so. Granted, the country is large, diverse, predominantly



Hindu and had the "father of the country" Nehru and other admirable politicians live long into its initial years as an independent state. Yet the remaining factors are the result of deliberate choices by the civil-military leadership, either of the Raj or independent India or both. Of these, professionalism is undoubtedly the most important, and the British ideal of an officer and gentleman welded by *izzat* to his regiment and by professional training to his barracks remains the model taught even today. The British practices of recruiting officers—if not men—from all over the country and having regional army commands has also continued. Other factors—India's initial political stability, quality and tradition of democracy, its relative administrative efficiency, and institutionalization of diverse centres of power—were also the result of imported policies which Indians consciously embraced as their own. Their great improvement on the Raj pattern of governance was in the enrolment of the masses in a unique non-violent independence movement which raised their political awareness and instilled in them the idea that votes counted. These choices were all deliberately made, and all have contributed to India's 40-year old habit of democracy which its officers are so reticent to threaten.

Although this examination of Indian civil-military relations does not suggest a general theory of the conditions which preclude a military coup, other third world countries wishing to ensure civil supremacy-of-rule would be wise (in no particular order) to:

- (a) Maximize their officer corps' professionalism
- (b) Recruit military personnel from all societal groups
- (c) Disperse concentrations of military force
- (d) Raise the political awareness of their people
- (e) Preach and practise democracy
- (f) Allow political power to flourish outside the capital
- (g) Increase the efficiency of administrators

Perhaps taking all of the above steps will keep the "man on horseback" from (re)appearing on the political scene.

What this examination does reveal is that, while the four competing coup prediction theories may be applicable to different periods of Indian civil-military relations, a coup is ultimately the result of officers' intentions. At Partition, commissioned Indian officers *may* have been altruistic citizens qualified to lead the modernization of their country. During the first decade of independence they *may* have wanted to behave as political actors. In the early 1960s they *may* have held a host of grievances against the government, and at any time they *may* have formed self-interested personal/clientelist associations.

That commissioned officers never attempted a coup was partly because other groups were more qualified and motivated to rule, because no such opportunity ever arose, because their grievances were never enough to force this momentous step, and/or because their numbers and diversity thwarted the primacy of any one internal group. Other factors--their remoteness to the people, a public belief in democracy, their antagonistic relationship with civil servants--also mitigated against the success of an attempted coup, much less a military regime.

Nonetheless, their virtual monopoly of weaponry and organizational size and efficiency may still have led Indian officers to attempt to intervene against the government. That they did not was *their* decision; whether based on professional conditioning, respect for the political leadership, understanding of the government's budgetary priorities, pride in their difference from their former comrades in Pakistan, professional and psychological inability to challenge Nehru, and/or satisfaction with their corporate rewards.

Will commissioned Indian officers remain out of politics in the challenges to come? Although the outcomes of notable post-1962 episodes of potential and/or particular civil-military stress are known—the Nehru succession, Indira Gandhi's 1975-77 period of Emergency Rule, the army mutinies which followed 1984's Operation Blue Star<sup>1</sup>—they need to be examined as a continuation of the work undertaken in this thesis. Current issues such as the increasing recruitment of commissioned officers from lower socioeconomic classes, the growing communalism in Indian society, and the increasing use of the armed forces in maintaining internal order also need to be investigated for their effect on the military's non-propensity to contemplate or attempt coups.

Yet, barring extreme and unforeseeable circumstances, commissioned Indian officers will never instigate a coup against the government. Their professional training and historical traditions demand they remain in their barracks. Officers also realize that to move successfully against the government demands a representative mix of coup executors from the diverse ethnic, regional and religious groups in the armed forces, as well as the cooperation of all army commands—hardly likely. They further recognize that to govern effectively as a military regime would demand the collaboration of the civil service and the general acquiescence of the people—even more improbable. Officers also concede the unlikelihood of tackling the challenges of administering a state as large and diverse as India better than a civilian administration. Finally, commissioned Indian officers take great pride in the contrasts between themselves and the officer corps of neighbouring Pakistan. They

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<sup>1</sup> For an examination of the post-Operation Blue Star mutinies, see A. Kundu, "Operation Blue Star and Sikh and Non-Sikh Indian Military Officers", Pacific Affairs (Vancouver) 67:1, Spring 1994.

have, and will never wish their self-perceived high military professionalism and record of respect for democracy to be tarnished by entering the "dirty" world of politics.

Civil-Military Relations in British and Independent India, 1918-1962,  
and Coup Prediction Theory

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE I<sup>1</sup>

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1. Personal details:

- a) Birthdate?
- b) Place of birth?
- c) Place of upbringing?
- d) Caste?
- e) Mother tongue?
- f) Are you proficient in any other languages? (Please list.)
- g) What was your father's occupation?
- h) If retired from active military service, what is your present occupation?
  - i) Would you characterize your own economic situation as better, the same, or worse than that of your father's?
  - j) Does anyone in your immediate family own land? If so, how much, where, and of what type is it?
  - k) What was the extent of your formal education? (Circle one.) Also, where did you attend? (Please list after choices.)

Where

Secondary school completion  
Bachelor's degree  
Some graduate work  
Master's degree  
Some post-graduate work  
Doctoral degree

- l) Which, if any, religion do you follow?
- m) How often, if at all, do you observe your religion's formal rites?
- n) How often have you voted in national elections? (Circle one.)

Always  
Almost always  
Most times

Sometimes  
Once  
Never

o) Have you ever been actively involved in politics? If so, for which party?

p) Have you ever stood for political office? If so, where, when and for which party?

q) Have any members of your family ever been actively involved in politics? If so for which party? Have any members of your family ever stood for political office? If so, where, when and for which party?

