

Control Arms India Update

A Monthly Newsletter from Control Arms Foundation of India (CAFI)

Volume 1 No. 4 September 2005

Control Arms Foundation of India, formerly known as India Working Group on Arms Control was established on 10th September 2004 in New Delhi. The Foundation functions at an all India level and consists of noted academics, lawyers, journalists, former military personnel and human rights activists. The aim of the Foundation is to address issues of control arms, small arms light weapons proliferation, women and disarmament and conducting research on India's defence policies and military expenditure. The Foundation aspires to create a movement in the sub-continent where defence and military issues no longer remains a department where the public has no say.

The Control Arms India Update brings news, views and analyses on issues pertaining to small arms, light weapons, gun running, human rights violations due to arms by both state and non-state actors, arms transfers, military expenditure and defence policies pertaining to Indian sub-continent. This is the fourth issue of the newsletter.

India and Its Armaments

India was the leading buyer of conventional arms among developing nations in 2004, says a United States Congressional Research Service report. Last year, India entered into agreements with arms manufacturers across the globe to buy weapons worth \$5.7 billion, ahead of China. But New Delhi's defence expenditure for 2004-2005 was pegged at 2.5 percent of its gross domestic product, much lower than Beijing's 6 percent and Islamabad's 5.5 percent.

The CRS report says since 1997, India has been the developing world's leading arms buyer. During the last eight years, the country has entered into arms transfer agreements totalling \$15.7 billion. That is 10.3 percent of all arms transfer agreements in the developing world. Last year, the Pakistan embassy in Washington prepared a brief called Phenomenal Increase in Indian Defence Budget.'The massive Indian defence spending has its implications for Pakistan's national security,' the brief said. 'It fits in with the Indian aggressive posture towards Pakistan and its policy of non-dialogue. While India has been sharply increasing its defence expenditure, Pakistan's defence budget during the last three years has remained almost static with considerable decrease in real terms.'

In the year 2004-2005, the first budget the Manmohan Singh government presented had set apart the biggest-ever allocation for defence: Rs 770 billion (about \$17 billion). It was an increase of 27 percent over the Rs 653 billion (about \$14.5 billion) that the previous Atal Bihari Vajpayee government had allocated for defence. About 44 percent of the defence outlay went for the purchase of weapon systems. So, just what did New Delhi shop for with that whopping budget?

Admiral Gorshkov (INS Vikramaditya)

Bill: \$1.5 billion

On January 20, 2004, India and Russia signed an agreement for acquiring the massive Russian aircraft carrier. The 44,570-ton aircraft carrier is expected to join service by around 2009. Besides being fully modernised, the carrier would have 12 MiG-29K fighter aircraft, four MiG-29KUB training jets, six to eight Kamov-28 Helix-A and Ka-31 Helix-B helicopters. It will join the INS Viraat as India's second aircraft carrier, and wait for another few years for India's indigenously built new carrier to join in. Around Gorshkov, the Indian Navy wants to build a robust fleet, ready for the turbulence of 21st century seas.

Advanced Jet Trainers

Bill: \$1.8 billion

The Indian Air Force is acquiring 66 Haw advanced jet trainers for training its fighter pilots for transition from sub-sonic aircraft to supersonic fighters.

Israeli arms

Bill: \$1.7 billion

On March 5, 2004, India and Israel signed an agreement for the supply of three Phalcon systems, which were earlier denied to China under US pressure. This eye in the sky will provide India real-time surveillance of the sky in a radius of about 100 km, as well as moving command and control centres in the sky. One of the greatest force multipliers, Phalcon would make the Indian Air Force several notches superior to Pakistan, and provides it a strategic edge over even the Chinese.

According to Israeli defence ministry's figures, India is the number one customer of Israeli-manufactured arms. In 2004, new contracts were signed between the Indian defence ministry and Israeli companies to the tune of \$1.7 billion. Of this, \$1.1 billion came from India's purchase of three early warning Phalcon planes from Israel Aircraft Industries and its subsidiary Elta Electronics.

India also bought fighting equipment and systems from Israeli firms to the tune of \$500 million.

And more...New Delhi is currently negotiating some big-ticket arms deals. The defence ministry has already fine-tuned proposals to acquire French killer class Scorpene submarines and 125 multi-purpose fighters for the IAF to replace its aging Mig-21 aircraft.

In fact, of the Indian Army's 3,414 tanks, 1,200 are of the World War II era and 700 are vintage Russian T-55s. India has been introducing T-90s from Russia in phases, and a lot of money has to go into this. India continues to buy in a major way from Russia, while it continues to build on its relations with Israel, and West European powers. The US, which is the largest supplier of arms to developing nations, is increasingly making a feverish pitch to tap the market in India.

