

SYNERGY

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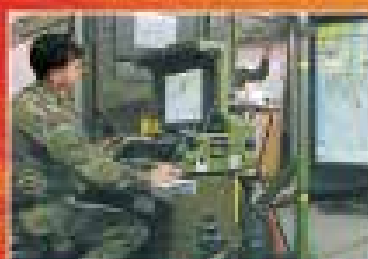
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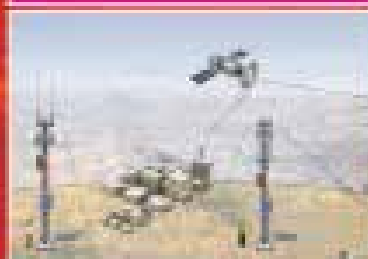
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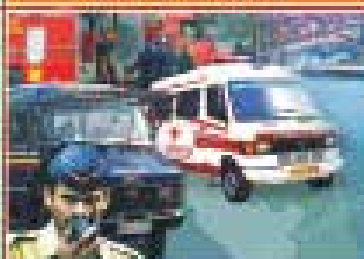
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FOREWORD

CDS (CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF) AND NEED FOR INTEGRATED THEATRE COMMANDS

Appointment of a CDS is an imperative to transform India from a 'Military Force' to a 'Military Power'. The GOM report post the Kargil Conflict, the Naresh Chandra Task Force report and recently, Lt Gen Shekatkar Committee Report have recommended the appointment of a CDS to synergize all elements of national power. Four essential reasons and justifications for the need for the CDS identified by the GOM namely; to provide single-point military advice to the Government, to administer the Strategic Forces, to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning process through intra and inter-Service prioritisation and to ensure the requisite "jointness" in the Armed Forces are an imperative.

Better technology at our disposal necessitates more synergy and jointness to enhance combat potential and optimize resources between three Services. The unique geo-strategic advantage of India dictates an indigenous model for the Institution of the CDS and consequent formations of the integrated theatre commands. Ever proliferating new security challenges can only be met by a dynamic CDS model to ensure operational preparedness in all domains of warfare from nuclear to conventional to sub-conventional domains. Well considered national security and military strategy as also dynamic force structuring calls for a critical thought process with a long term perspective.

Over the last couple of decades, defence analysts and senior defence officers have articulated the requirement of the institution of a CDS and formation of Integrated Theatre Commands in India. This issue of the Synergy Journal has select articles by sixteen eminent scholars, on the subject.



(Satish Dua)

Lt Gen

CISC & Chairman CENJOWS

EDITOR'S NOTE

Higher Defence Organisation Reforms in India have been recommended by various groups, committees and eminent strategists from time to time. The perceived sub optimal performance of our great defence and security machinery is invariably attributed to lack of these reforms. Implementation of recommendations of innumerable study groups for synergy and integration of inter and intra services issues often hit the wall created by our less modern decision making structures. India seems to be nearing the end of this dilemma and imminent defence reforms ushered in by the Government initiatives appear to be heading towards a clear and goal oriented direction.

The editorial board of the 'Synergy Journal' of the CENJOWS, focused to bring about jointness and integration among various constituents of Indian national power, selects important themes for the biannual issues of this Journal. 'Enhancement of Joint Capability through Functional Commands (Cyberspace, Space and Special Operations) in India'; 'Make in India, Likely Impact on Defence Preparedness'; 'Global Threat of ISIS, An Integrated Approach to Counter Terrorism in India'; 'Economic Warfare in 21st Century'; 'Harnessing Military Technology in India'; 'Relevance of Modern wars in achieving Political Objectives'; 'Contours of Emergent Warfare'; 'Civil Military relations in India' and 'India's Response to Sub Conventional Warfare' are some of the themes covered in our previous issues. Efforts are made to explore the selected themes from all angles to assist policy makers, researchers and practitioners to arrive at well informed conclusions on all aspect of the selected theme.

This issue of the Journal is also one such endeavour. Comments by the readers and suggestions for improvement are most welcome by the editorial board and may be emailed to ***cenjows@yahoo.com***



(T Chand)
Air Cmde (Retd)
Editor

CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF AND JOINT COMBATANT COMMANDS

Lt Gen Balraj Nagal (Retd)*

The international order of stability and state responsibility is under threat from many realms and forces of disorder, rogue nations, revisionist states, sponsored non-state entities, migration and religious extremism. The security domain is getting complex, complicated, intricate and difficult. The geo-strategic environment of the future will present a blurred, ambiguous, vague, uncertain and diffused canvas, with the role of various protagonists veiled and shrouded. The spectrum of war in the future will manifest from terrorism to nuclear war, cyber to space, internal security challenges to human assistance and disaster relief. New forms of war are entering the security lexicon e.g. hybrid, asymmetric, irregular or lone wolf attacks, the diffusion of organised and stand-alone violence pose their own challenges besides the state power used in pursuance of state goals. Military and civilian technology have expanded the scale of destruction, precision of attacks, non-violent but damaging acts, reach of non-state actors, doctrinal and strategy changes.

An examination of the challenges India has faced, establishes that all possible forms of violence, all facets of the conflict spectrum, coercive threats and internal disorder have manifested at some point of time. The reaction or response has been piecemeal, delayed or even uncoordinated. The future too will follow a similar pattern but call for far swifter, lethal, integrated and coordinated response from the Indian State. Responses to the emerging threats and challenges will be qualitatively different compared to the past where linear or sequential actions sufficed and succeeded, in the future integrated actions will form the basis and backbone of joint actions and strategies. This changed model will call for modern and modified organisations and structures. The question remains: does India have these in structures ready, and in place? The answer is a very clear negative, so is there scope to learn from others? The reply is in the affirmative. Yes we can, and should learn from the experience of other nations.

Four leading military powers with the concept of a single military head and joint force structures at the apex level are US, UK, China and Russia. Each has modelled its system to suit the national ethos and culture, however, the focus is jointmanship and integration. US has a Chairman, Joint Chief of Staff(CJCS), with a Vice Chairman and supporting staff, the CJCS is the Principal Military Advisor to the President of USA, the National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council and the Defence Secretary. The CJCS assists the President and the Defence Secretary in exercising their Command functions. The Chiefs of Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines also assist the CJCS in his functions. The Combatant Commands are not under the operational control of the CJCS, but report directly to the Secretary of Defence, this arrangement appears suited to the global role of the Commands. In the UK the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) is the Senior Military Advisor to the Secretary of Defence and the Prime Minister. There is a Vice Chief of Defence Staff and three Deputy Chief of Defence Staff. The CDS is responsible for Military Strategy and Operations, the UK Armed Forces have one Joint Forces Command for overseas role. The Russian Chief of General Staff is the Senior Advisor to the President of Russia, who is the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. Russia has five Joint Commands and one was created based on the Naval Fleet in the north, the Military Districts also exist with the Joint Commands. China recently reformed its Armed Forces, creating five Joint Commands, presumably reporting directly to the Central Military Commission (CMC), which is headed by the Secretary of the Communist Party who also is President of the country and Chairman of CMC. The erstwhile four Departments under the CMC have now been restructured to become fifteen. The role of Chief of Defence Staff is probably with the Vice Chairman of CMC. The essential point to note is that all modern militaries have Joint Commands and the Principal Military Advisors/ Chiefs of the military do not command these directly. Also important is the participation by heads of the Armed Forces in the formulation of all important policy/strategy by the Head of the Military. The terminology to describe the role and duty is "Principal or Senior" Military Advisor, implying that other military commanders are also part of the system to provide advice. The joint headquarters are manned by personnel from all Armed Forces organisations giving the headquarters the requisite expertise to decide on all policy issues. The decision of the US to create a single Principal Military Advisor and Joint Commands were based on the lessons of World War II, the UK followed thereafter in 1959. The Russians have long followed the concept even before the World War,

and now China as it grows its military power and strives to expand its area of military reach has also created Joint Commands.

The rationale and logic of why India must have a Principal or Senior Military Advisor and Joint Commands has been argued in many writings, the Kargil Review Committee also made many recommendations including a Chief of Defence Staff. Recently the Naresh Chandra Committee also recommended a Permanent Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee. The decision to take a decision continues to be delayed on the specious grounds of political consensus, more about this dilemma later. The Armed Forces are also part of the cause for delay in the fructification of the reforms of the military; however, these are peripheral in nature, whilst the advantages of jointmanship are well established from the experience of the powers who transformed decades ago.

The concept of centralised military advice and jointmanship flow from the complexities of the security environment and diversity of means to apply force, these continue to increase in complications and intricacies. The essence of this requirement is encapsulated in a discussion paper on civil-military relations published by Council on Foreign Relations “As commander in chief of the armed forces, the president of the United States bears great responsibility in determining when and how to use military force. To make such decisions, the president requires clear understanding of the risks, costs, and likely outcome of a military intervention. Because many presidents and senior civilian appointees lack military experience, they rely on senior military advisors to provide viable, realistic, and timely advice to inform critical decisions”.

The above statement clearly demonstrates what the civil-military interface requirements are; the need is to put the system in place. The advice sought and provided has to be the distilled essence of the views and opinions of each armed service, of course laced with competing demands. If we critically examine the readiness state and preparedness of the three armed services for Op Parakram and a possible reaction to the terrorist attacks at Mumbai on 26 Nov 2008 it is abundantly clear that there was no joint contingency plan or strategy to address the national intention. To achieve a convincing doctrine and strategy where all the elements of the Armed Forces act in concert and unison in support of a national aim and national objectives there is a definite need for an apex authority to coordinate and synergise the central effort. The application of force based

on the central plan and strategy necessitates a similar approach at the execution level, implying the creation of joint organisations, more on this subject later.

An enduring image in the post Osama Bin Laden raid was a photograph of the White House control room where the President of the US is sitting with important Cabinet members and military personnel following the operation. A very cursory examination will reveal that the operation was a highly centralised plan executed by joint forces thousands of kilometres away. Besides the military, the crucial role of intelligence agencies, space systems and political leaders was instrumental in successful implementation of the plan. Similar examples of centralised planning are noticeable in the Russian intervention in Syria recently or the Entebbe rescue of 1976 at Kampala airport. Therefore, the concept of centralised doctrines, strategies and planning is perforce the responsibility of a single authority and by extrapolation cannot be the charge of separate entities such as the Army, Navy and Air Force. India did create HQ Integrated Defence Staff (IDS) but with a very limited charter, really not a body to discharge all responsibilities that are shouldered by CJCS or CDS or Chief of General Staff. The broad charter for a Principal Military Advisor will span to include providing a strategic vision of the military to both the political leadership and the organisations that constitute the Armed Forces. As India's economic power grows and alongside the military power, the role too shall become regional to multi regional, in such circumstances individual armed forces lack the ability and acumen due to limited knowledge of their domains, it is not a negative but a realty due constraints of information and charter of duties. The articulation of a well-defined strategic vision will need inputs from political, diplomatic, intelligence, economic and military organisations. The second major duty is to develop doctrines, concepts, strategies and plans, for joint operations. India has limited experience in tri-services operations and nearly non in conceptual development, this inadequacy needs redressal, and can come about only when formal structures are created to address the subject. Joint concepts require new organisations, and these need to be created by a neutral headquarters which is the proposed apex body to assist the Principal Military Advisor (PMA).

