



CENTRE FOR
JOINT WARFARE
STUDIES

GL/19/25

**NEW AGE WAR: SHIFTING CONTOURS OF
ADVERSARIES
BY
LT GEN PJS PANNU, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (RETD)**

**ORGANISED BY CENJOWS
05 JUNE 2025**

NEW AGE WAR-SHIFTING CONTOURS OF ADVERSARIES

LT GEN PJS PANNU, PVSM, AVSM,VSM (RETD)

ORGANISED BY CENJOWS ON 05 JUNE 2025

The lecture explored the evolving nature of warfare, emphasising the growing complexity of modern conflicts and the need for nations to adapt accordingly. It highlighted that contemporary warfare extends far beyond the traditional battlefield, encompassing domains such as cyberspace, outer space, and the economic sphere. In this context, effective national defence requires not only strong armed forces but also a comprehensive understanding of **geo-economics** and **geopolitics** to shape strategic responses and long-term security planning.

One of the key points addressed was the rise of **cyber warfare** as a critical domain in national security. Alongside the traditional tri-services—Army, Navy, and Air Force—cyberspace and space operations have emerged as essential pillars of defence. These domains present both opportunities and vulnerabilities, as adversaries increasingly exploit digital infrastructure to disrupt communications, logistics, and public confidence.

The lecture underscored the urgent need for **investment in India's military-industrial complex**. To build self-reliance and modernise forces sustainably, India must focus on developing indigenous technological capabilities, fostering public-private partnerships, and ensuring supply chain resilience. This transformation is essential not only to enhance military effectiveness but also to reduce dependency on foreign defence suppliers.

The role of **technology** in modern warfare was emphasised as a double-edged sword. While advanced systems such as drones, AI, and satellite-based surveillance enhance military capability, they also introduce new vulnerabilities. As warfare becomes more technologically driven, the threat of disruption to critical infrastructure, information systems, and national decision-making processes grows substantially.

Another key theme was **body bag sensitivity**, a term referring to the impact of military casualties on public opinion and recruitment. This phenomenon influences not only democratic nations like the United States but also authoritarian regimes such as China. Public support can wane quickly in the face of mounting losses, making information management and media narratives crucial components of modern warfare.

Modern conflicts are increasingly defined by **strategy and influence** rather than sheer firepower. The speaker emphasized that achieving geopolitical objectives today relies more on information dominance, economic leverage, and technological superiority than on large-scale ground combat. To remain effective, nations must adopt a **whole-of-**

nation approach that integrates military operations with information campaigns, economic policy, and civil preparedness.

Finally, the concept of **smart frontiers** was introduced, calling for a layered and integrated defence system across all domains—land, air, sea, cyber, and space. Protecting national sovereignty in the modern era requires more than conventional military strength; it demands adaptive, multi-dimensional defence architectures capable of responding to diverse threats across the full spectrum of conflict.