Source : <http://in.rediff.com>, 9 September 2005

Gun Running in Goa

Reports surfaces in September 2005 that gun runners are operating in Goa. What is appalling is that the State police are clueless of their whereabouts and their modus operandi. Says a police officer scornfully, "the authorities talk about setting up a marine force to patrol Goa's 105-km long coastline to prevent anti-social activities but we are clueless on how to tackle the illegal gun trade in the State."

While the authorities were compelled to form a marine police force, after they received inputs from various intelligence agencies that coastal areas could be 'soft targets' for arms, ammunition, and explosives, the police are still groping in the dark on the operations of the gun runners who are operating in the jungles of Goa. Very few know that the State underbelly gets its supply of illegal arms and ammunition with little difficulty, as rifles, revolvers and even semi-automatics make their way with ease into the State. And this was highlighted in the recent attempted bank robbery in Margao, where the accused used an illegal .22 revolver costing about Rs 25,000.

Says PI, Santosh Dessai, Margao "the culprit bought it from a Nepali truck driver near Cotigao." Though some may dub this incident as a stray incident, a source in the blood bank revealed a rise in cases of bullet injuries, most inflicted by illegal arms. Though the illegal firearms market in the State is not as big as that of UP and interiors of Bihar, and unlike Mumbai underworld kissed by 'Smith and Wesson' revolvers or 'Colts', it's the country made and more recently, imported pistols that have grown enough to feed the urge to have a gun for 'safety' or to take the 'kill'. Moreover, it is the easy availability and low prices that is forcing more and more young people to gravitate towards acquiring an illegal weapon.

Investigations by Herald, revealed that Cotigao and Margao are the nerve centres from where arms are illegally made, supplied, repaired and even modified. Even villages like Poinguinim attract buyers of illegal arms. While North Goa is considered a buying zone for illegal arms, at least one gun maker reportedly operates from Khorlim. According to sources, Moti Dhongor (Margao), Partagal village (Canacona taluka), Avem-Cotigao, Dabal-Sanvordem, Netravali (Sanguem), Eddar ward and Chari ward (Poinguinim), and Khorlim (Mapusa) are places to search for illegal guns. The nexus between sections of the administration and criminals continue to exist. Some years ago, Hyderabad police traced to the Goa police armoury, some weapons seized from extremist groups like Naxalites and People's War Group (PWG). More recently, Goa police astonishingly witnessed some guns and ammunition missing in its armoury.

The last crackdown on illegal arms was in January 2001, when police busted an inter-State gang and raided a house unearthing 75 firearms, including .22 rifles, 6.35 pistols, .38 revolvers, .22 revolvers, double barrel guns, pen pistols, 9mm pistols, shot guns and air guns. Incidentally, the guns were of different make and

came from Germany, Italy, America and Spain besides India. More recently, police sources disclosed that guns from Yugoslavia and Russia are also surfacing in the State. As the State continues to grapple with the rising crime graph, the news that a criminal could easily acquire a weapon is shocking. For the police, this is another headache the police will have to handle after pedophilia, drug running and murders.

Source : *The Goa Herald*, 9 September 2005

New, Improved Rifles for the Indian Army

THE much-needed under barrel grenade launcher upgrade to the INSAS (Indian Small Arms Systems) rifle is finally ready and city-based Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE) says that they are awaiting Army orders. The good news is that the new launcher developed by ARDE is 'flexible' and can even be fitted to the AK-47s used by the armed forces. The indigenous INSAS rifle, which was developed to equip the Army with cutting edge technology, was being held back as it did not have an under barrel grenade launcher and night fighting capabilities. In the absence of these, the Army was forced to order 3,400 Israeli made Tavor 21 rifles in October 2002.

The Army is also eagerly waiting for the carbine variant of INSAS to be used by field commanders. "The carbine version is also ready and is undergoing user trials at the moment," said AS Rajagopal, director, ARDE at a recent armament meet. While the carbine may take some time before it can be inducted into the Army, it will be among the most advanced in the world. "We are getting good feedback for our carbine. It is unique, as it is personalized for left handers too," adds Rajagopal. Although the rifle is now upgraded, there were two other problems with it. The Army had complained that there was an oil leakage problem and the cartridge would crack in extreme temperature conditions. However, defense authorities say that both the problems have now been fixed.

Source : <http://indiadefense.blogspot.com>, September 2005

Arms Dealer, Hemant Lakhani Sentenced to 47 Years in Prison

A U.S. federal court judge sentenced British businessman of Indian origin Hemant Lakhani to 47 years in prison for providing financial support for terrorist activities against the United States, Reuters reported. Prosecutors say Lakhani, 70, tried to sell a shoulder-fired missile bought in Russia to a man posing as a terrorist group member. He was found guilty in April of attempting to support terrorism, illegal arms brokering, money laundering and other charges.