War preparedness and equipping of forces will be an extremely important task of the PMA, including weapons and equipment development, procurement and stocking of ammunition/platforms. Planning for operations i.e. OP PLANS and contingency planning will be the central duty of the PMA,

the nature of future war will require far greater resources and coordination which can be ideally provided by this headquarters. In the era of limited resources and growing cost of defence weapons/ equipment, the planning of budgets and control of expenditure needs specialised experts to manage the full requirements of the Armed Forces, individual services cannot be expected to economise or procure common platforms or weapon systems, this task can be executed well by the PMA organisation. Coordination of intelligence from the Armed Forces and all external agencies is done by the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA), once an apex PMA is created this responsibility will be an added charter, not only will the output be improved even the range of inputs may increase hence improving the overall advice and planning.

The centralisation of intelligence improves optimisation in resource utilisation. Logistics is one field where the contribution by the PMA organisation will ensure standardisation, commonality and economy, even resulting in reduction of manpower and costs. India is one of the largest importers of arms, equipment and platforms including transport aircraft, fighter aircraft, tanks and allied supporting systems, ships, submarines and aircraft carriers. Time is ripe to place under the PMA the DRDO and DPSUs for development and production, the responsibility should shift to the user, and not remain with authorities, not accountable to the military. There are many similar subjects which will be addressed by the PMA, to bring value to the military. Last but not the least the PMA will be the face of the Armed Forces to the nation and the public, who will articulate the vision and ideas of the military to the nation without prejudice to the requirements of any particular service. More details on the subject can be found at “Writing on the Wall” in FORCE of January 2017.

In a complex and fluid environment, across the spectrum of conflict, multiple organisations will be forced to act simultaneously, be it any type of military action including disaster relief. The resources available will be limited as has been witnessed in the past seven decades of independent India. Hence the issue of Joint Commands is pressing and vital to the conduct of campaigns and operations since no single service can achieve the desired results independently within its own resources. India has too many Commands but none are co-located and neither can claim to have joint plans. The rationale is simple; each service has its own doctrine and strategy which does not match the core needs of the other. Once we accept and develop joint doctrines and strategies, we will perforce have to employ our assets jointly and give no leeway for specific priorities.

Due to its complex geographical needs, India will have to create two types of Joint Commands, a two service Command and a Tri-Services Command. The details of these commands can be worked by experts, however the three army commands on the northern borders i.e. Eastern, Central and Northern can be amalgamated with the three air force commands of Eastern, Central and Western corresponding to geographical overlaps. The army western, south western and southern commands should be merged into two joint commands and amalgamated with the air force commands of south western and southern. The four tri-services commands should be based on the existing naval and Andaman & Nicobar commands by amalgamating with the army and air force resources. One Joint Training Command can be created by merging all the training commands or institutions of all the three services. Each command will have a commanding general/admiral/air marshal of three star ranks to command the respective force and work under the Joint Command Commander in Chief. All maintenance work should be brought under one command. Thus there will be a total of Nine Joint Operational Commands, One Training Command and One Maintenance Command. These are the recommendations for the existing structures; however there is scope for further reduction in the overall number of commands if the commander in chief rank is raised to four star officer as is the case in the USA.

The emerging domains of cyber and space besides Special Forces need immediate attention of the PMA. Creating these new joint Commands based on the environmental reality is an urgent requisite, the logic and rationale for the three new commands are have been articulated in the Synergy edition of June 2016.

Besides the proposed restructured commands for strategic and conventional deterrence the Strategic Forces Command should be elevated to a separate service. The technological developments in the field of ballistic missiles, hypersonic vehicles, cruise missiles, ballistic missile defence and ASAT capabilities are set to bring about major changes in deterrence equations; hence India out of necessity will be required to adopt these technologies which will enhance the role the Strategic Forces. Russia and China already have Rocket Forces as independent services directly under command the highest commander.

With the proposed changes should come changes in the Ministry of Defence (MOD), once a PMA is created, the headquarters under the

PMA will take over some charter of duties at present with the MOD. Simultaneously the Armed Forces Headquarters will restructure to integrate with the MOD. The most fundamental function of the PMA HQ will be to integrate, coordinate and synergise the outputs in concert with the Armed Forces headquarters, to achieve this aim it will require a tri-service combine of officials from each and every branch of the three services (and the fourth once created).

The most contentious issue to be resolved will pertain to the command and control of the Joint Commands, essentially two models can be evaluated i.e. under the PMA or directly under the Defence Minister (e.g. USA). This aspect is contentious because in India the bogey of a coup has been fashioned by vested interests to keep the political class on tenterhooks and build distrust between the political leadership and the military. The Indian ethos shaped over centuries does not favour seizure of power through violent means, the events in our neighbourhood are not driven by the Indian ethos but by the genetic inheritance of their forefathers who came from distant lands. Therefore both models are workable provided the indispensable changes are made in the MOD or the PMA HQ.

In India the Defence Minister is a working politician and is burdened with political work, which is not the case in USA, Russia or China. The second important aspect of Indian forces is, they are employed within the country and at present do not have a regional or international role, because of this limited charter the PMA may be tasked to exercise direct command. In the case of US, the PMA does not shoulder the responsibility of Commanding the Combatant Commands as laid down by law, Russia by convention, in the case of China the responsibility is not clear. The current arrangement of each service chief commanding own combatant commands, cannot continue by virtue of the changed system. Therefore, the option of the Defence Minister being in charge of Combatant Commands is feasible once the MOD and Armed Forces HQ are merged; with the assistance of the three chiefs and a centralised MOD the Defence Minister can exercise the authority and be in a position to give directions in war and peace.

Turf protection and sharing or reduction of power is alien to any military force and the Indian Armed Forces are no exception. At the same time, major changes largely occur due to political acceptance of the necessity for reform for improved performance in the national security requirements. It is time that the present political dispensation takes a decision to reform

the military without the “so called political consensus” and the bogey of a “coup”. The demonitisation decision demonstrated the political will to take a decision without resorting to political consensus, so for national security, a similar decision is justified. The PMA will bring greater synergy, coordination and integration to the forces, provide valuable advice to the political leadership and develop jointmanship to deliver better outputs. The restructured MOD after integrating with the Armed Forces headquarters will function more efficiently and the Defence Minister with the three chief become direct commander of the field forces.

***Lt Gen Balraj Nagal (Retd) is the Director CLAWS, Delhi**



INDIA'S CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE STAFF: AN IMPERATIVE IN THE MAKING

Lt Gen Syed Ata Hasnain*

More than anything it is the complexity of modern warfare brought on by the huge onset of technology, unconventional and irregular threats, and the nuclear backdrop of the subcontinent that demands better Joint Service understanding and single point advice to the Government on matters of national security. The focus of course would be on military security but that takes away nothing from the availability of single point advice on comprehensive security too. It is sufficient to say at the start that this is something sorely missing in the parlance of India's military security structure. Functional Joint Service effectiveness is a product of seamless appreciation of threats and application of coordinated military power. However, that is utopian considering the competitive edge with which armed forces function, not in India alone but anywhere in the world; call it the warrior ethos, competition or narrow badge loyalty, it is second nature to them. Realizing the pressing need for Joint Service effectiveness and the inability of the US armed forces to overcome service loyalties in terms of allocation of resources and application of military power, the US Government introduced a legislation under which the concept of Joint Service functioning would be a functional requirement under law. The Goldwater Nichols Act 1986 has virtually become a reference point for all modern or modernizing armed forces around the world. Its brief examination is therefore almost mandatory.

Prior to 1986, the experience of Vietnam, operations such as the Iran hostage rescue attempt 1980 and the botched Grenada invasion 1983, as also the preparation of the US armed forces for war fighting in terms of resource allocation and training revealed that inter service rivalry was preventing the optimization of US military effectiveness. One of the major highlights of the Act was the chain of command. The individual Service Chief's responsibility towards operations and command and control of the forces was removed and they became the functional Chiefs of Staff of their

respective Services. Their responsibility was restricted to force structuring, doctrinal aspects, centralized training, provisioning, procurement and modernization besides personnel management. The Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff was designated as the principal military adviser to the President of the United States, National Security Council and Secretary of Defense. He thus became the chief strategist but with no command over the Service Chiefs. The command channel flows from the President of the United States to the Defence Secretary and directly to the combatant commands. This could be a theatre command with forces allocated in a flexible format (like the US Pacific Command) or a single entity (like the Cyber Command or Special Forces Command). In effect instead of a hierarchical system of command and consultation the functioning becomes multilateral. In crises the President or the Defence Secretary would pick up the phone to call the theater commander while the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff would be on hand to confirm, alter or advise negotiation.

The above is all about the most modern of Joint Service systems brought about by functional demands and lessons learnt from operational situations. However, the system extends as much into day to day functioning in the world of procurement, equipping, training and doctrine. Armed forces do not fight wars every day and neither are they involved in crises so frequently; it is the preparation for crisis that is as critical. For that there is a need to go beyond the single Service needs of ego and one-upmanship. Allocation of budgets remains one of the biggest challenges. Prudent financial management, procurement and modernization are essential. These must not be in isolation and based on single Service perceptions but on national needs arising from clarity of the big picture about threats and availability of resources. As critical are the fields of intelligence, training and logistics going by the basic principle of war, economy of effort. Left to its own, a single Service in a nation such as India would pursue policies of international cooperation, acquisition and sharing of intelligence in keeping with its perception. This perception may not be in sync with the perceptions of national security. That is where the problem lies.

It gets accentuated further with three things in the Indian context. First is the fact that we do not live in a world bereft of threats. In fact we are in a state of perpetual hybrid conflict with Pakistan and China. There may be no physical contact operations but proxy war remains a strategic threat against us. The concept of modern day hybrid war has little predictability and no consistency. Different domains are cobbled together by the adversaries

from time to time. Response to such threats cannot be in the conventional domain and has to be tailored on a full understanding of the nature of conflict which can transform into conventional conflict at short notice. It needs the full spectrum capability of all three Services to respond but for that to be optimum there is a need for complete Joint Service understanding. It extends to the Services to bring a comprehensive understanding of such threats and responses to the Government to tailor the political, social and diplomatic dimensions to the needs of national security; the proverbial 'whole of government' approach associated in counter hybrid warfare, so to say.

The second domain is the nuclear backdrop of the subcontinent. The need for deep secrecy and yet sufficient transparency for effectiveness is a paradoxical requirement. Yet that is so and all the more that there should be complete understanding between the three Services, DRDO, National Security Adviser and the other organs of the Government. There is nothing static in this for it is a dynamic domain where there can be changes due to development of assets and alteration in doctrinal aspects. The mechanism has to be robust from every angle and the advice to the Government must be well thought through by practiced and informed minds. This is one field in which necessary assets will in the future be held by all three Services. Commonality, overlapping doctrines and trained manpower will be necessary.

