



Indian Defence Expert Foresees War Threats to India; Urges Strategic Shifts in Military Preparedness & Diplomacy

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“Urgent Need for India's Technological Advancement and Regional Diplomatic Vigilance”

Intro: Did you know that China's military plans include completing infrastructure development in Xinjiang and Tibet by 2032, constructing 3 Aircraft Carriers, 21 Nuclear Submarines, and 200 warships by 2030? This week in an exclusive interview with senior journalist **Mahima Sharma**, seasoned Indian **Defence Analyst Lt Col JS Sodhi**, made some critical revelations and urgent calls to action. From looming two-front war scenarios to the rise of cyber and space threats, Lt Col Sodhi's analysis navigates the complex terrain of defence readiness, regional geopolitics, and the indispensable role of private sectors in shaping India's security paradigm. A very different interview this time on Socio-economic Voices, because we stay a step ahead, when it matters the masses.

MS: We are quoting former Army Chief General Naravane here, who in Aug 2023 wrote: “India is like a boxer facing both Pakistan and China in the ring. New Delhi must prepare to deal with both of them individually.” **A two front war would defeat our economy or what else do you foresee - why and when is the likelihood?**

Lt Col Sodhi: On July 08, 2013 in an article in Wenweipo, which is a pro-PRC newspaper published from Hong Kong, was an article whose title was “Six-wars that China will fight in the next 50 Years.”

- The first in the series of these six-wars is a USA-China War over Taiwan, whose possibility has been stated in a statement by William J. Burns, Director of CIA on February 03, 2023 in which he said that China & USA will go to war over Taiwan in 2027.
- The third war in the series of these six-wars is indicated to be waged in 2035 by Pakistan. It's indicated that Pak & China will attack India for Jammu & Kashmir and that at the same time China will attack India for Arunachal Pradesh, thus meaning a two-front war on India. Gen MM Naravane (Retd), the previous Chief of Staff of the Indian Army in an article in The Print on August 09, 2023 has written that no country in the world has ever won a two-front war. Various timelines are pointing towards the two-front war in the year 2035.

Certain timelines that I would like to enumerate are China's plans to complete the infrastructure development in Xinjiang and Tibet by 2032. Xinjiang and Tibet are on the northern and eastern borders of India, and hence these areas are of immense significance.

¹Also, China is presently constructing 3 Aircraft Carriers, 21 Nuclear Submarines and 200 warships, which are slated to be completed by 2030 and on March 20, 2023. China completed the construction of the biggest naval submarine base in South Asia by constructing it in Cox Bazar in Bangladesh. Thus, with Gwadar port in Pakistan and Hambantota port in Sri Lanka firmly in the Chinese grip and with huge interests in Cox Bazar, the planning of China to encircle India by the sea-route is complete.

Besides, Chinese military activity has been noticed in Laamu Atoll in Maldives and Kyaukphyu in Myanmar, which are clear signs of Chinese military activity in the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal. In 2014, People's Liberation Army (PLA) in its military doctrine stated that PLA is ready to fight any country anywhere in the world in all the six-domains of war i.e. Land, Sea, Air, Cyber, Electromagnetic spectrum and Space.

Thus, the writing on the wall is clear. A defeat of any country in a war apart from loss of economy and territory, results in loss of international credibility and psychological impact which takes decades to recover.

MS: How well is India prepared for a two-front war if Pak and China are immediate threats looming large? What exactly needs to be done and in which all sectors?

Lt Col Sodhi: China is ahead of India by three decades in military preparedness which has been explained well in an article in The Wire on December 11, 2020 by strategic expert Pravin Sawhney.²

Artificial Intelligence (AI) will play an important role in all future wars and China's "New Generation Artificial Intelligence Development Plan" released in July 2017 is on track to see China becoming the global leader in AI by 2030, thus overtaking USA who is currently the global leader.³ India currently ranks 15th among the top 25 AI nations, according to an article published in the Business Standard on December 26, 2023. China has been immensely aiding Pakistan in their combat-preparedness since 2013 when Xi Jinping became the President of China.

