

China disarming India without fighting¹

More than 2,000 years back, Sun Tzu, the author of the Art of War wrote, "For to win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the acme of skill; to subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill."

If I was a Chinese general and keen to defeat India without combating, do you know what I would do?

I would provide 'proofs' that foreign arms dealers have corrupted some Indian officials or politicians by paying hefty 'commissions'. I would repeat this for each and every armament deal.

The result would be terrific. The Indian Ministry of Defence would immediately cancel all the deals, no more arms for the three Indian services! It would be rather easy to realise. One just has to 'inform' the Indian Government that something has gone wrong in the procurement process, and 'someone' has taken money.

So easy to do and easy to believe! The reverse would be unbelievable.

A few days ago, a US company, Mandiant, identified the People's Liberation Army's Shanghai-based unit 61398 as the organisation behind most computer attacks against the United States. Through Unit 61398, I would leak some 'details' about the bribes to the MoD or better, to a gullible 'breaking news' channel.

Mandiant's detailed 60-page study tracked individuals of a sophisticated hacking group, known in the United States as 'Comment Crew'. The report said, "The activity we have directly observed likely represents only a small

¹ Published in *Niti Central* on February 24, 2013 (URL not available).

fraction of the cyber espionage that APT1 has conducted." APT1 stands for 'Advanced Persistent Threat', the most dominant being termed APT1.

The report continues, "We have analysed the group's intrusions against nearly 150 victims over seven years. We uncovered (in Shanghai) a substantial amount of APT1's attack infrastructure, command and control, and modus operandi (tools, tactics, and procedures) Our research found that People's Liberation Army (PLA's) Unit 61398 is similar to APT1 in its mission, capabilities, and resources."

Further, it was discovered that PLA Unit 61398 is located exactly in the place from which APT1 activity originates.

As a Chinese general, I would have the perfect tool to win the war. Let us take an example, the latest scam or Choppergate.

In 2010, the Government signed a Rs 4,000 crore contract for procurement of 12 AW101 helicopters from the Anglo-Italian firm AgustaWestland for the use of Indian VVIPs. Three of the 12 helicopters ordered have already been delivered (and an advance of 40 per cent has been paid).

Citing an 'integrity clause', Defence Minister AK Antony immediately announced that the contract will be cancelled and a show-cause notice was sent to the company to this effect.

Defence expert, Ajai Shukla commented in Business Standard, "Defence Minister AK Antony's 'strong action' against Italian defence giant Finmeccanica, and its Anglo-Italian helicopter subsidiary, AgustaWestland, is aimed at making him sound like a man of steel."

Now, Antony has no proof of any offence as yet, as the Italian prosecutors in Milan have refused to share incriminating documents with India. This is logical as the trial has not yet started, but it does not matter as, in India,

loud voices have started asking for a ban. One commentator even suggested cancelling the deal for 126 Rafales because the fighter planes of Dassault Aviation were armed with missiles manufactured by the European company MBDA, of which Finmeccanica is a minority shareholder.

The rule, say the babus, is when a defence firm, Indian or foreign, comes under a corruption cloud, not only are all its contracts, present and the future, cancelled, but the entire group of companies are blacklisted and they can't work in India for a minimum of 10 years.

According to this thinking, Dassault would be banned because Rafale may use weapons made by MBDA; the French firm being owned by BAE (37.5 per cent) and EADS (37.5 per cent). The Rafale's rival Eurofighter would also be banned as Finmeccanica is part of the Eurofighter GMBH consortium, etc, etc, etc.

At the end, I, the Chinese general will effortlessly win the war, because India will not get a single piece of armament required for its defence and this, for the next one or two decades. I would merely have to leak some credible information into a few Indian computers.

Some will say, "It is a good thing; we shall now indigenise the defence production." Faster said than done, the Tejas Light Combat Aircraft has been on the HAL drawing table for the past decades. Air Chief NAK Browne recently declared, "By my estimate the Initial Operational Clearance should be by the end of 2013 and the Final Operational Clearance (FOC) should take another year-and-half more." Ditto for many DRDO projects.

So, as a Chinese general, I would used Unit 61398 or any other 'research labs' to pass on to South Block the information that there is something 'fishy' in each and every armament deal and the trick will be done.

The next day, the MoD will 'cancel' the deal using the 'termination clause'.

I would subdue my enemy without a fight! That's skill! India's tragedy is that it prefers to punish the bribe-givers and leave free the bribe-takers and then ban the former in order to look honest. Unless the rotten apples are booked, the Chinese generals will keep laughing.

Separate issue: I am wondering what the Ministry of Defence is doing against Unit 61398 or its sister/brother concerns? Whether one likes it or not, cyberwar will be tomorrow's war; the Chinese are far in advance on us in this field.