The third domain has arisen very largely in the last few years. This is the whole gamut of Inter Services Personnel Management. It was the One Rank One Pension issue which threw up the issue of personnel management as a separate domain. Perhaps at the time of the Kargil Review Committee the issue of personnel management remained restricted to the issues concerning promotion opportunities and lowering of age for command. Civil military relations have been in flux in the last few years with a requirement to address this through a Joint Service approach since it bedevils national security to a large extent. The Seventh Pay Commission related issues concerning status and pay and allowances has added further to the need for a Joint approach on personnel management. Without this the three Services have disparate policies which create flux.

In 2001, the Kargil Review Committee while examining the pitfalls which led to the initial fiasco of the Pakistani 'walk in', was of the view that the "political, bureaucratic, military and intelligence establishments appear

to have developed a vested interest in the status quo.” It recommended the creation of the appointment of a Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS). The four main functions envisaged were provision of single-point military advice, administering strategic forces, ensuring jointness in the armed forces and enhancing the planning process through inter service coordination and prioritizing.

Somehow the Cabinet Committee for Security (CCS) which considered the report of the Group of Ministers on the findings and recommendations of the Kargil Review Committee, agreed to almost everything except the appointment of the CDS. Perhaps there was a pending of the decision because the CCS approved the creation of the HQ Integrated Defence Staff (IDS) under a Chairman of the Integrated Staff to the COSC also commonly referred as CISC. The decisions taken led to the creation of the Strategic Forces Command (SFC) to manage the strategic nuclear assets of India and the first true theatre concept with raising of Andaman & Nicobar Command (ANC). The decision to postpone the creation of CDS perhaps was taken due to lack of clarity and insufficient support from within the Services themselves. This lack of clarity continues to the day. It needs a brief review to see where we stand today.

What irks who, is the question? The CDS concept is reputed to have worked well in most modern armed forces. Given India’s crying need to overcome inter Service rivalry, have single point advice, coordinate Joint planning, carry out Joint training and streamline the procurement process for the almost 150 billion USD worth of hardware that India will obtain for its forces in the next ten years, there is obviously a crying need. The reluctance is partially based upon the hesitation regarding the nature of the role. It is yet uncertain what role the three Services themselves wish to assign to a future CDS.

Firstly, if a CDS is foisted on the existing HQ IDS in four star rank, as a first among equals, it will virtually amount to upgrading the current CISC and nothing else. From being currently the head of the HQ IDS the CISC in appointment of CDS would rise to preside over the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) without exercising control over operational decisions. The Service Chiefs would have the responsibility of their individual Services as they would remain in ‘command’. The CDS in this mode would probably have the ANC and SFC under him as the strategic assets and the only theater command would probably come under his command. The real

single point advice would be elusive in such an arrangement. In fact the CDS would be toothless as stated by those who have analyzed this issue many times in the past. The few advantages would yet be the fact that with rotation as the norm each Service would get its chance to head the COSC. That would be quite unlike the current system which is based on seniority in the appointment of Service Chief. The last Army Chief did not ever get a chance of being the Chairman COSC. Perhaps nor will his successor.

Secondly, if the CDS is appointed in five star rank the common perception is that there will be problems of status with the bureaucratic leadership. This is just conjecture and no serious debate on this has ever been conducted. In five star rank the CDS could well exercise responsibility in all spheres he would as a four star officer but more effectively due to status. The single point advice would not include operational aspects as he would not exercise command over the field formations and operational assets except of the ANC, under current status of forces. If theatre command concept is adopted by the three Services he could well be exercising direct authority over the Joint theatres. If the US concept is adopted the theatre commanders would have direct access to the Raksha Mantri and Prime Minister with the CDS exercising a loose control but yet offering single point advice to the government. In the theatre command concept it is the Service Chiefs who will lose maximum functional status as they will remain the literal Chiefs of Staff to oversee coordination aspects of issues other than operations. The reluctance to adopt the CDS concept therefore also comes from this direction.

Two additional major issues therefore come to the fore; the concept of regional theatres and two, the merger of the existing regional commands of the three Services on a functional basis to form the theatre commands. Are these good ideas? They ought to be if CDS has to be successfully functional. However it should be remembered that the theatre concept is not based on unnatural mergers of military assets and their command and control aspects. It has to begin with doctrinal guidelines and establishment of a Joint Service Culture if they have to have seamless functioning and optimum utilisation of assets. It is beyond the scope of this analysis to pursue the case for theatre commands. Yet, the understanding should be clear that composition of such commands will be function based. It is not necessary to have only tri-Service commands. For example a theatre

command to look after the Northern theatre will need to have only Joint functioning of Army and Air Force and hence the composition will be such.

It needs to be added that for effective status based command and control the theatre commanders need to be of four star rank. The resources actually placed under their command and the range of responsibilities almost dictates this. This will make acceptance from bureaucratic circles even more difficult.

Returning to the issue of status of the CDS and the potential bureaucratic resistance, there are detractors who state that both the political leadership and bureaucracy would be reluctant to have a full-fledged CDS in five star rank, in control over the field forces and providing single point advice, due to the potentially out of proportion empowerment of a single appointment. This argument is substantiated by the fact that in spite of three powerful committees arguing for CDS (Kargil Review, GoM and Naresh Chandra) the entire concept remains elusive and sufficient informed debate on the subject has not even been encouraged. The fear of out of proportion power is apparently unfounded given the record of India's armed forces. Unfortunately the Indian media finds this theme quite fascinating and enjoys throwing up the fears of the political leadership and the bureaucracy in a sensational way rather than analyzing this in an informed way. The Indian Armed Forces need to take this up with the Government of India and the media with a slightly different approach to set aside fears and facilitate acceptance. Acceptance must be in the most optimum format and not a half-baked decision such as the setting up of the HQ IDS in 2001. That HQ has awaited its full utilisation for the last sixteen years but has grown in effectiveness over that period. It is a well-structured and manned headquarters except perhaps the absence of or reluctance to fill the civilian appointments.

Linked to the CDS issue are a few other functional aspects related to the organization of the MoD. If advice of the CDS has to mean anything the MoD must be geared to analyze it in an informed way and not a bureaucratic way. The MoD in its current avatar does not have the capability to do justice to such analyses. The HQ IDS yet remains an attached office. It needs to either merge (that may be awkward and may dilute effectiveness of a fully functional entity) or the MoD needs to restructure to bring enough uniformed expertise at various staff levels, potentially including uniformed staff officers with the RM and the Defence Secretary.

An aspect which needs flagging in any serious and informed debate on the CDS issue is the fear that the Navy and the Air Force may have that their individuality as services and assets may get smothered under the weight of the huge Army organizations and large size manpower presence. This is a dated argument. The threats which present themselves in the maritime, air and space domains have enhanced the significance of the two Services. Hybrid warfare does not have limitations on technology and need not be land based alone. Besides the strategic nuclear assets as they emerge are encompassing all domains. The days of compartmentalized warfare are long over. The transition may still be in the making. Apprehensions regarding the sheer manpower size of the Army must not intimidate the other Services any longer.

A clinching argument in favor of a CDS is that with the National Security Adviser (NSA) tending to be a personality of repute other than from the Services there is a complete absence of military oriented advice directly to the Government; advice not filtered through the NSA secretariat. The CDS will fill this void and the Government will get the most comprehensive advice which it can then consider. The apprehensions caused by complete absence of the military domain in the higher direction of national security would then be overcome. The NSA and the CDS should be permanent invitees to the Cabinet committee on Security.

The last recommendation of this paper relates to strategic culture of the country, something evidently woefully missing in political and bureaucratic circles. This absence as well extends to academia and media. The CDS issue and hopefully its final acceptance must be done alongside a decision to promote strategic culture in the country. Towards this end the Government could well task the IDSA to come up with a full working paper on the same and a road map on execute the same.

Lastly, while strongly advocating the idea of a five star CDS, four star theatre commands and an integrated MoD it would be pertinent to close with a reminder that Cyber, Special Forces and Space Commands have been in the making for far too long. This needs to be taken forward to a final decision.

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CDS (CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF) AND NEED FOR INTEGRATED THEATRE COMMANDS

Pravin Sawhney*

India needs military reforms to build military power. What India has is military force: mere collection of war waging materiel and manpower. Military power involves optimal utilisation of military force by an understanding of the adversaries' mind-set, and evolving technologies which shape domains of war and ideas (doctrines). Military power demands synergy at the policy or the strategic level, and war-fighting or operational level of war.

Why military power? Because military power is not about war alone; it is about preventing war, deterring adversaries, exercising diplomatic and military coercion, and strengthening one's own political resolve to use military power as an essential component of foreign policy. Military power is critical to all geostrategic players or leading powers which by definition have the capability, capacity and will to influence events beyond their borders.

Given this, should India have military reform in the form of the five-star rank Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)? Not yet; to know why there is a need to review the mandate of the CDS.

The creation of the CDS post was recommended by the 2001 Group of Ministers report. As the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) had been ineffective, it was felt that the senior-most service chief, with elevated rank and stature, be made the CDS. Unlike the chairman, COSC, which was a rotational post with the senior-most service chief being a double-hatter (heading his own service and being chairman, COSC), the CDS — a five-star rank officer — would be a permanent post. While presiding over the deliberations of the COSC, the CDS would have his own tri-service secretariat run by his deputy, the vice CDS as the member-secretary, and discharge the following functions:

- One, he would provide single-point military advice to the defence minister. Individual service chiefs would however continue to advise the defence minister on their service-related issues and could be invited to attend the Cabinet Committee on Security, if required. For example, if the CDS was a former air force chief, asking the army chief's advice on cross-border terrorism would be more effective.
- The second function of the CDS would be to head the tri-service Strategic Forces Command (SFC) which was created on 4 January 2003. As head of the SFC, which would be run by a three-star rank commander-in-chief, the CDS would have overall administrative control — responsibility for managing the nuclear delivery systems — as distinct from operational control vested in the political leadership through the National Security Advisor (NSA).
- The third function would be to improve the procurement procedure for intra-services and inter-services for efficient utilisation of defence allocations.
- And, finally, the CDS was expected to foster joint-ness amongst services. Since wars were expected to be short and swift, it was argued that the three services should fight the war together for optimal results. This required joint planning and joint training leading to fighting wars under a single commander.

The Group of Ministers directed the cabinet secretary to make recommendations regarding the relationship of the CDS with the civilian officers in the Defence Ministry. The CDS, it was agreed, would be the 'principal military advisor' as distinct from the defence secretary designated as the 'principal defence advisor'. The latter, relegated to administrative tasks, would have the following functions — supervision of the department of defence; coordination between various departments of defence; coordinating finalization of the Long Term Defence Perspective Plan (of ten and fifteen years), five-year plan, and the annual budget for approval of the defence minister; and advising the defence minister on matters pertaining to Parliament, central and state governments, other ministries, and so on.

The above separation of powers amongst the civil bureaucrats and military officials though highly desirable was not acceptable to the bureaucracy. Building upon politicians' fears, born of ignorance, the

bureaucracy scuttled the plan by arguing that too many powers in the hands of the CDS could result in the takeover of the government by the military. The result was a halfway house. Instead of the CDS, the government created the vice CDS post with a tri-service secretariat. A three-star officer, the vice CDS was made a non-voting member of the Chiefs of Staff Committee. Since there was no CDS, the question arose: vice chief to whom? To correct this anomaly, the vice CDS was re-designated as the Chief of Integrated Defence Staff, and was eventually changed to Chief of Integrated Staff to Chairman (CISC) of the Chiefs of Staff Committee. In day-to-day functioning, he is referred to as Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (IDS).