2. What was your reason for joining the military?

3. Which branch of the armed forces did you join and why?

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<sup>1</sup> The original Questionnaire I had blank spaces between the questions.

4. What do you think was the generally perceived status of a career in the military when you joined?

5. What do you think was the generally perceived status of a career in the military when you last actively served? And today?

6. Career details: (Please list the details of your military career in the spaces provided.)

Year(s)      Postings      Promotions      Type of troop commanded

Action seen (if any):

Decorations awarded (if any):

Date of retirement (if applicable):

7. What do you remember as the attitude of Indian officers towards British officers and vice-versa in the Indian Army of pre-Independence?

8. What is your view of the practice of designating certain peoples as "martial races"?

9. Did the British practice of heavily recruiting martial races help or hinder overall military efficiency and/or effectiveness?

10. What do you remember as the attitude of the common man towards the Indian Army before Independence? Why do you think he held this attitude?

11. What do you remember as the attitude of Indian officers towards the Independence movement?

And towards the politicians who led the movement?

12. Were you yourself, any family members, or any close friends personally active in the independence movement? If so, who and in what ways?

13. During World War II, what do you remember of Indian officers' attitudes towards those officers and soldiers who joined the Indian National Army (INA)?

Was this attitude at all affected by the post-war trial of suspected INA members at the Red Fort? If so, how?

14. At the time, did you feel that the political leadership was properly prepared for Independence? Why or why not?

15. At the time, did you feel that the civil service was properly prepared for Independence? Why or why not?

16. At the time, did you feel that the armed forces were properly prepared for Independence? Why or why not?

17. Did the break-up of the Indian Army into the two separate armies of Pakistan and India affect the professionalism of the new Indian military? If so, in what way(s)?

18. In the ten year period from Independence to the appointment of Krishna Menon as defence Minister (1947-1957), how would you characterize the Central Government's attitude towards the military?
19. At the time, what were your feelings on Ayub Khan's military coup d'état in Pakistan? Was this action necessary?
20. Were you aware of any talk or feelings at the time within the military which viewed Ayub Khan's action as one which the Indian military could or should follow? If so, from where were these views emanating and how strongly held were such beliefs?
21. What were your initial feelings on the appointment of Menon to the Defence Portfolio? Did they change over time and, if so, why?
22. Did Menon politicize the military? If so, how?
23. What were your feelings on the army career of B.M. Kaul before the Autumn of 1962?  
Did they change over time and, if so, how and why?
24. Were you at all personally affected by the talk of political favouritism at the upper levels of the military hierarchy during Menon's tenure as Defence Minister? If so, how?
25. What was your attitude towards the "forward policy" deployed on the Sino-Indian border before October 1962?  
Did your opinion of this policy change after the events of October-November 1962?
26. Various commentators have explained the reverses suffered against the Chinese in October-November, 1962, in terms of a failure in any number of areas; for example: the political leadership, intelligence, the military leadership, the field officers, the jawan, and the standard of equipment and/or suitable training. What is your explanation? Were any of the above at fault and if so, how and why?
27. Which of the above groups acquitted themselves best during the period leading up to October, 1962? Which of the above groups acquitted themselves worst during this period? How and why?
28. How large a part do you think public opinion played in shaping the events leading up to the Chinese attack of October, 1962? Was their influence, if any, to the benefit or detriment of India's defence?
29. What did you feel was the typical field officer's attitude towards the military chiefs in the aftermath of the Sino-Indian conflict?  
And towards the political leadership?
30. Were you aware of any talk or feelings either within the military or amongst the civilian population which spoke of moving against the government? If so, from where were such views emanating and how strongly held were they?

31. What did you feel was the political leadership's attitude towards the military in the aftermath of the Sino-Indian conflict?
32. What did you feel was the public's attitude towards the military in the aftermath of the Sino-Indian conflict?
33. Since the events of 1962, has the border situation with china eased, remained the same, or worsened? Due to what factors?
34. Was the military at all apprehensive about the possibility of mass public disorder after Jawaharlal Nehru's death? Did it feel that it might be called in to ensure public order?
35. At the time, did you think the 1971 signing of the 20-year Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation between Indian and the Soviet Union would be beneficial to India's security?  
Would be beneficial to India's armed forces?
36. Have you feelings on the 20-year Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation changed since 1971. If so, in what way(s) and why?
37. Do you think that Indira Gandhi was justified in declaring Emergency? Why or why not?
38. Did you feel that the Indian military approved or disapproved of Emergency?  
Was this a unanimous view amongst senior and junior officers, or were there differences of opinion within the armed forces? If you think the latter true, what were the different opinions and which quarters held them and why?
39. How long did you think the Emergency could have endured and why?
40. Did your own opinion on the Emergency change during its duration? If so, how and why?
41. After losing the elections of 1977, some commentators felt that Indira Gandhi might call on the military to forcibly keep her in office. Did you feel that there were any members among the armed forces who would have obeyed such an order? If so, what kinds of people were they and how strong were their feelings on the matter?
42. What is the military's attitude towards internal policing actions? Are such duties they beneficial or detrimental to army efficiency?  
Have there been any instances of internal policing actions which you felt were particularly appropriate and/or necessary? Any actions which were inappropriate and/or unnecessary?
43. What is the military's attitude towards such paramilitary organizations as the Border Security Force (BSF) and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)? Do they help or hinder the effectiveness of the military in defending the nation's borders?  
Also, how would you compare the level of professionalism found in the BSF and CRPF with that of the army, navy and air force?