Apart from investing US\$ 65 bn in the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which has great military value as it will ease the movement of PLA troops to Pakistan whenever the need arises, Pakistan Army Officers are being posted to the Western Theatre Command of China since 2021, an unheard thing amongst foreign armies.

Though officers and soldiers do military exercises in foreign countries and attend courses of instructions too, but never before in military history have officers been posted in a foreign country's military headquarter. This shows the trust and bonding that the PLA and the Pakistan Army have in each other, which is warning bells for India.

In 2021 a direct Optical Fibre Cable was laid between the Western Theatre Command of China and the General Headquarters (GHQ) of the Pakistan Army in Rawalpindi for swift and uninterrupted communications. Apart from this Pakistan and China have been regularly holding joint army, maritime and air exercises where the aspect of interoperability of each other's weapon systems is given weightage so that when the need arises, the Pakistani troops can man the PLA's weapon systems and vice versa.

India has in the last one decade has picked up steam in defence preparedness by intensively building infrastructure along the LAC in the northern and eastern borders. **India's infrastructure along the LOC and IB with Pakistan was good, but along the LAC it lacked significantly, which is now being addressed. The Atmanirbhar Bharat and Make in India initiatives have been successful and India has started manufacturing weapons not only for herself but has started exporting to 85 countries and is ranked 23rd globally in the list of the arms producing nations.**⁴

To ramp up India's military preparedness, first and foremost India needs to get out of China's economic web as each rupee that China is earning from its trade with India, it is strengthening the PLA. Hence, we need to totally stop our trade with China. In 2019, the India-China trade was worth US\$ 92.89 bn and in 2020 it was US\$ 87.65 bn. The Galwan Valley Clash happened on June 15, 2020 in which 20 soldiers of the Indian Army made the supreme sacrifice of their lives whilst fighting the PLA. Despite this, our trade with China soared to US\$ 125 bn in 2021 and US\$ 135.98 bn in 2022. In 2023 the India-China trade stood at US\$ 136.2 bn.

Secondly, India needs to have greater Research & Development by having more PhDs in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics), as R&D plays a major role in a country becoming a manufacturing

hub, apart from business-friendly laws, low taxes and skilled manpower. The world's two biggest manufacturing hubs i.e. China & USA are also the world's two top nations in having the largest PhDs in STEM. In 2019, China produced 49,498 PhDs in STEM and USA produced 33,759 whereas India produced 700+ PhDs in STEM.⁵ Thus, India should focus on having more PhDs in STEM and to retain them in the country, after their doctorates are over.

Thirdly, India needs to hike its defence budget to reduce the gap in the military preparedness which is three decades as of now, in a lesser time frame so that defence acquisitions are done in lesser timelines as 2035 is just a little over a decade away.

MS: A straight question: How prepared is India, in terms of its defence technology overall? And what all more needs to be done and why?

Lt Col Sodhi: Most of the defence technology in India is imported as our in-house Research & Development is very less when we compare to China. It is imperative that we should have more research and development in the country and for this we should have more doctorates in fields like Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics for these four fields are the backbone of any Research & Development which takes place worldwide.

To achieve this, we need to have world class Universities which rank very high in the global ranking order as the best brains of the world flock to universities as faculty which are ranked high in the global ranking order.

In 2015 Xi Jinping announced the World Class 2.0 project in which he wanted to have at least two Chinese universities in the world's top 500 by 2030, as none were in the top 500 list at that time. China hired the best brains of the world with good pay packages and in 2023 China has two universities in the top ten in the world.

To hire the best brains, we also need to ensure that the pay packages of these faculty are of global standing because only then will such people come to teach in our country. As a result, we will be producing more technology within our country rather than relying on any foreign country for transfer of technology.

MS: Now, please share your views on how to prevent war with non-friendly neighbors.