Fast forward to 2017; two issues transformed the military landscape making certain military reforms necessary before the CDS. The first were the 1998 nuclear tests by India and Pakistan, which led to nuclear weaponisation, and the two-fold need: to involve the political and military leadership in defence policy making; and to have seamless transition from conventional to nuclear war plans. Even when the conventional and nuclear war doctrines are separate for India, Pakistan and China, it is necessary to have transition plans for successful conventional war.

The other issue was the broadening of war domains as the consequence of technology. To the three war domains at the turn of the century, three more were added, namely, space, cyber and electromagnetic spectrum. Thus, it became necessary to have synergy in all six domains for success at the operational level of war.

Hence, for success at the war winning operational level, the following became necessary:

- (a) Synergy at the strategic or policy making level;
- (b) Seamless transition from conventional to nuclear war plans;
- (c) Synergy in all six war domains, namely, land, air, space, sea, cyber and electromagnetic spectrum; and
- (d) Inter-services understanding of each other's core competencies at staff and field levels.

Given this, the military reforms that should be initiated without delay pertain to the defence minister, the NSA, and the CISC.

For synergy at the strategic level, there should be formalised interaction between the political and military leadership. This has never been attempted (both the 2002 Arun Singh Committee and the 2012 Naresh Chandra Committee were given narrow terms of reference. While keeping the political leadership out of the ambit, both committees were tasked to suggest better bureaucracy-military relations). To do this, the defence minister and not the defence secretary, as is the existing case, should be constitutionally responsible for the defence of India. Once this is done, the defence minister would seek regular institutionalised advice from the COSC for making defence policy or political directive. However strange it may sound, India, which aspires to be a leading power, does not have a written political directive given by the Cabinet Committee on Security headed by the Prime Minister to the COSC. The purpose of the defence policy will be four-fold.

- One, to help the political leadership decide, in interaction with the COSC, what national security objectives would require use of military power.
- Two, based upon the defence policy, the service chiefs would then plan, propose and acquire threat-based capabilities. At present, despite clearly defined threats, the services, with an eye on empire building, focus on capability-based acquisitions. On the one hand, these capabilities are not tailor-made to tackle threats; on the other hand, given India's decrepit defence-industrial complex, these are mostly imported at huge costs with usually poor through life support.
- Three, for formalised interaction between the political and military leadership to craft the defence policy, the 1961 Government of India allocation of Business Rules would need to be amended to bring the services' chiefs in the policy-making loop. Once this happens, the services' chiefs would qualify as chief of staff of their services rather than remain the highest operational commanders. Moreover, then the army commanders (and their equivalent in other two services), as the topmost theatre bosses, would be able to plan and execute the operational level of war, where conventional war's outcome is decided, without having to look at the army chief for operational guidance. This would pave the way for executing the directive style of command (which gives freedom to junior commanders to decide action by themselves), a must for a short, swift and intense conventional war. This is not all.

Once services' chiefs are formally brought into the defence policy-making loop, it would be a positive first baby-step towards creating a meaningful CDS post.

- Four, once the defence services are constitutionally in the defence policy making loop, they should formally become a part of Indian diplomacy as well. India, as a geostrategic player should have its defence services as a part and parcel of its diplomacy. For instance, this would generate greater understanding between the US Pacific Command and the Indian Navy for security of the sea lanes of communication in the Indian Ocean area.

The next reform should be of the NSA, who, in India's case, is the link between the Prime Minister-led National Command Authority which decides the nuclear weapons option and the COSC responsible for the conventional war. The NSA's brief includes nuclear weapons, defence, internal security, foreign affairs and regular interaction with politicians associated with India's national security. His role is both advisory and executive.

Given the varied responsibilities, the NSA, should not be a retired bureaucrat, who bring a straitjacket mind-set to the job. A policeman NSA becomes a super-cop, while a diplomat NSA usurps the ministry of external affairs. Given the opportunity, a soldier NSA is unlikely move away from his comfort zone.

It would be better to have a bright politician as the NSA since he would have an open mind and bring substantive political heft to the job. As head of the National Security Council, he could have experts of all disciplines in his secretariat to advise him on varied issues. More to the point, until the political leadership and the defence services are ready for a five-star rank CDS, the NSA could be the de-facto CDS responsible for the seamless integration of conventional and nuclear war plans.

The third reform should be of the three-star rank CISC. At present, he is answerable directly to the defence minister like the defence secretary, yet he is not considered at par with the other four departments — the Department of Defence, the Department of Research and Development, the Department of Production and Supplies, and the Department of Finance — of the defence ministry headed by the defence secretary. Unlike the four departments of the defence ministry, the IDS remains an attached office of the defence ministry, something like the secretariat, outside the government policymaking loop.

Take the case of the Andaman and Nicobar Command. Since it is directly under the COSC, for all administrative tasks, the Andaman and Nicobar Command approaches the IDS. On operational matters, nothing much happens as the service chiefs in the COSC accord preference to their own service over the Andaman and Nicobar Command. Created in 2001, the Andaman and Nicobar Command is the first tri-service command of the defence services meant to safeguard India's strategic interests across the Strait of Malacca into Southeast Asia. The commander-in-chief, Andaman and Nicobar Command, appointed by rotation from the three services, remains its biggest shortcoming. To expect a three-star commander-in-chief from the army and the air force to appreciate maritime issues, when the three services work in compartments, is unrealistic. To strengthen the Andaman and Nicobar Command operationally, which is essential since the People's Liberation Army Navy has made the Indian Ocean its playground, is an urgent need. The Andaman and Nicobar Command, while remaining tri-service, should be permanently under an overall naval commander.

The relationship of the IDS and Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is similarly muddled. The IDS formed the Horizon Core Technology Group with the DRDO with two aims. First, to know what technologies the DRDO thought would be relevant fifteen years ahead and how they would benefit the defence services. And second, for the DRDO to find out from the defence services what technologies they desired in their fifteen-year perspective plans. The arrangement has produced suboptimal results because the DRDO is part of the government loop with its secretary reporting to the defence minister. And the office of the IDH is attached to the Defence Ministry.

However, there are three areas where the IDS has shown encouraging results. The first concerns management of nuclear weapons. The IDS prepares the nuclear targets list which is updated annually. The IDS gets the strategic target lists of the three defence services through the COSC, gets the opinion of the commander-in-chief, Strategic Forces Command, on the consolidated list, and once finalised hands it to the NSA for safe custody. The big lacuna in the system is that the IDS which prepares and finalises the nuclear targets list works in isolation. He is unaware of the nuclear yields to weight ratios and accuracies which are known only to the Principal Scientific Advisor and the NSA, both reporting directly to the Prime Minister.

The second issue concerns creation of more tri-service organisations in addition to the Andaman and Nicobar Command and the Strategic Forces Command. The IDH has under him the Defence Space Agency, Defence Cyber Agency and the Defence Special Forces Agency, which is reportedly under way. Headed by two-star rank officers, the Defence Space Agency interacts with the Indian Space Research Organisation; and the Defence Cyber Agency works closely with the National Technology Research Organisation under the Union Home Ministry. Both the agencies are expected to be upgraded to commands awaiting the government nod. Once formed, the Space Command is expected to be headed by a three-star air force officer, and the Cyber Command to become the responsibility of a three-star army officer. What sort of relationship the two new commands would have with the CISC, who is also a three-star officer, remains to be seen.

The Defence Special Forces Agency, which is sought to be raised, would be both different from and in addition to the Special Forces of the three services. It is expected to have direct recruitments and not lateral inductions from the services. While its administrative management could be with the CISC, its operational control for strategic employment is expected to be with the NSA.

The third area where the IDS has made good progress concerns joint operations. Two doctrines — one for amphibious operations and another for joint operations for expeditionary missions — have been written and handed over to the COSC. While officers of the three services have worked out joint doctrines and operating manuals, much would depend upon inter-services training.

Against this backdrop, the Naresh Chandra Committee, which submitted its report in August 2012, made, three suggestions pertaining to higher defence management. These were:

- (a) Creation of the post of four-star rank Permanent Chairman, COSC (PCCOSC);
- (b) Establishment of a bureau of politico-military affairs; and
- (c) Cross-posting of civil and military officers in the ministries of defence and external affairs.

The creation of PCCOSC for a fixed two-year term rather than a CDS found acceptance with the politicians and the air force brass. As he would not be the single point military advisor to the government, he would not have a higher status than the other three service chiefs.

The PCCOSC is a good idea and would help further what has been accomplished by various CISC. Like the three service chiefs comprising the COSC, the PCCOSC too would be recognised by the Allocation of Business Rules and Transaction of Business Rules. And the IDH, which he would head, would become on par with the other four departments of the defence ministry. This would have five major benefits.

- One, as another department of the defence ministry, the IDH would no longer be the military secretariat of the department of defence. Its recommendations regarding defence planning, for instance, would go directly to the defence minister with minimal interference from the civil bureaucrats. This would obviate the need for cross-posting civil and military officers in the defence ministry as recommended by the Naresh Chandra Committee and forcefully sought by numerous senior military officers. Interestingly, the Arun Singh Committee on management of defence had rejected this suggestion as impractical.
- Two, the PCCOSC would be better placed to work with the DRDO regarding the needs of the defence services and the utilisation of technologies sought by the DRDO. Moreover, by becoming a voting member of the COSC, the interaction between the PCCOSC heading the IDH, an administrative headquarters, and the service chiefs heading operational headquarters, would improve substantially. Also, while the IDH would not decide what weapon systems each service should have, they would be able to clarify matters in the case of commonality of equipment like unmanned aerial vehicles, cruise missiles, air defence, and so on. Building a joint capability would give them better value for money and an edge over adversaries.
- Three, the PCCOSC would administratively head tri-service commands like the Andaman and Nicobar Command, Strategic Forces Command and the expected Space, Cyber and Special Forces commands. The tri-service commands would provide a boost to joint-ness as officers and men who spend time here would better understand the core competencies of other services. Over time, inter-service postings at

various levels of field command should become a norm, perhaps, a necessary qualification for higher command positions. The defence services could then hope to develop genuine operational joint-ness necessary for swift and short wars. This, however, would take years to happen.

- Four, the PCCOSC with a fixed two-year tenure and elevated rank and stature would be able to work better with the three services' chiefs. Working with the commander-in-chief, Strategic Forces Command, the PCCOSC and the services chiefs would contribute better towards a nuclear-weapons targeting list than the present CISC.
- Five, after superannuating from his post like the other services' chiefs at age sixty-two, the PCCOSC, given his experience with the COSC and tri-services' commands could join the National Security Council as an advisor to the NSA.

Thus, the top-down conventional war chain of command will run from the prime minister-headed Cabinet Committee on Security to the defence minister to the PCCOSC and the service chiefs. The nuclear war chain of command will run from the prime minister-headed National Command Authority to the NSA to the commander-in-chief, Strategic Forces Command, with the PCCOSC and the three chiefs being in the loop. The NSA will provide the seamless integration of conventional war and nuclear war plans.