Lakhani, who had faced a maximum sentence of 67 years, has maintained he was set up in a sting operation. "It's a total lie," he said at the defense table in U.S. District Court in Newark, N.J. His conviction was considered one of the more significant victories for the U.S. Justice Department since the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks and the launch of the U.S.-led war on terror, Reuters adds. Lakhani was arrested two years ago after U.S. Customs officers and FBI agents stormed a New Jersey hotel room and found him showing a "sample" shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missile to an informant posing as a member of a Somali militant group. The arrest was the culmination of a 22-month sting spanning three continents.

The Indian-born clothing merchant has claimed he was a victim of entrapment because the buyer was an FBI informant and the missile sellers were undercover Russian agents. Prosecutors said Lakhani had agreed to sell as many as 200 missiles to the informant and that he believed they would be used to shoot down U.S. airliners. They said evidence showed he was a willing participant in the scheme, that he associated with a reputed terrorist and tried to broker other arms deals negotiated during 200 phone calls with the informant and 12 trips to Russia and Ukraine.

Source : <http://www.mosnews.com>, 13 September 2005

Indo-US Joint Army Operations and Counter-Insurgency in Mizoram, Northeast India

The United States, which is facing increasing involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq, sent a 42 member team to undergo training at the Counter-Insurgency and Jungle Warfare School, located in Vairangte in Northeast India. The training which happened in September is the third joint exercise between Indian and American troops. The CIJW School, located at Vairangte in Mizoram is fast becoming famous across the world's armies.

The 42-member team that is currently undergoing a two-week course included soldiers from the 25th Infantry Division of the US Army and the Guam National Guards. Lt. Almeirez, having just returned to his base in Hawaii from Afghanistan, says the training at Vairangte has been extremely useful. "In the US Army, we have been out of touch with jungle warfare for some time, so to train here in real-time situations has been tremendously helpful," Almeirez says. Lt Col Marcus of the Guam National Guards feels it is the India army's experience for the past four decades in dealing with various insurgencies that they want to share. "The experience of the Indian soldiers and the doctrines developed against insurgency would be of great value to us," he said.

Commandant of the school Brigadier Rakesh Sharma says: "Here, we train soldiers for the modern war, which is increasingly unconventional. We reorient soldiers for the low intensity, high casualty conflict. And we give real time training." Col Dhirendra, Indian officer-in-charge of the joint exercise named Yudh Abhyas said, "Our effort during this joint exercise has been to depict as many live scenarios as possible and train for ways to combat them." Soldiers from the 22 Maratha Light Infantry selected to do the joint exercise with the Americans, were bunched into 'buddy pairs' with an American counterpart and told to carry out different tasks.

The two-week training comprised of the basic tactical training and specialised operations like conducting raids in heavily built up urban settings, laying an ambush in the jungles, setting up mobile check posts, intelligence collection and analysis. Apart from the Americans, officers and men from as different countries as Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Singapore and Afghanistan have trained in Vairangte in the recent past.

In the next six months, a contingent each of Mongolian and Uzbekistan army are scheduled to train. The need for this school was felt in the wake of the Indian army's deployment against the Naga and later Mizo insurgents in the 1960s and 70s. Initially, the institute was catering to the needs of the Indian Army alone. The aim was to prepare troops operating against Naga and Mizo insurgencies. In three decades trained over 1350 officers and 3,25,000 Junior Commissioned Officers and other ranks.

Going by the demands on CIJW to accommodate more and more battalions for pre-induction training, a stint here is definitely beneficial. Clearly, the army top brass has recognised CIJW's role and has therefore decided to upgrade it to a college with more resources at its disposal. In coming years we are going to hear more and more about Vairangte.

Source : <http://indiadefense.blogspot.com>, September 28, 2005

India to buy 6 Scorpene Submarines

In a major defence deal, India decided to acquire six highly advanced French Scorpene submarines worth \$3 billion (about Rs 13,000 crore), days after placing an order for 43 Airbus aircraft at a cost of about \$2.4 billion (nearly Rs 9,800 crore) from a European consortium that includes France. French President Jacques Chirac disclosed India's decision to buy the Scorpene submarines while welcoming Prime Minister Manmohan Singh at the Elysee Palace, where the two leaders had wide-ranging discussions on Indo-French defence cooperation, India's bid for permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council and trade and economic cooperation. The French leader said that he was happy that India had confirmed the decision to buy the Scorpene submarines in addition to the Airbus aircraft.