42. Looking at the defence budgets of: a) the mid-1950s; b) the mid-1960s; c) the mid-1970s; and d) today...Do you think the absolute level of defence expenditure too high, about right, or too low for:

Comments

- a) the mid-1950s?
- b) the mid-1960s?
- c) the mid-1970s?
- d) today?

Do you think the defence budget had been properly divided between the army, navy and air force? If not, which service(s) benefited, which service suffered and why in:

Comments

- a) the mid-1950s?
- b) the mid-1960s?
- c) the mid-1970s?
- d) today?

Do you think that each of the three services have spent their respective allocations wisely? If not, how and in why were the funds misspent in:

Comments

- a) the mid-1950s?
- b) the mid-1960s?
- c) the mid-1970s?
- d) today?

45. India today faces the possibility of Pakistan acquiring nuclear weapons...

a) Do you think Pakistan is indeed intent on acquiring a nuclear arsenal and, if so, will she succeed?

b) If Pakistan does acquire the nuclear bomb, will it be aimed at Indian and/or other foreign targets?

c) Should India develop her own nuclear weaponry: only if Pakistan gets the bomb first; before Pakistan does; or regardless of whether Pakistan does or does not acquire the bomb? Why?

d) If India does decide to develop nuclear weapons, who will have pushed hardest for their development: the military; Central Government; the public; or foreign powers? Why?

e) If India decides not to develop nuclear weapons, who will have pushed hardest against their acquisition: the military; Central Government; the public; or foreign powers? For what reasons?

f) If the bomb comes to the subcontinent, do you think it will ever be used? If not, why not? If so, describe the scenario(s)?

46. India has lately been pursuing a policy of diversifying the countries from which it purchases arms. Is this policy beneficial or detrimental to the effectiveness of the Indian military? Why or why not?

47. The above policy has been interpreted by some as the beginning of closer Indian identification with the West, specifically with the United States. Is it in India's security interest to be seen as moving closer to the U.S.?

48. Since you first joined the military, have the backgrounds—geographical, social and economic—of incoming officers changed? If so, how?

Has this affected the quality of the officer corps? For better or worse?

49. Since you first joined the military, have the backgrounds—geographical, social and economic—of incoming soldiers changed? If so, how?

Has this affected the quality of the fighting man?

50. How would compare the level of professionalism among officers of the Indian Army officer of 1946 with that of the period in which you last served?

And with the professionalism of the officers today?

51. How would you rate the professionalism of the Indian military of today with its contemporaries in:

- a) China
- b) Gt. Britain
- c) USSR
- d) USA

52. How would you rate the professionalism of the Indian military of today with its contemporaries in:

- a) Pakistan
- b) Bangladesh
- c) Sri Lanka

53. How would you rate the effectiveness and efficiency of the Indian political class with its contemporaries in:

- a) China
- b) Gt. Britain
- c) USSR
- d) USA

54. How would you rate the effectiveness and efficiency of the Indian political class with its contemporaries in:

- a) Pakistan
- b) Bangladesh
- c) Sri Lanka

55. The unrest in the Punjab continues.

a) How large a part did Central Government play in creating the circumstances where army action became a real possibility? (Circle one.)

NONE AT ALL—Central Government was simply responding to events outside its control.

A LITTLE—Central Government was somewhat negligent in its attention to the problems in Punjab.

A FAIR BIT—Central Government's mismanagement of events helped fuel the crisis.

A LOT—Central Government's bad decisions were to a great extent directly responsible for the deterioration of law and order.

b) Was army action in Amritsar absolutely necessary? Why or why not?

c) Do you think the army will eventually be called in to replace the CRP and/or local police in establishing order? Why or why not?

Would such an action adversely affect the morale of the army? Why or why not?

d) Do you think any of the current trouble in Punjab can be blamed on foreign support? If so, who is ultimately behind such agitation and why?

56. Accords granting greater powers of self-government to the states of Punjab and Mizoram have recently been signed. With respect to each case, has the Central Government gone too far in acceding to the states' wishes? Or were these accords—when signed—necessary moves in trying to bring peace to these regions?

55. Punjab, Mizoram and most recently the agitation for a separate "Gurkhaland". Some commentators see such developments as but the first steps towards the fragmentation of India. Are they correct—is India moving towards that day when the military will be the only body capable of holding the nation together and will have to act forcefully to do so? Why or why not?

56. It has often been said that the armed forces of India are too diverse in their make-up and too spread out in their barracks to ever be capable of the tight coordination needed to stage a coup d'état. Do you agree? Why or why not?

57. What do you think are the reasons for India remaining virtually the only nation in the "developing world" never to have experienced a military take-over of government?

How long do you think Indian will enjoy this state of affairs?

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Civil-Military Relations in British and Independent India, 1918-1962,  
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APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE II<sup>1</sup>

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1. Personal details:

- a) Birthdate?
- b) Place of birth?
- c) Place of upbringing?
- d) Caste?
- e) Mother tongue?
- f) Are you proficient in any other languages? (Please list.)
- g) Which, if any, religion do you follow?
- h) How often, if at all, do you observe your religion's formal rites?
- i) What was your father's occupation?
- j) If retired from active military service, what is your present occupation?
- k) Would you characterize your own economic situation as better, the same, or worse than that of your father's?
- l) Does anyone in your immediate family own land? If so, how much, where, and of what type is it?
- m) What was the extent of your formal education? (Circle one.) Also, where did you attend? (Please list after choices.)

Where

Secondary school completion  
Bachelor's degree  
Some graduate work  
Master's degree  
Some post-graduate work  
Doctoral degree

- n) How often have you voted in national elections? (Circle one.)