In summation, if the government were to frame a defence policy or political directive under the defence minister, have a politician as the NSA, and create the post of PCCOSC, India would improve its higher defence management substantially. All joint commands, namely, Andaman and Nicobar Command, Strategic Forces Command, Cyber, Space and Special Forces commands should administratively be brought under the PCCOSC. In operational terms, the command of Special Forces should be with the NSA, of the Andaman and Nicobar Command with the naval headquarters, while the rest (Cyber and Space Commands) could remain with the PCCOSC. Once this is done, the five-star CDS could be considered provided the government is willing by then to share its nuclear weapons capability with senior military leadership beyond the scientists and the NSA.

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INESCAPABLE FUTURE REQUIREMENT: INTEGRATED TRI-SERVICE RAPID REACTION FORCE FOR INTERVENTION OPERATIONS

Brig Gurmeet Kanwal (Retd)*

India's Growing Regional Responsibilities

Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar has said several times that he will soon forward his recommendations for establishing the post of Chief of Defence Staff and undertaking other defence reforms to the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS). A broad consensus is likely to emerge on the subsequent measures that should be adopted for better integration of the three Services, including the raising of integrated tri-Service theatre commands, in order to ensure that maximum synergy can be achieved during war and operations other than war (OOTW). However, theatre commands will take anything from five to ten years to raise after the first CDS is appointed. Meanwhile, there is an inescapable operational requirement for the early raising of an integrated tri-Service rapid reaction force for intervention operations.

With India's growing trade, most of it seaborne, burgeoning Diaspora and an unstable regional security environment, the threats and challenges to national security and the demands on India to contribute positively to regional security have been gradually increasing. India intervened militarily in the Maldives and Sri Lanka at the request of their governments in the 1980s. The Indian armed forces and the Department of Civil Aviation have been involved in evacuating beleaguered Indian citizens from conflict zones in Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Nepal, Syria, Ukraine and Yemen in the last two decades. The evacuation of 170,000 Indians from airfields in Jordan and Kuwait during the 1990 Gulf War was the largest airlift in history after the Berlin airlift. India undertook large-scale rescue and relief operations after the Southeast Asian Tsunami in December 2004 and the Nepal earthquake in April 2015.

When the Taliban had first come to power in Afghanistan, a perplexing scenario was how India would respond if it ever became necessary to launch

a military operation to rescue the Indian ambassador or members of his staff from Kabul. Would India ask for American or Russian help? How would they respond? Or, would India have no option but to leave the embassy staff to the mercy of terrorist Jihadis? That contingency fortunately did not arise but another one did. Indian Airlines flight IC-814 was hijacked to and parked at Kandahar airfield for several days in the cold month of December 1999. The nation was forced to look on with helpless rage as virtually no military options worth considering were available. The ignominious surrender to the Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorists did prompt some soul searching. However, it did not lead to the acquisition of the required intervention capabilities.

Analysts the world over are now discussing the emergence of a resurgent India that will be a dominant power in Southern Asia. Bharat Verma, former Editor, Indian Defence Review, wrote in 2003: "... our political aim should be the dominance of Asia by 2020 as an economic power backed by a world class military." In keeping with its rapidly growing strategic interests and regional responsibilities, in future India may need to join hands with its strategic partners to intervene militarily in its regional neighbourhood when its national interests are threatened. While India would prefer to do so with a clear mandate from the United Nations Security Council and under the UN flag, it may not be averse to joining 'coalitions of the willing' when its vital interests are threatened and consensus in the Security Council proves hard to achieve.

Though it will be a gradual and long-drawn process, it is quite likely that a cooperative international security framework will eventually emerge from the ashes of the ongoing conflicts in the Indo-Pacific region. Stemming from the need for contingency planning, particularly in support of its forces deployed for United Nations (UN) peace-keeping and peace-support duties and for limited power projection, India will need to raise and maintain in a permanent state of quick-reaction readiness adequate forces to participate in international coalitions in India's area of strategic interest. This area now extends from the South China Sea in the east to the Horn of Africa in the west.

The aim of such operations will be to further India's national security and foreign policy objectives, to support international non-proliferation efforts and, if required, to join the international community to act decisively against banned insurgent outfits like the al Qaeda and Lashkar-e-Tayebba or even rogue regimes like the one in Yemen. International non-

proliferation initiatives, such as the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) and the Container Security Initiative (CSI) particularly cannot succeed in the Southern Asian and Indian Ocean regions without Indian participation as a member or as a partner providing outside support. As an aspiring regional power, India will also need to consider its responsibilities towards undertaking humanitarian military interventions when these are morally justified. In addition, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) operations will also need to be undertaken. Other requirements that are difficult to visualise accurately today but would further India's foreign policy objectives or enhance national security interests in future, will also justify the acquisition of military intervention capabilities.

Integrated Theatre Commands

The armed forces have experimented with the Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC) and the Strategic Forces Command (SFC). Valuable experience has been gained over a decade. The way forward will be to graduate completely to tri-Service theatre commands on an all-India basis. In "Defence Reforms: CDS and Theatre Commands are an Operational Necessity" (Synergy, July 2016), I had made several recommendations for constituting theatre commands. These are summarised below.

The state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) should form the 'Northern Theatre' with responsibility for defence against both China (in Ladakh) and Pakistan. The 'Western Theatre' should comprise the plains of Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat. The 'Central Theatre' should have responsibility for the borders of Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Sikkim with Tibet and India's borders with Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh. The 'Eastern Theatre' should have its HQ near Guwahati and should be responsible for all national security interests, external and internal, in the seven north-eastern states. The 'Arabian Sea Theatre' should be responsible for the defence of the Western seaboard, the Lakshadweep and Minicoy Islands and the security of India's maritime EEZ in the Arabian Sea. The 'Bay of Bengal Theatre' should include the Eastern seaboard, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and India's EEZ in the Bay of Bengal. In addition, there is a need for Special Forces, cyber and aerospace commands plus a logistics and procurement command.

Each theatre command should be headed by a four-star General,

Admiral or Air Chief Marshal. Each theatre commander should have under him forces from all the three Services based on the requirement. The initial grouping and allocation of forces would not be permanent and could be varied during the preparatory stage as well as during war on an as required basis. There should be a joint planning staff in each of the Theatre HQ. The staff officers and even the Other Ranks should be drawn from all the three Services. The conventional wisdom is that the switch over to integrated theatre commands should be a gradual process and should be undertaken after gaining experience with a CDS having been appointed. There is merit in proceeding in this manner.

Tri-Service Rapid-reaction Contingency Force

In addition to the Theatre Commands, there is a need for a permanent tri-service force under the CDS for dealing expeditiously with emerging contingencies including pre-planned OOAC, for international intervention operations and for HADR. Recommendations for such a force, the quest for which goes back many decades, are given below.

The late General K. Sundarji, former COAS, had often spoken of converting an existing infantry division to an air assault division by about the year 2000. One of the existing divisions had been designated as an air assault division in Exercise Brass Tracks IV in 1987 even though its air assault capabilities were notional. Though the idea was certainly not ahead of its time, the shoestring budgets of the 1990s did not allow the army to proceed to practically implement the concept. Now the time has come to translate his vision into reality.

Lt Gen Vinay Shankar (Retd) has written, "Some years ago the army had drawn up an approach paper projecting the requirement of two air-mobile divisions... This is now a definite requirement and the proposal ought to be followed up." Other analysts are also of the view that India needs to put in place a fairly expansive expeditionary capability. Bharat Karnad is of the view: "At the very least, a genuine expeditionary force would have to comprise two division equivalent forces, increasing over time to 5-6 division equivalents for distant employment..."

Lt Gen Satish Nambiar, Force Commander, UNPROFOR in former Yugoslavia in 1992-93, has suggested the following components for a 'rapid reaction task force' as he calls it:

INESCAPABLE FUTURE REQUIREMENT: INTEGRATED TRI-SERVICE RAPID REACTION FORCE FOR INTERVENTION OPERATIONS

- A tri-Service corps sized headquarters.
- A land forces component to include an airborne brigade, and a light armoured or mechanised division comprising an air transportable armoured brigade equipped with light tanks and infantry combat vehicles, an amphibious brigade and an air transportable infantry brigade.
- Army aviation elements, assault engineers, communications units and logistics elements.
- A Naval component that desirably includes an aircraft carrier, appropriate surface and sub-surface craft and aerial maritime capability.
- An Air Force component that includes strike aircraft, helicopters and strategic airlift capability.
- A Special Forces component.
- Civilian component to include diplomatic representatives, civil affairs personnel, civilian police, human rights personnel, etc.

Besides being necessary for out-of-area contingencies, 'air assault' capability is a significant force multiplier in conventional conflict. Despite what the peaceniks may say, substantial air assault capability is not only essential for furthering India's national interests, it is now inescapable for conventional deterrence. The present requirement is of at least one air assault brigade group with integral heli-lift capability for offensive employment on India's periphery. This capability should have been in place by the end of the 12th Defence Plan period 2012-17. However, since the brigade has not yet been raised, its raising must be completed on priority basis during the 13th Defence Plan. This brigade should be capable of short-notice deployment in India's extended neighbourhood by air and sea. Comprising three specially trained air assault battalions, integral firepower component and combat service support and logistics support units, the brigade group should be based on Chinook CH-47 and MI-17 transport helicopters. It should have the guaranteed firepower and support of two to three flights of attack and reconnaissance helicopters and one flight ofUCAVs.

The air assault brigade group should be armed, equipped and trained to secure threatened islands, seize an air head and capture an important objective inside the adversary's territory such as a key bridge that is critical to furthering operations in depth. It should also be equipped and trained to operate as part of international coalition forces for speedy military interventions. To make it effective, it will have to be provided air and sealift capability and a high volume of battlefield fire support by the IAF and the navy till its deployment area comes within reach of the artillery component of ground forces. Since the raising of such a potent brigade group will be a highly expensive proposition, its components will need to be very carefully structured to get value for money.

Simultaneously, efforts should commence to raise a division-size rapid reaction force, of which the first air assault brigade group mentioned above should be a part, by the end of the 13th Defence Plan period 2017-22. The second brigade group of the Rapid Reaction Division (RRD) should have amphibious capability with the necessary transportation assets being acquired and held by the Indian Navy, including landing and logistics ships. One brigade group in Southern Command has been recently designated as an amphibious brigade; this brigade group could be suitably upgraded. The amphibious brigade should be self-contained for 15 days of sustained intervention operations. The third brigade of the RRD should be lightly equipped for offensive and defensive employment in the plains and the mountains as well as jungle and desert terrain. All the brigade groups and their ancillary support elements should be capable of transportation by land, sea and air.

With the exception of the amphibious brigade, the RRD should be logistically self-contained for an initial deployment period of 15 to 20 days with limited daily replenishment. The infrastructure for such a division, especially strategic air lift, attack helicopters, heli-lift and landing ship capability, will entail heavy capital expenditure to establish and fairly large recurring costs to maintain. However, it is an inescapable requirement and funds will need to be found for such a force by innovative management of the defence budget and additional budgetary support. The second RRD should be raised over the 14th and 15th Defence Plans by about 2032 when India's regional responsibilities would have grown considerably. Unless planning for the creation of such capabilities begins now, the formations will not be available when these are required to be employed. The initial allotment of one RRD each could be made to the Western and Eastern Theatres

for conventional conflict. They should be in standby mode for contingency operations and HADR tasks in the other theatre commands.