Lt Col Sodhi: India's non friendly Neighbors that are China and Pakistan only understand a strong language. Whenever India has trusted China or Pakistan we have been backstabbed by these countries. Hence the time of dialogue and diplomacy is far over and now India has to fully concentrate on building up a strong and modern military so as to serve as a big deterrence to China and Pakistan.

MS: In the Interim Budget, the defence ministry secured the highest allocation of Rs 6.1 trillion. Analytically, what are your views on this? Looking ahead to potential conflicts, where should the main budget priorities be for the next decade?

Lt Col Sodhi: The interim defence budget of 2024 has been a historic budget as regards India military preparedness, because this time the highest ever allocation of Rs 6.1 lakh crores has been done. Though it is a step in the right direction, it also shows that India is well cognizant of the fact that the combat preparedness has to be kept at an all-time high and the national security will always outweigh the economic considerations though we are a developing country and much needs to be done in the social sector too.

- The areas of the budget focus in this year should be that we should aim to start the construction of our third aircraft carrier as naval superiority will play a very important role in the wars ahead.
- Also, we need to speed up the acquisition of our fighter aircrafts as currently we are just down to 29.5 squadrons as against the authorised 42 squadrons of fighter aircraft in the Indian Air Force.
- Thirdly, **efforts have been put in that the weapon system that we are manufacturing now should have artificial intelligence enabled in them** so that we are able to use this aspect effectively whenever the need

arises.

MS: What India can learn from the ongoing Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Hamas war?

Lt Col Sodhi: There are ten lessons that can be learnt from the Russia-Ukraine war as it is a conventional war based on the US Airland Battle Concept, 1986.

- **The first lesson from this war** is the improper selection of timing for the launch of the war in Ukraine by Russia. Russia launched the offensive on Ukraine on 24 February 2022 when winters were ebbing in Eastern Europe. Thus, with snow covering the entire ground in Ukraine it was heavy with water content resulting in the ground being boggy. The Russians had no option but to restrict the movement of their troops and tanks on the metalled roads. In armoured warfare emphasis is on dispersed movement of tanks on large frontages cross country. However, this was not possible due to the ground conditions, hence these tanks became easy targets for the Ukrainian soldiers who are equipped with the latest US made Javelin, the British made **NLAW (Next-generation Light Anti-Tank Weapon) anti-tank missiles and the Turkish TB2 Bayraktar armed drones.**
- **The second lesson** that accrues out of the Russia-Ukraine War is that the will of the people of the country where the war is being raged is of great importance. In all the three prolonged wars where the USA fought in modern times post 1945, i.e. in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan, the civil population of these three countries were anti-American and hence even sophisticated weaponry and the well-trained soldiers of the US military proved to be no match for the under-equipped and ill-trained soldiers of these three countries. **Local support is of inherent importance. In the Russia-Ukraine War, the Ukrainian armed forces have given a tough reply to the Russians, despite being the underdogs as the local population supported the Ukraine military in every possible way.** NLAW anti-tank missiles being transported on electric two wheelers to destroy the Russian tanks, is an apt example of the role the civil population can play when a war is ravaged on their nation.
- **The third lesson** One significant lesson from this conflict is the importance of launching a war with significant force and effectiveness. In boxing, the initial punch often sets the tone for the entire match. At the outset of the war on February 24, 2022, Russia possessed overwhelming air superiority with 1511 fighter aircraft compared to Ukraine's 98. However, Russia's use of its combat air power was limited. Exploring the utilization of fighter aircraft and artillery in the initial phases, with a focus on key cities such as Kyiv and Kharkiv, could have been considered. This strategic evaluation might have enabled a faster advancement by Russian forces. While discussing such tactics, it's important to consider and reconsider the implications on civilian populations and the broader consequences of escalated conflict.
- **The fourth lesson for every military leader**, right upwards of the junior most officer rank in any military the world over is that all officers should READ about strategies, immensely. Reading inculcates a thorough understanding on any subject – be it military, economic or political. The best military leaders in the world have been voracious readers.
- **The fifth lesson is that as the war progresses realistic aims must be reset to ensure that war must not prolong.** The fact that the Russians were not meeting their military objectives can be gauged that the Russian theatre commander in Ukraine was changed on 10 April 2022 and General Alexander Dvornikov took over as the new theatre commander. Commanders in any war are only changed under three circumstances – injury, death or being unable to meet the aims and objectives. On April 23, 2022 the Deputy Commander of the Central Military District of Russia, General Rustam Minnekayev announced that the military aims of Russia in Ukraine are to liberate Donbas so as to be able to create a land bridge with Crimea and onward to Transnistria, a region in Moldova where the Russian peacekeeping forces are already present. If this were indeed the military objectives of Russia on the onset of the war, then definitely Russia would not have crossed the Dnieper River nor would it have removed its theatre commander in Ukraine. Clearly its military aims had been reset owing to the resistance put up by Ukraine.