Source : <http://in.rediff.com>, 12 September 2005

Gun Battle in Manipur, Death of an 8 Year Old Girl, Arms Recovered

At least two of the slain persons in the Pamzal village in Manipur (Northeast India) encounter between the Army and the proscribed rebel group UNLF (United National Liberation Front) were brought to Lamka town and handed over to the district. According to sources, the Army on getting specific information that some 20 UNLF militants were camping in Pamzal village of Thanlon sub division surrounded the village on Sunday at about 4 pm. At that time, the UNLF cadres were playing volleyball at the village with the locals. Upon being challenged by the Army, the militants replied with heavy gunfire prompting a serious gun battle that lasted for about 4 hours.

Later a UNLF cadre's body was found inside the village with a civilian of the village. The civilian was identified as a girl of 8 years by the name, Kim Ngaih Nuam daughter of H. Chinzahau. A post mortem was

conducted on her body today. She will be buried tomorrow at New Lamka cemetery, sources said. However, the slain UNLF man's body is deposited at the district hospital morgue and is unidentified as yet.

Meanwhile, the army recovered 1 AK 56 rifle with 114 live rounds, 3 magazines, 16 fire cases, 1 each of fire cases and bottles, 90 25mm explosive telemix of 110 gms each of about 80 numbers, 8 IEDs, 5 detonators, 60 pencil batteries, 223 Duracell, 5 photo albums, 250 meters of spool electric wire, 500 metres of electric cables, 4 detonator switch pull type and 2 pressure types, 10 small rolls of electric wires, radio antenna sockets of Kenwood make, and cipher documents, apart from 10 pieces of shawl and plastic ground sheet of 13 numbers.

Recounting the incident a relative of the deceased civilian said the underground rebels (UGs) had turned the village's central church as duty post since June this year. He further said the deceased girl may have been killed by the UGs during the random firing towards the girl who was hiding with her father under their huts apparently thinking they fired against the Army.

He further said the UGs had turned the village into their hideout staying from one house to another and in the meantime disturbing the peaceful atmosphere of their village life. The deceased girl was hit by stray bullets at her stomach and right thigh, while the slain militant was hit at the right jaw and front teeth.

Source : *www kangla online*, 21 Sept, 2005

Pentagon to Sell Defence Weapon Systems to India

A team from the US military headquarters at Pentagon made a series of competitive presentations to the Indian defence establishment in an attempt to hard sell the F-16 Fighting Falcon fighter aircraft and the US Navy representatives will campaign for the F/A-18E/F Super Hornet aircraft.

The team is being led by General Jeffrey Kohler, head of the Pentagon's Defence Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA). The team comprises representatives of the US Air Force, the US Navy, Lockheed Martin, manufacturers of the F-16 and the Patriot III missile, Boeing, makers of the Super Hornet, and Raytheon, which supplies the avionics and navigation equipment for the Patriot.

The presentation will be made to an Indian side led by the vice-chief of air staff. Washington has offered to sell to Delhi both the F-16 and the Super Hornet. They are in the race for one of the biggest fighter aircraft orders in global aviation and are competing also with the Grippen (Sweden), the Mirage 2000-V (France) and the MiG29-M/M2 (Russia). The Indian Air Force had sent requests for information to buy 126 multi-role combat aircraft of the above-20-tonne category. The order for the aircraft, each of which is expected to cost in the region of Rs 100 crore, spread over 10 years, is the most sought after by aviation industry majors.

The presentations by the Pentagon team will be with the aid of electronic audio-visual equipment and thick wads of charts. New Delhi and Washington have reached an informal agreement that the transaction would be government-to-government and not company-to-government. The Indian request was sent to Lockheed Martin directly but the US government also routed it to Boeing for the Super Hornet. The F-16 is flown as one of the main weapons of the US Air Force. The Super Hornet, based on aircraft carriers for combat, is the main air weapon of the US Navy.

Representatives of Lockheed Martin and Boeing have been included in the team as their companies would be the main contractors to service the order in the event the US wins it.

In November, the US Air Force is to hold bilateral combat exercises (Cope India 2005) with the Indian Air Force out of Kalaikunda near Calcutta. But before that exercise, the US Air Force will deploy another team to make a presentation on F-16s in combat. That presentation will illustrate the use of the aircraft in operations from Operation Desert Storm in the Gulf (1991) to the Afghanistan and Iraq wars in 2001 and 2003.

Source : <http://indiadefense.blogspot.com>, September 2005

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President : General (Dr) BS Malik
Vice President : Professor Anuradha Chenoy
Secretary General : Binalakshmi Nepram
Treasurer : Ashima Kaul
Legal Advisor : Riju Raj

For more information, please contact : Binalakshmi Nepram at BNeptram@Yahoo.co.in
Address : B 5/ 156 Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi 110029, India. Mobile : 9891210264