The support of the Special Forces should be available to the RRDs on as required basis, for conventional conflict and intervention operations. It needs to be appreciated by India's policy planners that in many situations when war has not yet commenced and it is not possible to employ ground forces overtly, Special Forces can be launched covertly to achieve important military objectives with inherent deniability. In Kandahar-type situations they provide the only viable military option. However, they can act with assurance only if they have been suitably structured and well trained for the multifarious tasks that they may be called upon to perform.

The only airborne force projection capability that India has at present is that of the independent Parachute Brigade. Since the organisational structure of this brigade is more suitable for conventional operations, this brigade should be retained as an Army HQ reserve for strategic employment behind enemy lines to further the operations of ground forces that are expected to link up with it in an early time frame. However, when necessary, the brigade could be allotted to the RRD for short durations to carry out specific tasks.

While India has acquired limited strategic airlift and sea-lift capabilities, much more needs to be done. The Indian Navy acquired the INS Jalashva (USS Trenton) that can carry one infantry battalion with full operational loads and is in the process of acquiring additional landing ships in addition to some old ships that are still in service. Besides long-range fighter-bomber aircraft with air-to-air refuelling capability like the SU-30MKI, the Indian Air Force has acquired fairly substantive strategic airlift capabilities, including six C-130 Super Hercules aircraft for the Special Forces and 10 C-17 Globemaster heavy-lift aircraft. In addition, Apache attack helicopters and CH-47 Chinook medium lift helicopters and additional transport aircraft are reported to be in the acquisition pipeline.

A permanent tri-Service headquarters equivalent to a Corps HQ should also be raised under HQ Integrated Defence Staff for training, assembling and commanding the rapid reaction task force when it is to be deployed to meet a contingency, for keeping watch over and following emerging situations, continuous threat assessment and operational planning. It should work in close coordination with the office of the National

Security Advisor (NSA) and the National Crisis Management Cell. It should provide C4I2SR support to the RRDs and to their firepower, combat service and logistics support components. The HQ should also be suitably staffed with a skeleton civilian component comprising diplomats, representatives from the intelligence agencies, civic affairs personnel and disaster relief staff on deputation. This component should be beefed up when the task force is ordered to be deployed. Unless planning for the creation of the capabilities that are necessary begins now, these potent fighting echelons will not be available when these are likely to be required.

Looking Ahead

It need not be emphasised that rapid reaction-cum-air assault capabilities will provide immense strategic reach and flexibility to the Cabinet Committee on Security and multiple options to the military planners in the prevailing era of strategic uncertainty. As government sanction may take some time to obtain, the nucleus of such a force should be established immediately by the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) by pooling together the resources currently available with the three Services. The nominated echelons must train together at least once a year so that the armed forces can respond suitably to emerging threats.

It is also necessary to work with strategic partners and other friendly countries in India's extended neighbourhood and with organisations like the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and, when possible, even the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), to establish consultative mechanisms through diplomatic channels for the exchange of ideas, coordination of the utilisation of scarce resources and joint training and reconnaissance. As C Raja Mohan has averred in his book "Samudra Manthan: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo-Pacific", the major powers in the region, including Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan and the US, need to work creatively to frame acceptable rules for peace and stability in the global commons in the Indo-Pacific. Unless such realisation comes about, subterranean tensions will continue to hamper stability. China has so far been ambivalent in seeking to join a cooperative framework and has preferred to stand apart. It has failed to realise that its growing trade and massive dependence on energy imports through the Indian Ocean make it imperative for it to join the efforts being made to establish such a framework.

Small-scale joint military exercises with likely coalition partners help to eliminate interoperability and command and control challenges. All of this can be achieved without having to enter into military alliances. Efforts put in during peace time always help to smoothen cooperative functioning during crisis situations when tempers are usually high, the media outcry for military responses is shrill and cool judgment is invariably at a premium.

As a regional power with aspirations for world power status and a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, India is being increasingly called upon to become a net provider of security in the Southern Asian region and to join other friendly powers to contribute to the security of the global commons as part of a cooperative security framework. As is well known, the US is 'rebalancing' or pivoting from the Atlantic Ocean to the Indo-Pacific as it is in this extended region encompassing two great oceans and the Asian and the Australian landmass that future opportunities as well as challenges lie. While military alliances are almost completely passé in the 21st century, there is definitely a need to work together with strategic partners for peace and stability in India's area of strategic interest. This extends from the Horn of Africa and the Gulf of Aden in the west to the South China Sea in the east.

India cannot aspire to achieve great power status without simultaneously getting politically and militarily ready to bear the responsibilities that go with such a status. Military intervention in support of its national interests is one such responsibility and it cannot be wished away. Unless India becomes the undisputed master of its own backyard in Southern Asia, including the Northern Indian Ocean region, it will not be recognised even as a regional power. India's aspirations of becoming a power to reckon with on the world stage will never be achieved without potent capabilities for military intervention. The government must sanction the raising and equipping of the forces and organisations structures that will be required for future interventions along with the creation of the post of the CDS and the implementation of other important defence reforms.

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STRENGTHENING DEFENCE INTELLIGENCE

Lt Gen Kamal Davar*

“ the reason the enlightened Prince and the wise General conquer the enemy..... is foreknowledge.”

- Sun Tzu in the Art of War

India, located easily in one of the world's politically unstable and violent regions, confronts diverse and ever growing formidable challenges to its security and economic resurgence. Surrounded by two belligerent neighbours, threatening India even collusively, security threats---- external and internal, conventional and non-conventional----emerging from newer dimensions makes the tasks of all intelligence agencies of the nation exacting and mind-boggling. That the art and science of Intelligence is not only a force multiplier in the pursuit of a nation's stated and unstated goals, but also, its first line of defence is a truism which merits no elaboration. The Armed Forces, being the last bastion of the state and the most critical instrument for ensuring its security and safety, thus has to have in place an adequately structured and a fully responsive intelligence edifice of its own to accord to the nation's Armed Forces, timely and actionable intelligence inputs necessary for thwarting the challenges and threats emerging to the nation, as also, for the successful prosecution of its goals, both in peace and war.

The vital aspect of Defence Intelligence requires, for meeting the critical requirements of the Armed Forces, as mentioned *ibid*, re-energising by deliberate, in-depth analyses of the various institutions which constitute the defence or military intelligence structures. Time-bound reviews of the charter and roles, changes and upgradations as warranted, and, frank assessments of the capabilities of all the constituents of Defence Intelligence to fulfill assigned responsibilities in all the realms and nuances of intelligence thus has to be scrupulously gone into and institutionalized.

Challenges for Defence Intelligence

India's strategic domain extends from the Strait of Malacca in the east to the Gulf of Aden in the west, running southwards along the eastern African coastline and down to the southern expanse of the Indian Ocean. In addition, the entire Asia Pacific region also impinges on our security calculus. India's land borders exceed 15,000 sq kms which it shares with seven nations, including a small segment with Afghanistan (presently it falls in the Gilgit-Baltistan region adjoining POK). India has a 7683 kms coastline and an EEZ of over 2 million sq kms in size. With an adversarial 'string of pearls' having been established by a militarily powerful China, a congenitally anti-India centric Pakistan constantly exporting terror to India, a few sieges within from Pakistan sponsored terrorists and a credible Naxal/Maoist threat (formally referred to as Left Wing Extremism), the challenges to India's intelligence agencies especially Defence Intelligence are indeed awesome. China's escalating cyber capabilities which have the potential to inflict 'electronic paralysis' on Indian utilization of cyberspace, command and control structures, communication networks, power and nuclear grids, diverse electrical and electronic systems et al----- diverse challenges emerging and escalating to India's defence are colossal.

Indian defence intelligence has to factor in the rapid and phenomenal growth of China's military and economic might translating into China's aggressive assertiveness both in the unresolved land borders issue with India and in the maritime commons, whether in the Indian Ocean or the entire Asia-Pacific region. China's collusive efforts in containing India with its strategic prodigy, Pakistan, and its embarking on the ambitious \$46 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor(CPEC) through the disputed GB expanse to Gwadar Port are all challenges for our intelligence agencies to monitor.

A major thrust area for all our intelligence agencies, both civil and military, is also to monitor Pakistan conceived and implemented terror mischief in J&K, North-East, Punjab and in India's hinterland.

Background: Defence Intelligence

For the Indian Army, the Military Intelligence Directorate(MI Dte) has existed as the primary intelligence set up , in the nation since 1941(though it traces its roots well back to 1887) and we also have, the Naval Intelligence Directorate and the Air Intelligence Directorate to look after the intelligence

requirements of their respective services to the extent possible. Though the need for a set up to provide integrated intelligence inputs and analyses to the three services was felt, off and on, and so expressed by some security analysts since long, it was the rude shock of being surprised by major Pakistani incursions at the Kargil heights in 1999 was what truly prompted the government of the day to review the higher defence organisation (HDO) of the nation. The Vajpayee government had set up the Kargil Review Committee (KRC), in 1999, under the widely respected strategic expert, K Subramanyam, to go into the entire gamut of HDO including the efficacy of the intelligence structure as obtaining in the nation, both civil and military. The KRC, in its very comprehensive review, had put up its findings and the report to the government on various issues concerning national security preparedness. The government, subsequently, instituted a high powered Group of Ministers (GOM), under the then Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister, LK Advani, to study these recommendations. The GOM later constituted, a Task Force under former R &AW chief, Gary Saxena to have an in-depth look at the nation's intelligence challenges and structures in their totality and the recommendations of the KRC.

In its candid exposition, the KRC had opined that “the resources made available to the Defence Services are not commensurate with the responsibility assigned to them. There are distinct advantages in having two lines of intelligence collection and reporting with a rational division of functions, responsibilities and areas of specialization..... Indian threat assessment is a single process dominated by R &AW...” It went on to further state that the Army has to depend upon inputs from the R&AW for its own threat assessment. The KRC observed that “the Indian intelligence structure is flawed since there is little back up or redundancy that goes to build up the external threat perception by the one agency, namely R&AW, which has a virtual monopoly in this regard. It is neither healthy nor prudent to endow that one agency alone with multifarious capabilities for human, communication, imagery and electronic intelligence.” The KRC and the GOM reports and the Task Force on Intelligence, strongly advocated the setting up of a Defence Intelligence Agency besides many other recommendations for energizing the civil intelligence set-up including the raising of the NTFO (rechristened as NTRO later) for TECHINT. Importantly, the KRC and GOM had both recommended the establishment of a 5 star Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) for rendering single-point military advice to the Government of India

Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA)

Based on the recommendations of the GOM, which were duly accepted by the Vajpayee govt, the DIA was established on 5 March 2005. The DIA was established primarily for “coordinating the functioning of the different service intelligence directorates”. It was created to ensure better integration of intelligence collected by the three service directorates and to serve as the principal military intelligence agency. It was also chartered to produce integrated intelligence assessments as regards defence matters for national security planners.