- **The sixth lesson is conventional wars will always remain a reality and each nation has to be prepared for it.** Even the best of friendships develop cracks as life is dynamic. Similarly, even the friendliest nations can go to war with each other. Hence, training in peace time has to be of an exceptional order because when the balloon goes up, then only one thing will matter for each warring nation and that is victory. There are no runners up in a war.
- **Seventhly, in the current precarious geopolitical times that the world is in today, three factors go in making a nation a force to reckon with** – economic power, military strength and nuclear weapons. Had Ukraine not decided to give up its nuclear weapons in 1994, Russia would not have launched a full-scale war and would have limited itself to skirmishes with Ukraine.
- **The eighth lesson is that economic bankruptcy will not prevent a nation from attacking another nation nor will it deter them from putting up a fierce resistance against the attackers.** On February 27, 2022 just three days after Russia invaded Ukraine, its President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, shaken by the Russian offensive, offered to have peace talks with Russia. Within a couple of hours of this announcement the European Union had an emergency meeting and released 450 million Euros to Ukraine and that changed the entire complexion of the war. While acknowledging Pakistan's economic challenges, it's important to recognize the persistence of tensions between the two nations. The historical context of Pakistan's formation and its political discourse underscore the complexities in the India-Pakistan relationship. Therefore, maintaining vigilance is crucial for India. Discussions surrounding defense budget reductions should carefully consider the potential implications in light of the ongoing dynamics between the two countries.
- **The ninth lesson is that Drones and UAVs will play an important role in any war or skirmish.** The Russian tanks became sitting ducks for the Ukrainian soldiers who are equipped with the latest Turkish TB2 Bayraktar drones. Drones and UAVs played an important role in the Armenia-Azerbaijan War of 2020. Hence, it is imperative for every nation to procure Drones and UAVs for its military.
- **And finally, it is important to have a single point military advisor to the leadership of any country** and to give him full authority and power in conducting the military operations. The Russians, despite having General Valery Gerasimov as its Chief of General Staff, was never seen giving a briefing in the media after the Russia-Ukraine War started. In the 1971 India-Pakistan War, the then COAS of the Indian Army, General (later Field Marshal) SHFJ Manekshaw was frequently heard on All India Radio in motivating his troops. In those times 24x7 television channels were not there and Doordarshan, the only government owned television channel at that time, had very less reach as owning a television was very expensive. With the vast reach the television channels and social media has these days, the military commander's presence on media motivates the troops in the war zone.

The lessons that can be learnt from the Israel-Hamas War are as follows –

- **One, the side having and utilising the latest defence technology will have the first mover advantage** as was evident when Hamas jammed the entire electromagnetic spectrum of the Israeli Defence forces for 20 minutes for, 6.30-6.50 am on October 07, 2023.
- **Second, never ignore intelligence reports about the adversary.** Despite the USA and Egypt informing Israel multiple times about the impending Hamas attack, Israel disregarded the information and paid a heavy price for such a major security lapse.
- **Third, no matter how technologically Advanced a nation's military may be but the fact that the soldiers can never be replaced by technology** Israel had moved a division away from the Gaza Strip border to the Palestinian border thus having lot of voids and gaps in terms of the security personnel manning the highly technologically advanced border fencing with the Gaza Strip presence of adequate soldiers on ground always acts as a Plan B in case the technological measures fail for any reason whatsoever.
- **Fourthly there is no substitute to the experience and education of a soldier;** some years back Israel had initiated defence reforms in which the service of the Israeli soldiers was drastically reduced. A Israeli male

soldier now serves for 32 months and a female Israeli soldier serves for 24 months. This is grossly inadequate as the soldiers are devoid of military experience which is quintessential in winning a war.