Always	Sometimes
Almost always	Once
Most times	Never

o) Have you ever been involved in politics and/or stood for political office? If so, for which party and/or where and when? (If you or your family was active in the Independence movement please see question # 12)

p) Have any members of your family been actively involved in politics and/or stood for political office? If so for which party and/or when and where? (If you or your family was active in the Independence movement please see question # 12)

2. What was your reason(s) for joining the military? Did your choice meet with your family's approval or disapproval?

3. Which branch of the armed forces did you join and why?

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<sup>1</sup> The original Questionnaire II had blank spaces between the questions.

4. Career details: (Please list the details of your military career in the spaces provided.)

Year(s)          Postings          Promotions          Type of troop commanded

Action seen (if any):

Decorations awarded (if any):

Date of retirement (if applicable):

5. a) What do you think was the generally perceived status of a career in the military when you joined?  
b) What do you think was the generally perceived status of a career in the military when you last actively served?  
c) What do you think is the generally perceived status of a career in the military today?  
d) In the future, do you think the status of a military career will improve or decline? For what reasons?
6. What is your view of the practice of designating certain peoples as "martial races"?
7. Did the British practice of heavily recruiting martial races help or hinder overall military efficiency and/or effectiveness?
8. What do you remember as the attitude of Indian officers towards British officers and vice-versa in the Indian Army of pre-Independence?
9. What do you remember as the attitude of the common man towards the Indian Army before Independence?  
Why do you think he held this attitude?
10. What do you remember as the attitude of Indian officers towards the Independence movement?  
And towards the politicians who led the movement?
11. What do you remember as the attitude of the Independence movement politicians towards the Indian Army?
12. Were you yourself, any family members, or close friends personally active in the Independence movement? If so, who, and in what ways?
13. During World War II, what do you remember of Indian officers' attitudes towards those officers and soldiers who joined the Indian National Army (INA)?  
Was this attitude at all affected by the post-war trial of suspected INA members at the Red Fort? If so, how?
14. At the time, did you feel that the political leadership was properly prepared for Independence? Why or why not?
15. At the time, did you feel that the civil service was properly prepared for Independence? Why or why not?

16. At the time, did you feel that the armed forces were properly prepared for Independence? Why or why not?
17. Did the break-up of the Indian Army into the two separate armies of Pakistan and India affect you personally? If so, in what way(s)?
18. In the first ten years of Independence (1947-1957), how would you characterize the political leadership's attitude towards the military?
19. During this same ten year period, how would you characterize the senior civil service's attitude towards the military?
20. At the time, what were your feelings on Ayub Khan's coup d'état in Pakistan? Was this action necessary and/or desirable?
21. At the time, were you aware of any talk or feelings either within the military or amongst the civilian population which viewed Ayub Khan's action as one which the Indian military should follow?  
If so, from where were these views emanating and how strongly held were such beliefs?
22. What were your initial feelings on the appointment of Krishna Menon as Defence Minister?
23. Did Menon politicize the military?  
If so, was it a deliberate action?  
If so, for what purpose(s) was it undertaken?
24. What were your feelings on the army career of B.M. Kaul before the Autumn of 1962?  
Did they change over time and, if so, how and why?
25. Were you at all personally affected by the talk of political favouritism at the upper levels of the military hierarchy during Menon's tenure as Defence Minister? If so, in what way(s) and why?
26. What was your opinion on the "forward policy" deployed on the Sino-Indian border before October 1962?  
Did your opinion of this policy change after the events of October-November 1962?
27. How large a part do you think public opinion played in shaping the events leading up to the Chinese attack in October 1962?  
Was their influence, if any, to the benefit or detriment of India's security?
28. Various commentators have explained the Indian reverses suffered against the Chinese in October-November 1962, in terms of a failure in any number of areas; for example: Political leadership, Intelligence, Military leadership, Field officers, The jawan, The standard of equipment and/or suitable training.  
What is your explanation? Were any or all of the above at fault?  
Which of the above groups acquitted themselves best before and during

October-November 1962? Which of the above groups acquitted themselves worst during this period? How and why?

29. What did you feel was the typical field officer's attitude towards the military chiefs in the aftermath of the Sino-Indian conflict?

30. What did you feel was the public's attitude towards the military in the aftermath of the Sino-Indian conflict?

And the public's attitude towards the political leadership?

31. What did you feel was the political leadership's attitude towards the military in the aftermath of the Sino-Indian conflict?

And the military's attitude towards the political leadership?

32. At the time, were you aware of any talk or feelings either within the military or amongst the civilian population which spoke of moving against the government?

If so, from where were such views emanating and how strongly held were they?

33. "After Nehru, who?" was a much discussed question in the early 1960's...Was the military at all apprehensive about the possibility of mass public disorder after Jawaharlal Nehru's death? Did it feel that it might be called in to ensure public order?

34. Did you think that Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was justified in declaring Emergency?

Why or why not?

35. Did you feel that the Indian military approved or disapproved of Emergency?

Was this a unanimous view amongst senior and junior officers, or were there differences of opinion within the armed forces?

If you think the latter true, what were the different opinions and which quarters held them and why?

36. When it was first declared, how long did you think the Emergency would endure?

a) How long do you think it could have endured and why?

37. Did your opinion on the Emergency change during its duration? If so, how and why?

38. Why do you think Indira Gandhi called elections?

a) Did you feel that, win or lose, Indira Gandhi would abide by the result of the election?