The strategic intelligence assets of the services, namely the Defence Image Processing and Analysis Centre(DIPAC) and the Signals Intelligence Directorate were placed under command of the DIA. Defence Attaches(DAs), posted abroad, were also put under command of the DIA, albeit partially. The head of the DIA, DG DIA is also the DCIDS(Int) and is the principal military intelligence adviser to the Raksha Mantri, Chairman COSC/CDS(whenever he will be appointed) and the Defence Secretary. The DG DIA is member of various intelligence committees at the apex level like the ICG,TCG, NIB etc.

Defence Intelligence Aspects Meriting Analysis

The major issue as regards defence or military intelligence(the term conveys the same interpretation) is to, first and foremost, arrive at or define the capabilities which we want the DIA to acquire in its pursuit of serving the nation and the Armed Forces. The inter-se responsibilities for overall military intelligence acquisition between the DIA and the Services Intelligence Directorates (SIDs) also require clarity and definition.

Areas of Concern/ Major intelligence Acquisitions Sought. The Armed Forces have to be prepared for successful prosecution of conflicts in the entire spectrum of war fighting----- for which accurate, actionable, timely intelligence is required. For the successful prosecution of its various tasks , the Armed Forces require hard intelligence on China, its military and nuclear capabilities, its infrastructure, its modernization, its activities in our border regions and the Indo Pacific maritime region, its collaboration with Pakistan, about its growing footprint in the Gilgit-Baltistan and POK regions, Gwadar deep sea port activities, its cyber capabilities, its build up in space in the years ahead, its string of pearls initiatives etc. Similarly on Pakistan in virtually every area of military significance including that rogue

nation to be kept under strict surveillance on its nuclear activities---- its state of nuclear readiness (the US may feel it is doing enough but we have to be sure ourselves). Pakistan's devious activities in Afghanistan and Bangladesh against Indian interests is also a major KRA for Indian military intelligence. In addition, the growth of the Pakistani deep state and its terror infrastructure etc, its continuing proxy wars against us, terrorism in J&K and the Machiavellian measures it adopts to keep the pot boiling in that sensitive state. Intelligence from our vast areas of interest and influence from the Straits of Malacca to the Gulf of Aden ---- the list will be endless and mind boggling----- currently the R&AW is chartered to do it for us---- it will be worthwhile for us to look at the entire gamut of responsibilities---in concert with R&AW that where all do we gradually step in--- where all the R&AW continues. Division of labour between the R&AW and DIA and, internally between the IB and DIA, should be formalized.

External Intelligence. The mandate, for acquisition of all forms of external intelligence, including military intelligence, currently rests with the R&AW. Have we got the desired quality military --oriented inputs from them so far? The R&AW, comprises officers and operators primarily from the police, PMF, CPOs many other civil streams and thus their expertise in military related intelligence is, naturally, not of the desired levels. The R&AW primarily focuses largely on political, economic and diplomatic intelligence and thus military related intelligence takes a back seat. As is the practice in many other nations, let the DIA be accorded this capability for acquisition of military intelligence from abroad. It will have to employ various means including HUMINT,ELINT, IMINT---- all forms of TECHINT. Thus the staff and equipment with the DAs in various missions abroad will also have to suitably augmented. Very importantly, both the R&AW and DIA should share inputs with each other with sincerity, as required. The role of DAs in doing 'snooping' activities as they are officially 'military diplomats' and do not have any legal or even moral sanction to undertake covert activities will require re-examination. In my considered opinion, Indian military attaches are, grossly under---utilized, despite the fact that we send virtually our best officers from the three services on these assignments. However, to optimally utilize the DA/MA appointees apart from the knowledge of the language of the country they will be serving in--- as happens to some extent now--- but, importantly, some formalized intelligence training to sniff out and filter important information as also to handle HUMINT resources discreetly will be required. Adequate safeguards will , however, have to be built in.

HUMINT. As the capability in TECHINT in its various forms and applications gets improved, the importance of HUMINT can never get downgraded. As a veteran Russian spy, Mikhail Lyubimov, once expressed that “ the most important secrets can only be found in the human mind.” In my view, within the overall realm of military intelligence , let the entire gamut of HUMINT be divided into strategic and tactical HUMINT with the DIA looking at the strategic level and the three SIDs employing their resources at the tactical level----details of where the tactical finishes and the strategic commences can be suitably worked out, promulgated and with good team effort and sincere sharing and effective coordination by the DIA, the desired intelligence picture or an actionable mosaic can be built. In HUMINT, there is an aspect of covert operations also as regards tasking is concerned. Currently in external operations, the R&AW has the exclusive responsibility. For internal security (IS) operations, though the IB is tasked, but in actual practice, each and every organization, participating in IS, is indulging in it independently with hardly any worthwhile cooperation, which can turn out to be counter productive. We need to streamline the roles and responsibilities for HUMINT ops in the counter-insurgency grid and for LWE counter operations; the local police has a vital role to play in HUMINT operations at the grassroot levels. As regards DIA is concerned, the responsibility should rest with the SIDs who anyway must share the information collected with the DIA which would be trying to build the larger and a clearer picture. Seamless sharing by all agencies operating in the IS battle in different regions will be most essential. Since a plethora of security organs are simultaneously engaged in the IS/CI battles, and each of them have their intelligence set-ups, however efficient or not, effective coordination , in reality, which will be a localized or a state level affair, can be the game changer. As far as we are concerned within the forces, let the SIDs control such operations keeping the DIA in the loop. Along our coastlines where the Coast Guard shares intelligence with the Navy and vice versa--- the inputs must come to the DIA also, which with its excellent TECHINT assets, will be preparing an overall mosaic for the Navy, Coast Guard, JIC and the National Security Council.

Domain Expertise. Frequent transfers of officers for mandatory command/staff/instructional appointments from the DIA/SIDs to units and formations reduces the build up of the requisite experience and capability building to achieve domain expertise of the desired level.

Cross Postings between Intelligence Agencies. Within the Armed Forces, already officers from the three services are adequately represented

in the DIA. But the main problem lies in the cross postings of our officers to the other civil intelligence agencies because of rank structure differences primarily where, say a Maj/Lt Col/Brig and equivalent rank from the other two services would not like to serve under a civilian intelligence officer, who maybe higher in rank but with much less service. This aspect needs to be worked out. In addition, the civil intelligence set-ups must also give suitable postings abroad to officers from the Armed Forces and utilize them adequately and in an equitable manner in their respective organisations.

Linguistic Skills. We are woefully short of personnel (Offrs,JCOs,NCOs) who are adept in critical languages like Mandarin, Arabic, Dari, Pashtu, Uzbeki, Sinhalese, even Kashmiri, Persian, Burmese etc etc. Language skills do not get sharpened overnight and the DIA had made a modest beginning with the National Defence Academy and the Director General Military Training to get languages of the neighbourhood given some primacy in our training. At the Army Education Centre and other regimental centres, some specific responsibilities should be allocated about different languages and JCOs and NCOs also encouraged and taught. We have some bright young soldiers who are computer savvy---- some of them could become linguistic experts--- the tail can be suitably better employed ! We should also not hesitate to employ youngsters from the civil world to augment our linguistic skills expertise. Unemployment even among our literate youth is rampant in this nation and we could utilize some of our trained youth in linguistic work for the Armed Forces.

TECHINT and Cyber Intelligence. With China having acquired breathtaking capability to hack/disrupt cyber networks of even advanced western nations, India and its military, needs to take speedy action to build--- both its offensive and defensive capabilities in all aspects of cyber warfare. China, as mentioned earlier, is assessed to be more than well equipped to ensure “ electronic paralysis” in target countries and India and the Indian Armed Forces need to be well prepared to counter this cyber challenge. The Armed Forces must press the GOI to raise the much discussed and much needed Inter Services Cyber Command to meet the challenges in the cyberspace over the coming years. We have to be adept at all nuances of Information Warfare in the foreseeable future. The NTRO, which was established in 2004 as the premier TECHINT agency had been given a massive mandate---- to plan, design, and set up and operate new TECHINT facilities including establishing secure digital networks as. Also to monitor missile launches in countries of interest. Now some experts feel

that the NTRO has been overloaded with TECHINT and the NTRO has over exceeded in its capacities to fulfill its assigned role (The US has three agencies looking into various aspects of TECHINT). The DIA/DIPAC and Signals Intelligence needs further coordination and cooperation with the NTRO as regards TECHINT for military operations. With maturity and clarity in thinking we can arrive at suitable answers for, some division of labour is necessitated. We have a huge Corps of Signals. Lets optimally utilize our reservoirs of expertise and talent-----also a case of effective utilization of our tail.

Other Shortcomings.

- (a) The Services themselves, traditionally speaking, do not accord much importance to intelligence. With all sorts of unimagined challenges appearing, the massive destructive powers of modern weaponry, its reach, the response times becoming virtually zero, due importance to intelligence has to be accorded by the three services and importantly by the MOD.
- (b) The absence of the long awaited institution of the CDS also has hampered long term intelligence planning and a synergetic approach from the three services on intelligence.
- (c) Most officers posted to the DIA/SIDs have minimal intelligence backgrounds---- short tenures also inhibit talent building and retention of organizational wisdom.
- (d) Our digital databases are hardly of the desired quality. The data-bases have a life span that is generally co-terminus with an officer's tenure ! Most of these are poorly collated and tagged, making data mining difficult.
- (e) There is virtually an absence of information sharing networks between the DIA and SIDs, and, DIA and its sister civilian intelligence agencies. We all talk about the NEED TO KNOW principle while sharing information with each other but conveniently forget the gospel of NEED TO SHARE !
- (f) Turf battles and one-upmanship needs to be eliminated in larger national interests.
- (g) It must be appreciated that no organization/Service can ever have, the year round, foolproof intelligence and thus their systemic preparedness must be adequately ensured to prevent catastrophic incidents.

Summation

Firstly, the DIA has to be substantially strengthened both in manpower and TECHINT. Secondly, the DIA must be given sufficient and official oversight over the SIDs---it cannot work on mere goodwill or personalities ! Thirdly, the Armed Forces must raise a Defence Intelligence Corps which includes the current Intelligence Corps set-up and intelligence personnel drawn from the three services. Its expertise in snooping, various intelligence techniques, languages and knowledge of areas around, in the neighbourhood and regionally, needs to be substantially built up. Despite much hype over India being a great IT power, we have not channelized our resources and energies towards software and secure data bases for the Armed Forces requirements. We can develop a common architecture and secure information networks for information sharing between the SIDs/DIA and the DIA with other intelligence agencies. The DIA with other national level agencies need to cooperate far more with each other than hitherto. Intelligence cooperation between all intelligence agencies/ SIDs is not the best option but, in essence, the only option. Information Dominance and a Decision Advantage for our military commanders and national security planners has to earnestly strived for by synergizing our resources and genius.

We should also go for intelligence sharing with friendly foreign countries---- currently we are rather conservative on such matters. DIA/ SIDs need to vastly augment their HUMINT capabilities as also for/in covert operations. The DIA must attain expertise for operations with Special Forces as also in coordination with the R&AW. .