MS: Amid the two wars already raging in, where do you see the other neighbors positioned for India in the next decade - Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bangladesh and Nepal? Additionally, what socio-economic defense-related adaptations should India prepare for?

Lt Col Sodhi: India has seven neighbours namely China, Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Myanmar. Out of these seven countries, China and Pakistan are totally against us while Nepal, Sri Lanka and Myanmar are in the tight grip of China. Bangladesh and Bhutan though inclined towards India but are slowly moving towards China as has been evident in the recent past.

Thus, out of seven neighbours there is not a single country as on date whom we can bank upon in totality. Though our Neighbourhood First Policy has been there for quite some time, China because of its deep pockets has been able to influence our neighbours, thus creating infrastructure in these countries which can be used against India in times of war.

To overcome this India needs to spend more money in the neighbouring countries except of course China and Pakistan and we should ensure that the projects that we launch in these five countries are completed in the shortest time frame possible. **A common lament in our five neighbours excluding China and Pakistan, is that though we announce our projects with great fanfare but our execution time is much more than that of China.** And thus China has more successful projects in these five countries than India.

Another point to be taken care of is that the neighbours always play an important role in the time of crisis. In the past few years as social media has gained more traction it is seeing that some social media handles of India cause avoidable heartburns with these five neighbouring countries, as was evident in the recent case of the standoff with Maldives. **Diplomacy is a very serious business and these social media warriors should be kept in check** lest we suffer more because of their immaturities.

MS: Experts are of the view that 'Make in India' in defence cannot succeed without the private sector. Is the private sector reliable for defense technology and arms? What's your detailed perspective on this, and how can India advance more efficiently amidst looming security threats?

Lt Col Sodhi: In countries like the USA and China which are the world leaders in defence technology as well as defence production, the Military Industrial Complex in both these countries play a very vital role. The Military Industrial Complex can never consist fully of serving officers of the armed forces.

Per Force the majority of the military industrial complex has to be civilians who are the backbone of any Military Industrial Complex hence the private sector will always play a very important role in a country becoming a major defence power.

The private sector has to be trusted with defence technology so that they can produce weapon systems for the country, which will help a country to be fully prepared in case of any eventuality. There would be a few cases wherein for greed a person might try to sell the secrets to enemy country, **but then our checks and balances have to be very strict and the justice system has to be very swift**, so that such miniscule cases are given the harshest punishment possible under the laws of the land so as to send the fear in the others, that selling a state secret will land them in great difficulty.

The Indian civilian defence sector has done phenomenally well be it the Mahindra Group, Adani Group, JSW group, Kalyani Group or the Tata Group. These private sectors amongst others have ensured that within a short time of one decade, India has become an arms exporting country apart from looking after the domestic needs.

This journey of India in the defence sector in the last one decade would not have been possible without the involvement of the private sector. Hence, the private sector has to be trusted and incorporated to the needs of the Indian Armed Forces so as to ensure that the latest weapon systems are available with the Indian soldiers.

MS: What role now majorly defence diplomacy will have to play in promoting economic diplomacy and fostering international trade relations, particularly in emerging markets with growing defence industries?

Lt Col Sodhi: In today's era of turmoil and turbulence where uncertainty is there, in every nation there is a need in today to beef up their security and defence mechanisms. It is in these challenging times that there also exists an opportunity for India, which in the last one decade has become a major arms exporting nation.