39. After losing the elections of 1977, some commentators thought that either Indira Gandhi would call on the military to forcibly keep her in office, or that some military officers would act to keep her in office. Were any military officers who would have obeyed such an order from the P.M.? Or were there were any officers who would council her to remain in office?

40. What is the military's attitude towards internal policing actions? Are they beneficial or detrimental to army efficiency?

a) Have there been any instances of internal policing actions which you felt were particularly appropriate and/or necessary?

b) Have there been any actions which were inappropriate and/or unnecessary?

41. What is the military's attitude towards such paramilitary organizations as the Border Security Force (BSF) and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)—do they help or hinder the effectiveness of the military in defending the nation's borders?

a) How would you compare the level of professionalism found in the BSF and CRPF with that of the army, navy and air force?

42. Looking at the defence budget...Do you think the absolute level of defence expenditure too high, about right, or too low for:

Comments

a) the mid-1950s?

b) the mid-1960s?

c) the mid-1970s?

d) today?

43. India today faces the possibility of Pakistan acquiring nuclear weapons...

a) Do you think Pakistan is indeed intent on acquiring a nuclear arsenal and, if so, will she succeed?

b) Should India develop her own nuclear weaponry: only if Pakistan gets the bomb first; before Pakistan does; or regardless of whether Pakistan does or does not acquire the bomb? Why?

c) If India does decide to develop nuclear weapons, who will have pushed hardest for their development: the military; Central Government; the public; or foreign powers? Why?

d) If India decides not to develop nuclear weapons, who will have pushed hardest against their acquisition: the military; Central Government; the public; or foreign powers? For what reasons?

44. Since the first years of Independence, India has officially been pursuing a foreign policy of nonalignment...Has this policy increased or decreased India's security in:

Comments

a) the mid-1950s?

b) the mid-1960s?

c) the mid-1970s?

d) today?

45. At the time, did you think the 1971 signing of the 20-year Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation between India and the Soviet Union would be beneficial or detrimental to India's security?

And would be beneficial or detrimental to India's armed forces?

a) Have your feelings on the above treaty changed since 1971? If so, how and why?



46. India has lately been pursuing a policy of diversifying the countries from which it purchases arms, turning more often to Western suppliers...

a) Is this policy beneficial or detrimental to India's security? Why or why not?

b) Is this policy beneficial or detrimental to the effectiveness of the Indian military? Why or why not?

47. Since you first joined the military, have the backgrounds—geographical, social and economic—of incoming officers changed? If so, how?

Has this affected the quality of the officer corps? For better or worse?

48. How would you compare the level of professionalism of the Indian Army officer of 1946 with that of the period in which you last served?

And with the professionalism of the officers today?

49. Since you first joined the military, have the backgrounds—geographical, social and economic—of incoming jawans changed? If so, how?

Has this affected the quality of the fighting man?

50. How would you rate the professionalism of the Indian armed forces with their contemporaries in:

India's is... Far Higher/Higher/Equal/Lower/Much Lower

Comments

a) China	/	/	/	/
b) Gt. Britain	/	/	/	/
c) USSR	/	/	/	/
d) USA	/	/	/	/
e) Pakistan	/	/	/	/
f) Bangladesh	/	/	/	/
g) Sri Lanka	/	/	/	/

51. How would you rate the effectiveness of the Indian political class with its contemporaries in:

India's is... Far Higher/Higher/Equal/Lower/Much Lower

Comments

a) China	/	/	/	/
b) Gt. Britain	/	/	/	/
c) USSR	/	/	/	/
d) USA	/	/	/	/
e) Pakistan	/	/	/	/
f) Bangladesh	/	/	/	/
g) Sri Lanka	/	/	/	/

52. How would you rate the efficiency of the Indian senior civil service with its contemporaries in:

India's is... Far Higher/Higher/Equal/Lower/Much Lower

Comments

- |                |   |   |   |   |
|----------------|---|---|---|---|
| a) China       | / | / | / | / |
| b) Gt. Britain | / | / | / | / |
| c) USSR        | / | / | / | / |
| d) USA         | / | / | / | / |
| e) Pakistan    | / | / | / | / |
| f) Bangladesh  | / | / | / | / |
| g) Sri Lanka   | / | / | / | / |

53. The unrest in the Punjab continues...

a) How large a part did Central Government play in creating the circumstances where army action became a real possibility? (Circle one.)

NONE AT ALL—Central Government was simply responding to events outside its control.

A LITTLE—Central Government was somewhat negligent in its attention to the problems in Punjab.

A FAIR BIT—Central Government's mismanagement of events helped fuel the crisis.

A LOT—Central Government's bad decisions were to a great extent directly responsible for the deterioration of law and order.

b) Was army action in Amritsar absolutely necessary? Why or why not?

c) Do you think the army will eventually be called in to replace the CRP and/or local police in establishing order? Why or why not?

Would such an action adversely affect the morale of the army? Why or why not?

d) Did the isolated outbreaks of troop mutinies which followed Operation Blue Star affect ethnic relations within the military? If so, has the change promoted better efforts at understanding different groups or increased prejudice?

e) Can any of the current trouble in Punjab can be blamed on foreign support? If so, who is ultimately behind such agitation and why?

54. Punjab, Mizoram and most recently the agitation for a separate "Gurkhaland"...Some commentators see such developments as the first steps towards the fragmentation of India. Are they correct—is India moving towards a day when the military will be the only body capable of holding the nation together and will have to act forcefully to do so? Why or why not?

55. India remains virtually the only nation in the "developing world" never to have experienced a military take-over of government...

a) Which of the following reasons do you think have contributed to this enviable state of affairs? (Please rank in order of significance, with "1" being the most important. If you feel that any item is relatively insignificant, cross it out. Feel free to add your own choices under "OTHER".)

