

## WARTIME ENERGY SECURITY FOR INDIA – TACTICAL ACTIONS

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The critical period that India is passing through since 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2025 is not a normal time. Every aspect of country's management is getting geared up to face emerging situation that is uncertain, unprecedented and unpredictable. Whatever may be the situations on external front, it is imperative that country's defence machinery must remain primed up while the economy, both internally and on trade front, runs at normalcy. Energy sector in this situation has the most sensitive and supportive role, both for the defence operation and for the economy. While industries, both manufacturing and services, must be kept chugging and clinking, families and households must be well supplied with energy for their consumption requirement. That heightens the issue of energy security.

For a country having energy security essentially means energy products are available and accessible to all, passing unhindered through the value chain, which involves production, storage, refinement, distribution, import and export. With over 85% dependency on imported crude oil, 50% import dependence of gas and LPG, vulnerabilities in energy logistics and infrastructure, the country faces significant risks during wartime. Any disruption, particularly in critical maritime chokepoints, global oil markets, power production and transmission could severely impact military readiness and civilian stability. Following is some reflection on tactical action during war time on energy front.

Importing Crude Oil, Gas and LPG need careful consideration from the point of view of trading partners, geographies and ocean transportation. India's Oil & Gas marketing PSUs are familiar with the tactics required for uninterrupted flow of products, using ocean vessels, passing through port operations and major storage locations. Oil & Gas marketing and refining companies have contingency plan in place under the coordination and observation of Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.



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Term contracts for supply of crude oil, natural gas and LPG must be put to maximum use. Terms contracts must be kept live, renewed and renegotiated, as required. Spot market also has to be sourced from.

Scheduled maintenance of refineries, power plants may be deferred to the extent possible.

Patrolling and surveillance of major shipping lines such as the Strait of Hormuz and Strait of Malacca must be undertaken by Indian Navy together with naval power of friendly countries. US navy may be good partner for this purpose as US is emerging to be a major supplier of crude oil and natural gas, including LPG.

Maintaining security and safety of oil and gas pipeline network, energy storage points, and power transmission lines are to be put to high surveillance and resilience. Security apparatus of major oil and gas installations, including refineries and power generating stations must be strengthened. These may require extra layer of security and safety coverage during this critical phase. Oil installations, coal mines, utility scale solar plants may be fortified with reinforced enclosures, anti-drone shielding, and camouflage nets.

Raw material supply line to power plants, may it be coal or gas, needs to be maintained at any cost. Power generation companies have to activate second and third alternate sources for their fuel.

Strategic petroleum reserves at Mangalore, Padur and Vizag may be filled up for any emergency. Storage available in the refineries of both public sector and private sector may be kept topped up. Being a member country of IEA, their strategic reserves may be used in case of dire necessity.

Companies engaged energy industry will have to burn their pockets for some of these additional activities. Depending upon pricing methodology of energy products, it is possible to pass on these additional costs to the consumers, which we are not in favour of. Extra resources are to be mobilized through innovative ways. Some NGOs may be enrolled into non-skill activities, particularly those who might have been beneficiaries of corporate CSR. Civil Defence forces may be used for the purpose of surveillance, intelligence and some low skill operations. It may not be advisable to expect Governments to bear these expenses, as that would result in either additional tax burden on the citizens or fiscal deficit.

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