Thus, **defence diplomacy will play a very vital role in the times ahead for India to be reckoned as a major geopolitical leader. Countries like Armenia, Philippines and many more have been purchasing weapons from India** which apart from increasing our economy also fosters better international trade relations and of course stronger diplomatic relations.

Recently the Defence Attaches of the Indian Armed Forces posted in various embassies/high commissions worldwide were additionally given the task of promoting Indian Defence production capabilities under the Atmanirbhar Bharat scheme. This was stated in a press release by the Minister of Defence on October 13, 2022.

This is a significant step towards defence diplomacy as the officers of the armed forces are very well experienced and educated to explain the nuances of a weapon system to anyone, and thus when words come from a uniformed soldier about the efficacy and efficiency of the weapon systems, it has a much deeper impact to the listener and eventually the buyer.

MS: Research suggests future wars may target space satellites, disrupting communication and defense tech like Hamas did with electromagnetic fields. What does your analysis say? Given the rising importance of space and maritime defense, how should India enhance its capabilities to protect national interests?

Lt Col Sodhi: Till October 07, 2023 most of the militaries of nations in the world followed the Airland Battle concept given by the United States of America in 1986 in which the land forces played a important role in a war in jointness with the Navy and the Air Force of the respective nation. However, things changed totally on October 07, 2023 when Hamas launched an attack 15 miles inside Israel at 6:30 AM and the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF), one of the most sophisticated and capable defence forces of the world, were caught unawares.

This was because from 6:30 am to 6:50 am, for a period of twenty minutes, the entire electromagnetic spectrum of the IDF was jammed by Hamas and thus the IDF did not know for these twenty minutes that over 1000 Hamas terrorists had infiltrated 15 miles inside Israel causing mayhem and bloodbath.

Hamas could not have done such a big thing of jamming the electromagnetic spectrum of the IDF on its own as it is a highly specialised field to have knowledge of. Definitely there was an external factor which supported Hamas in this daring attack which they did on Israel which is having many nations have a rethink on the military doctrine of the Airland Battle concept of 1986.

The wars that China will unleash in the coming years will be different from the Airland Battle concept of 1986, as they will first launch cyber-attacks, electromagnetic spectrum attacks and space attacks before sending their ground forces into the enemy country or launching their air force or naval power.

The cyber, electromagnetic spectrum and space attacks will effectively jam the entire networking of any nation in future and they will be without any communication whatsoever, thus throwing all systems in disarray. PLA in their 2014 military doctrine have already announced that they are ready to fight any nation in the

world in any part of the world in all the six domains of war that is land, sea, air, cyber, electromagnetic spectrum and space, which USA hasn't done so far.

Now take a look at some startling statistics to understand this better:

- Of the total satellites operating in the world, the USA has 3433 while China has 541 and India has 124 satellites.
- China aims to become a space power comparable with the USA by 2030 and it is aiming to launch 26,000 satellites to cover the entire world by 2030 as has been reported in an article of Nikkei Asia on January 10, 2024. China aims to establish a network supporting high speed 6G communications by 2035.
- In the last one-decade India too has significantly stepped up its space power as was evident in the recent past by the launch of the lunar mission to the south pole of the Moon in 2023 and the Gaganyaan mission to the Sun a few months later.

However, a rethink is needed as regard the Airland Battle concept of 1986 as the future will be very technologically savvy wherein the conventional arms like the Army, Navy and the Air Force will come much later, after the cyber, electromagnetic spectrum and space have unleashed death and destruction, thus pulverising the enemy's army.

MS: In the era of asymmetric warfare and non-state actors, how MUST INDIA'S defence strategies evolve to address unconventional threats such as terrorism, cyber attacks, and hybrid warfare? What socio-economic factors influence these strategic decisions?

Lt Col Sodhi: As reported in the Hindustan Times on April 27, 2023 the Indian Army is raising Command Cyber Operations and Support Wings (CCOSW) to safeguard the communication networks and increase preparedness levels in this niche domain.