- A. Administrative efficiency
- B. Diversity of peoples, cultures, languages
- C. Dominant Hindu culture inherently against military rule
- D. Example of ineffectiveness of military rule in Pakistan and Bangladesh

- E. 40-year old habit of democracy
- F. Independence struggle's non-violent nature
- G. Initial political stability, quality and/or democratic form
- H. Institutionalization of diverse centres of power
- I. Logistics unfavourable--five regional army commanders, troops spread out over country, etc.
- J. Nationally representative military personnel
- K. Political awareness of masses
- L. Political unawareness of masses
- M. Professionalism of armed forces
- N. Sheer size of India
- O. Widely-held belief in democracy
- P. Wisdom and stature of national leaders
- Q. OTHER

b) Do you foresee any circumstances that might change this state of affairs?

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**APPENDIX C: MILITARY OFFICER DETAILS**

- a) Answered a questionnaire and interviewed.  
b) Answered a questionnaire only.  
c) Interviewed only.  
d) Grand Total.

Army Officers	Naval Officers	Air Force Officers
<b>a) Answered a questionnaire and interviewed.</b>		
00 General	01 Admiral	03 Air Chief Marshal
08 Lieut.-General	01 Vice Admiral	02 Air Marshal
04 Major-General	00 Rear Admiral	00 Air Vice Marshal
03 Brigadier	00 Commodore	00 Air Commodore
01 Colonel	00 Captain	00 Group Captain
01 Lieut.-Colonel	00 Commander	00 Wing Commander
17 Army	02 Navy	05 Air Force
24 Total		

<b>b) Answered a questionnaire only.</b>		
00 General	00 Admiral	00 Air Chief Marshal
12 Lieut.-General	02 Vice Admiral	02 Air Marshal
13 Major-General	00 Rear Admiral	00 Air Vice Marshal
35 Brigadier	00 Commodore	00 Air Commodore
01 Colonel	00 Captain	02 Group Captain
03 Lieut.-Colonel	00 Commander	01 Wing Commander
01 Anonymous (Army)		
65 Army	02 Navy	05 Air Force
72 Total		

<b>c) Interviewed only.</b>		
00 General	01 Admiral	00 Air Chief Marshal
04 Lieut.-General	01 Vice Admiral	00 Air Marshal
03 Major-General	00 Rear Admiral	00 Air Vice Marshal
01 Brigadier	01 Commodore	00 Air Commodore
00 Colonel	00 Captain	00 Group Captain
01 Lieut.-Colonel	00 Commander	00 Wing Commander
09 Army	03 Navy	00 Air
12 Total		

d) Grand Total.

00 General	02 Admiral	03 Air Chief Marshal
24 Lieut.-General	04 Vice Admiral	04 Air Marshal
20 Major-General	00 Rear Admiral	00 Air Vice Marshal
39 Brigadier	01 Commodore	00 Air Commodore
02 Colonel	00 Captain	02 Group Captain
05 Lieut.-Colonel	00 Commander	01 Wing Commander
00 Major	00 Lieut.-Commander	00 Squadron Leader
00 Captain	00 Lieutenant	00 Flight Lieutenant
00 Lieutenant	00 Sub-Lieutenant	00 Flying Officer
00 2nd-Lieutenant	00 Midshipman	00 Pilot Officer

01 Anonymous (Army)

91 Army	07 Navy	10 Air Force
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108 Total Officers

A further note on the questionnaire/interview sample:

In total, 96 senior retired Indian armed forces' officers replied to 412 questionnaires posted from the UK. This 23.30% response rate is statistically significant, especially given the officers' random selection (described in the Introduction text and footnote #17) and their having received the questionnaire "cold" (i.e., with no prior solicitations from myself). This response rate is also significant because professional officers are unusually reluctant to discuss sensitive civil-military topics. Nonetheless, the written replies of the questionnaire respondents were both frank and expansive.

Of the 36 officers interviewed face-to-face, 24 previously had answered a questionnaire while 12 had not. The first group were selected because their questionnaire responses were usually interesting and/or eloquent. The second set were chosen after being recommended by the first. All interviewees were forthright and voluble in their answers.

There arises a question of bias in that, given the sensitive nature of my research, officers willing to answer a questionnaire and/or submit to interview may form a non-representative "liberal" wing of the Indian military. Although this argument may have some basis, I remain confident that the above sample accurately represents their peers: retired officers are both more able and likely to speak candidly of their attitudes to civil-military issues than are serving officers; a number of interviewees were selected because their questionnaire replies notably differed from those of their comrades; in Chapter Six the respondents' religious mix was shown to reflect the variety found in the military as a whole; and all opinions were checked against other sources where possible. Finally, whether having attended Sandhurst, Woolwich, Cranwell or the IMA, the officers of the Indian Army, Navy and Air Force who served during 1918-1962 were trained to display the professional attributes of the British ideal of "officers and gentlemen". Chief among these was just the respectful, non-political, "liberal" attitude towards civil supremacy-of-rule consistently displayed by the sample of questionnaire respondents and/or interviewees.

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**APPENDIX D: MILITARY OFFICER INTERVIEW DETAILS**

Rank	Number	Place	Date
<b>a) Interviewed as a follow-up to answering a questionnaire.</b>			
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Air Chief Marshal	1	New Delhi	09 September 1987
Vice Admiral	2	Bombay	07 October 1987
Air Marshal	3	New Delhi	04 September 1987
Lieut.-General	4	Pune	12 October 1987
Air Marshal	5	New Delhi	17 August 1989
Lieut.-General	10	Patna	29 September 1989
Air Chief Marshal	12	Pune	11 October 1987
Lieut.-General	16	New Delhi	03 September 1987
Lieut.-General	17	London	27 November 1988
Air Chief Marshal	18	New Delhi	03 September 1987
Lieut.-General	19	New Delhi	10 September 1987
Brigadier	22	New Delhi	Summer 1986, 1987
Lieut.-General	23	New Delhi	06 September 1987
Colonel	24	New Delhi	12 September 1987
Lieut.-Colonel	25	Richmond	Summer 1987
Brigadier (Justice)	47	New Delhi	20 August 1989
Admiral	58	Gurgoan	28 August 1989
Brigadier	69	Pune	09 December 1989
Major-General	74	New Delhi	21 August 1989
Major-General	75	New Delhi	14 August 1989
Major-General	85	New Delhi	16 August 1989
Major-General	89	New Delhi	18 August 1989
Lieut.-General	94	New Delhi	15 August 1989
Lieut.-General	95	New Delhi	13 September 1989
-----			
24 Total			
<b>b) Interviewed only.</b>			
-----			
Major-General	97	Noida	15 September 1989
Brigadier	98	New Delhi	15 Sept 1987, 21 Aug 1989
Commodore	99	Bombay	06 October 1987
Lieut.-General	100	New Delhi	09 September 1989
Lieut.-General	101	New Delhi	18 August 1989
Lieut.-Colonel	102	New Delhi	15 September 1987
Vice Admiral	103	New Delhi	18 September 1987
Major-General	104	London	24 June 1988
Major-General	105	New Delhi	11 September 1987
Admiral	106	New Delhi	17 September 1987
Lieut.-General	107	New Delhi	20 September 1987
Lieut.-General	108	Meerut	14 September 1989
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12 Total			
36 Grand Total Interviewees			

Civil-Military Relations in British and Independent India, 1918-1962,  
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**APPENDIX E: CIVILIAN INTERVIEW DETAILS**

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Title	Number	Place	Date
Defence Journalist Mr.	C1	New Delhi	13 September 1989
International affairs expert Mr.	C2	New Delhi	21 August 1989
Professor	C3	New Delhi	11 September 1989
Ex-Principal Defence Secretary	C4	New Delhi	04 September 1989
Ex-Defence Secretary Mr.	C5	New Delhi	14 August 1989
Ex-officer Dr.	C6	Pune	12 October 1987
Ex-Governor Mr.	C7	New Delhi	13 August 1989
Indian defence expert Mr.	C8	Cambridge	15 May 1988

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08 Total Civilian Interviewees

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Civil-Military Relations in British and Independent India, 1918-1962,  
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APPENDIX F: TABLE 0.1 DETAILS

Which of the following factors have contributed to India  
never having experienced a military coup?

Ranked by the questionnaire respondents in order of importance.

- 
- (A) Administrative efficiency.
  - (B) Diversity of peoples, cultures, languages.
  - (C) Dominant Hindu culture inherently against military rule.
  - (D) Example of ineffectiveness of military rule in Pakistan and Bangladesh.
  - (E) 40-year old habit of democracy.
  - (F) Independence struggle's non-violent nature.
  - (G) Initial political stability, quality and/or democratic rule.
  - (H) Institutionalization of diverse centres of power.
  - (I) Logistics unfavourable: five regional army commands, troops dispersed nationally, etc.
  - (J) Nationally representative military personnel.
  - (K) Political awareness of masses.
  - (L) Political unawareness of masses.
  - (M) Professionalism of armed forces.
  - (N) Sheer size of India.
  - (O) Widely-held belief in democracy.
  - (P) Wisdom and stature of national leaders.
  - (Q) Other.
- 

Respondents  
28-96 only

Factors with rankings

	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)	(H)	(I)	(J)	(K)	(L)	(M)	(N)	(O)	(P)	(Q)
28:	0	3	4	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0
29:	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
30:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
31:	3	4	10	6	1	9	8	7	12	11	2	0	14	4	13	15	0
32:	4	3	0	7	9	1	5	0	12	6	0	0	2	10	8	11	0
33:	13	1	10	12	7	11	13	9	4	5	14	17	2	3	8	16	6 <sup>a</sup>
34:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
35:	14	10	4	6	8	9	7	11	15	3	12	0	1	2	5	13	0
36:	12	2	15	9	7	14	13	11	8	3	4	0	1	5	6	10	0
37:	9	10	5	7	11	12	2	3	8	6	15	16	4	13	14	1	0
38:	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	2	3	0	0	0
39:	11	7	1	14	10	12	5	6	9	4	2	0	3	13	8	15	0
40:	9	6	0	7	0	0	10	1	4	5	0	0	8	3	11	12	2 <sup>b</sup>
41:	13	5	9	14	2	15	4	11	6	8	12	0	1	7	3	10	0
42:	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	0	0	0
43:	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	2	0	0	4	3	0	0	0
44:	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
45:	10	5	3	0	8	9	4	7	0	0	0	6	1	2	11	0	0