Also, the Indian Army has announced 2024 as the 'Year of Technology Absorption for the Indian Army.' These are steps in the right direction but they have to be implemented on a war footing as every passing year is critical and crucial for India.

- India needs to be proactive in its cyber warfare and exposing the non-state actors that are waging a war on India from the soil of China and Pakistan.
- Time has come for us to talk about Balochistan, Xinjiang and Tibet in international forums.
- Like India has been pretty successful in showcasing to the world that Pakistan is the epicenter of terrorism, similar action needs to be taken on China too. Rarely in the mainstream Indian media and social media are China's atrocities discussed whereas Pakistan-bashing is often resorted to.
- China is a much bigger threat to us than Pakistan is and this needs to be brought to the notice of the Indian masses so that more awareness grows and the purchasing of Chinese products reduces.

Dr Prem Jagyasi quote "Acceptance of a problem will not only make you stronger to get over it but also make your troubles appear" is quite apt and appropriate for the problem that China is for India, but is being underplayed. China is slowly and firmly entrapping and encircling India in all possible realms.

MS: Last question for our student readers: To be a defence analytics expert, what extra skills like deep reading and more the young need, to be a better citizen and workforce of India, in these turbulent times?

Lt Col Sodhi: To be a defence analyst one needs to **read a lot especially books by authors who are politically non-aligned, as these authors do not use jingoistic language in their books and base their arguments and discussions on facts and figures.**

Rather it is imperative that every Indian citizen should read more and more because by reading many ideas get cleared and it leads to a greater rational thinking. In these times of social media one should use social media to the minimum and for fruitful purposes.

Social media is flooded with such poses which have a lot of factual errors in them. But because they are presented in a manner which catches the eye one tends to believe them though the truth is something else. In January 2024 the world economic forum ranked the spread of misinformation among the greatest risks and threats to humanity in its global risk report. It further said that this mis-information is the real threat to democracy and public health and of course going a step further **I would like to add that this mis-information is also a grave threat to a nation's security.**

Till the time a defence analyst is not well read he will only give jingoistic answers whether on the electronic media or the print media thereby not showing the true picture to the readers and viewers. A defence analyst also needs to write articles as when a person writes articles on various geopolitics and defence issues he is expected to research and more research plays more fundamentals which help in projection of the true situation that exists of the topic that is being discussed/written upon.

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About Lt Col JS Sodhi (retd)

Lt Col Jasinder Singh Sodhi (Retired) is a Veteran from the Bombay Sappers, Corps of Engineers of the Indian Army with over 21 years of distinguished service. He is a seventh-generation Indian Army Officer and a third-generation Corps of Engineers Officer. He has been awarded the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief's Commendation Card in 2007 and the Chief of Army Staff's Commendation Card in 2013. His articles and debates on defence and strategic issues are a regular feature on India's News Media, international/national conferences. In 2022, he was a panelist speaker in an international seminar on "From China's 20th National Party Congress Onwards" organized by the University of Nottingham, United Kingdom.

He was conferred the "Lifetime Achievement Award 2023" for his works in the electronic media and print media. He is also an Awardee of "Icon of the Year Award 2022-23" for his contribution in the field of Defence & Strategic Affairs. He features in the World Book of Records, London and in the India Book of Records for his defence-strategy-analytical articles in the print media and news channel appearances. He is a TedX Speaker as well.

About the Interviewer

Mahima Sharma is an Independent Journalist based in Delhi NCR. She has been in the field of TV, Print & Online Journalism since 2005 and previously an additional three years in allied media. In her span of work she has been associated with CNN-News18, ANI - Asian News International (A collaboration with Reuters), Voice of India, Hindustan Times and various other top media brands of their times. In recent times, she has diversified her work as a Digital Media Marketing Consultant & Content Strategist as well. Starting March 2021, she is also a pan-India Entrepreneurship Education Mentor at Women Will - An Entrepreneurship Program by Google in Collaboration with SHEROES. Mahima can be reached at media@indiastat.com

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