46:	11	7	13	2	1	12	3	8	10	14	6	16	15	5	4	9	17 <sup>c</sup>
47:	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0
48:	0	2	1	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
49:	0	9	0	8	7	13	5	10	0	2	11	0	3	0	4	12	1,6 <sup>p</sup>
50:	0	2	4	0	0	0	5	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
51:	6	2	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	4	3	0	0	0
52:	0	0	0	0	0	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0
53:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	3	0	0	0
54:	9	1	11	0	2	15	14	13	3	4	12	8	5	6	7	10	0
55:	11	5	0	10	9	0	1	0	7	3	5	0	2	12	4	0	13 <sup>p</sup>
56:	9	1	0	8	0	0	0	3	3	5	0	0	5	7	0	0	2 <sup>v</sup>
57:	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
58:	10	3	15	12	13	9	1	5	14	8	7	0	4	2	11	6	0
59:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
60:	6	8	0	11	5	0	4	10	13	2	12	14	1	9	3	7	0
61:	2	8	0	6	13	11	1	7	14	5	4	0	3	12	9	10	0
62:	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0
63:	7	5	0	0	8	3	4	0	0	9	2	0	11	12	6	1	10 <sup>f</sup>
64:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
65:	0	1	2	0	0	0	8	9	5	4	0	6	3	0	0	7	0
66:	0	1	0	7	6	0	10	11	2	3	8	0	4	5	9	12	0
67:	0	1	5	0	0	0	2	0	6	4	0	0	3	7	0	0	0
68:	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	2	3	0	0
69:	0	3	0	4	8	0	5	9	2	6	0	0	1	7	0	0	0
70:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
71:	0	1	0	2	4	0	0	8	0	6	7	0	0	5	3	0	0
72:	5	4	7	9	0	0	1	0	8	2	0	0	6	3	0	0	0
73:	15	1	5	8	11	10	9	6	7	4	12	3	13	2	14	16	1 <sup>h</sup>
74:	10	0	4	8	6	0	5	9	0	7	2	0	3	11	0	1	0
75:	0	0	0	4	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
76:	5	0	0	0	3	0	1	6	0	0	4	0	0	0	2	0	0
77:	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	9	5	3	0	0	1	5	7	7	0
78:	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
79:	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0
80:	0	4	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0
81:	0	2	10	0	0	0	8	9	3	4	0	6	5	1	7	0	0
82:	0	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
83:	5	6	0	10	9	8	7	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	1	4	0
84:	12	2	0	0	10	9	4	8	7	1	12	0	3	6	5	11	0
85:	7	5	0	9	6	0	8	0	0	4	0	0	2	0	0	3	1 <sup>i</sup>
86:	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
87:	1	7	4	0	0	0	3	5	9	8	0	0	10	6	0	2	0
88:	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	3	5	6	7	0	4	0	0	0	0
89:	15	5	2	16	8	6	12	9	7	1	11	14	4	10	3	12	17 <sup>j</sup>
90:	11	7	0	6	10	5	9	12	0	4	0	3	1	2	0	8	0
91:	4	3	10	0	6	5	7	0	13	2	11	0	1	8	9	12	0
92:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
93:	5	9	0	0	1	0	2	10	12	11	6	0	3	8	4	7	0
94:	0	3	1	8	7	0	5	0	0	6	0	0	7	2	9	4	0
95:	0	7	3	0	0	0	2	0	6	4	0	0	1	0	5	0	0
96:	0	6	4	10	0	7	3	9	0	2	11	0	1	8	0	0	0

(A) (B) (C) (D) (E) (F) (G) (H) (I) (J) (K) (L) (M) (N) (O) (P) (Q)

**Number of 1st- to 5th-place rankings**

	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)	(H)	(I)	(J)	(K)	(L)	(M)	(N)	(O)	(P)	(Q)
First's:	3	17	4	1	5	3	7	2	0	5	3	0	18	4	4	6	4
Second's:	1	7	2	2	2	0	5	1	2	7	4	0	10	10	1	1	2
Third's:	1	7	3	0	1	1	7	3	3	6	0	2	10	7	5	2	0
Fourth's:	2	4	7	2	1	1	6	0	3	9	3	1	7	1	4	2	0
Fifth's:	4	6	3	2	2	2	7	4	3	4	1	0	3	5	3	0	0
Total	11	38	18	7	10	7	31	10	10	30	11	3	46	27	16	11	6

**Final rankings**

(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)	(H)	(I)	(J)	(K)	(L)	(M)	(N)	(O)	(P)	(Q)
8	2	6	14	11	14	3	11	11	4	8	17	1	5	7	8	16

- 
- <sup>A</sup> "Absence of unified command of the three services".
  - <sup>B</sup> "Non-emergence of a charismatic leader amongst the armed forces".
  - <sup>C</sup> "Lack of proper communications".
  - <sup>D</sup> 1) "Administrative inheritance of the army from British Army culture and even earlier". 6) "Wisdom of the best army leaders in the past and present".
  - <sup>E</sup> "Repeated utterance of Mahatma Gandhi and even by all leaders on 'Panchayat Raj'".
  - <sup>F</sup> "No military leader of enough stature, universally loved and respected, universally known, whom all, or a majority, would follow".
  - <sup>G</sup> "People of India consider it [an apolitical army] a challenge".
  - <sup>H</sup> "Loyalty to service rather than the nation as instilled by Britain".
  - <sup>I</sup> "British tradition of the military subordinating itself to the government in power".
  - <sup>J</sup> "Preoccupation of [the] military leadership in rebuilding the forces while carrying out a perpetual confrontation with neighbouring countries Pakistan and China".

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**NOTE:** Weighting the rankings (e.g. 1st = 9pts., 2nd = 6pts., 3rd = 4pts., 4th = 2pts., and 5th = 1pt.) only affects the minor positions.

	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)	(H)	(I)	(J)	(K)	(L)	(M)	(N)	(O)	(P)	(Q)
PTS:	45	237	74	27	65	10	140	40	33	133	58	10	276	131	73	72	48
RANK:12	2	6	15	9	16	3	13	14	4	10	16	1	5	7	8	11	

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