Another major recommendation/suggestion, I would like to proffer is that all Intelligence agencies in the nation must report to a National Intelligence Authority--- we need a Director National Intelligence to whom the apex agencies report to. Most security analysts are of the opinion that currently the National Security Adviser has too much on his plate. Lets not worry about an "Intelligence Czar" thus being born---- checks and balances can be instituted to ensure no intelligence chief becomes overly powerful ! Notwithstanding our politicians and their petty and selfish motivations--- yet the much discussed point about governmental/parliamentary oversight on all its intelligence agencies remains an important legislation which in a democracy is required.

Finally institutionalized reviews on a time bound basis---- say every 10 years--- must be undertaken and remedial measures sought and implemented. We do not need crisis situations to occur and only then we improve and streamline our structures. As regards overall military intelligence is concerned---- we need an in--house inter services cum MOD driven commission to look into our complete structure. Let all practitioners of military intelligence in the nation (DIA and SIDs) note that governments do use civil intelligence agencies for political purposes but we all in the Armed Forces intelligence fraternity must remain totally apolitical---- even the Raksha Mantri mentioned in the Parliament in March 2016 that “ military intelligence has been sacrificed at the altar of political goals.” It is imperative that all intelligence agencies must keep clear of politics.

Conclusion

If India wishes to take its rightful seat on the global high table, it will have to strengthen its intelligence edifice in which defence intelligence will have to play a significant role to contribute to the nation's security as its first line of defence. Thus our apex Indian military leadership will have to provide the necessary primacy, direction and support to its vital intelligence edifice as prevalent in nations the world over.

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RESTRUCTURING THE DEFENCE ARCHITECTURE

Air Mshl Dhiraj Kukreja*

Introduction

The present million plus Indian Army has grown, just as the other two Services, from comparatively miniscule numbers from independence, to what the country possesses today, as crisis-management in reactions to conflicts and perceived threats. With the absence of any institutionalised structure for national security and higher defence management, the growth has been as per individualistic perception of the decision-makers of those times. This systemic weakness is indicated in the country's present defence structure, which has generally remained the same for over seven decades.

The bureaucratic arrangement under the political leadership presently functions on an audit-basis, asking mundane questions when the Services HQ adopts a particular course of action, rather than formulating or disseminating policy, and then look for deviations from the same. The political leadership is inept in exercising 'civilian control' over the armed forces due to a lack of understanding of their working, arising from little or no academic qualifications for direction or ministerial responsibilities. Given the surcharged and fiercely competitive nature of politics in the country, and the realities on time and effort that can thus be spared by the political leadership on policy matters relating to national security and defence related issues, the extant decision-making system is inadequate.

In the absence of clear guidelines/policy, the HQs plan as per their perceptions; an analysis of the force structure and acquisitions tends to indicate a bias towards individual personalities. There, however, is a far deeper context to the profession of arms, more so in the changing world, that is witness to a transformation in the nature of warfare, and consequently in the conduct. This observable fact is extensive across professional militaries of many countries, when newer and more deadly forms of security threats are emerging, involving both state and non-state actors; when the power

of technology makes a soldier sitting continents away from the battlefield wield enormous destructive power; and when weapons of mass destruction can instantly make civil populations far removed from conflict zones, direct victims of conflict.

The interest and awareness relating to the armed forces in the media and public, is a relatively recent occurrence, however, the same awareness is not on display in discussions and debates on the structure of the armed forces in particular, and the security architecture, at large. Unfortunately, an open dialogue on the subject has been lacking in India. This has led to a lack of understanding regarding complexities that drive modern-day profession of arms and the necessity of a mutually supporting relationship between all the stakeholders, namely, the armed forces, the institutions of democracy, institutions of governance, and most crucially, the society. This is especially relevant in today's changing world where individualism and materialism have come to take on greater relevance than human values of selflessness, service and sacrifice, and where human rights and other pacifist movements look upon the profession of arms with a certain degree of disdain.

Although the defence forces of India are highly professional, do they work in a modern structure, both within their respective services organisation and outside of it, with those in governance and administration, to avail the benefits of technology to meet the challenges of the 21st century? Do the armed forces carry the necessary punch, which should be associated with their large numbers? Do the forces have the necessary synergy that flows from a high degree of jointness, amongst themselves and with those who are supposed to exercise civilian control? Are they capable of meeting the future challenges, which the country is likely to confront in the next two decades or so? If not, what are the changes needed to enhance their capabilities? Should they be incremental changes or imposed by radical and fundamental reforms? These are, but a few questions that need answers.

The Existing System

The reader would be well aware of the defence structure that was inherited from the colonial masters, and how it evolved over the years, through the many wars, and, therefore, is not being discussed here in this piece. Suffice it to state that the Services have been working in isolated silos, notwithstanding the success in 1971, which many quote as an example of jointness.

It is now 17 years that the proposal for the appointment of a Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) was recommended, post the Kargil conflict. The recommendations of the Task Force on Security, the report of the Group of Ministers, and the recommendations of the renowned strategist, Shri K Subrahmanyam, have been dissected threadbare, both within the strategic community and outside of it. While there is broad agreement on the need of an integrated MoD, the bureaucrats have not articulated their views openly against the proposed change. They have played on the fears of the political masters over a strong unified military force, and have exploited the initial disagreement amongst the Services, on the appointment of a CDS, and the formation of unified commands. Now that the Services have resolved their differences, the paranoia, however, of a strong military continues to prevail. The trend, so far, indicates a dilution and obfuscation to deny the military the executive power in decision-making structures. Jaswant Singh, the erstwhile minister for defence and later, external affairs, in his book, 'Defending India', states, "So marked is resistance to change here, and so deep the mutual suspicions, inertia and antipathy, that all efforts at reforming the system have always floundered against a rock of ossified thought." Largely, the politicians and bureaucrats lack the insights, so essential to manage security and defence affairs!

Through an objective appraisal of the management of the country's security strategy and higher direction of defence, during the seven decades since independence, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that only a restructured decision-making system can manage the range of complexities involved. Given the ever-evolving threat scenario, the defence - internal and external - and economic components of our national power require to be more effectively synergised, consistent with globalisation and economic interdependence, a disturbing role of state and non-state actors, a hyper-active media, and rapid technological changes.

Continuum of Future Conflict

A conclusion, arrived at by Admiral J.C. Wylie in "*Military Strategy: A General Theory of Power*" is, "Despite whatever effort there may be to prevent it, there may be a war." This assumption, made in the late 1960s, is applicable even today and is neither an aggressive instigation, nor a justification for the existence of the armed forces in peacetime. Nations that neglect this assumption make themselves open to military surprise, defeat, and ignominy, as has been repeatedly proven through military history. The

conclusion, therefore, is a reminder to the professional soldiers/strategists/politicians/bureaucrats to visualise security threats, the possibility and nature of conflict or war, when political negotiations no longer serve the purpose, and be prepared for such an eventuality. Another basic assumption for war planning is that one cannot predict with certainty the pattern of war for which we prepare ourselves. It is seldom been possible to forecast the time, place, scope, intensity, and the general tenor of a conflict. India's conflicts with Pakistan and China, military involvement in Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict in 1987, and the recent wars involving USA and its allies in Iraq and Afghanistan are examples of the same. This theory, therefore, entails that our security forces and their plans should cater for the complete continuum of conflict—a scale that will embrace any situation that may imaginably arise.

While studying the entire gamut of probable conflicts, it is emphasised that all threats and challenges to the vital interests of the country need to be assessed in totality, prior to the preparation of a realistic threat matrix. These challenges could be from within or from outside, be they neighbours or regional powers, global players, or even non-state forces, whose interests are more often than not divergent from those of the nation. India's threat perspectives would continue, for quite some time in the future, to be impacted by the long-term strategic challenge from China and the medium-term challenge from Pakistan. Simultaneously, the decision-makers would require to consider the trend of international support for peace and socio-economic well-being, and the alteration of war as a coercive instrument, thus reducing the probability of an inter-state conflict employing regular conventional forces.

The role of the Indian armed forces today, as spelt out by the MoD, includes, apart from the traditional defence of the nation's frontiers, protection of the lives and property of the citizens against terrorism and insurgencies. It also envisages the maintaining of a secure, effective, and credible minimum deterrent against the use or the threat of use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Securing against theft/restrictions on the transfer of material, equipment and technologies that have a bearing on India's security, particularly its defence indigenous research, development and production to meet the nation's requirements, are also a part of the duties that the military.

Therefore, there should be preparation for rapid deployment of forces to deal with border skirmishes and tri-Service task forces for out-of-area contingency missions; specially equipped and organised forces for counterterrorism, counter-insurgency, proxy wars and other internal security (IS) deployments, are also a necessity. The tri-Service strategic forces are not just for deterrence but also for having the capability of a wide array of responses, and options and ability to defend space assets. The defence forces need to be well informed to tackle cyber attacks and psychological warfare. Integration of land, air, sea, space, and cyber power at strategic, operational, and tactical levels needs to be addressed to deal successfully with the broad spectrum of conflict, through a modified, modern defence architecture.

The Defence Structure Restructured

Why there is a need to restructure India's military? While the three Services have been in the modernisation drive for some time now, are they really equipped to handle a major conflict or a limited war? The growth of the defence forces of India in the past has usually been as a reaction to contemporary crises. Resultantly, the defence forces management structures have generally remained unchanged except for some cosmetic alterations to meet challenges as they arose. New equipment, as and when inducted, has been handled by an archaic defence structure, both at the higher levels and in the Services, which the country inherited on independence.

The higher defence structure is perhaps the weakest part of the armed forces of India. The Service HQs are not integrated in the MoD, but are an attached office. The implications of such an arrangement are obvious and have been amplified ad nauseam; suffice it to highlight here that this arrangement effectively keeps the military outside the policy formulation loop. While one agrees that the Service HQs are consulted on security issues, but it is no substitute for being part of formulating policy. The MoD asks Service HQs, individually or jointly, for opinions on issues, be they operational, intelligence, administrative matters, or relating to personnel, and thereafter it deliberates on them, with little or no competence to analyse such military matters. There exists no methodology for any joint analysis of issues.

The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) is the highest policy formulation body in the country on security issues. It gets its inputs from a variety of sources, including the Service HQs, but channelled through MoD; neither the Service Chiefs, nor the Chairman Chief's of Staff Committee (COSC), are members of the CCS, although they may be invited for consultations, just as many others. A National Security Council (NSC) and the office of a National Security Advisor (NSA) were created in 1999. All incumbents so far for the latter appointment have been either retired diplomats or bureaucrats; the current incumbent is a retired intelligence officer. A Deputy NSA heads the Secretariat, an appointment, once again held only by retired diplomats so far, with the Services represented by a handful of junior officers. This is indeed an ironical state of affairs, where matters related to national security are discussed without the presence of a man in uniform!

Political neglect has degenerated into bureaucratic control over the armed forces, thus, quite naturally, having an adverse impact on the state of preparedness for war, the modernisation hype apart. In future war/war-like scenarios, politico-diplomatic factors will play a dominant role, hence needing a careful and calibrated orchestration of military operations, diplomacy, and domestic/international political environment, for a successful outcome. Monitoring the escalation would require closer political oversight and high levels of politico-civil-military interaction. With conflicts becoming multi-dimensional, the armed forces require geo-strategic awareness and specialised political guidance, without the interference of bureaucrats. It, therefore, is imperative to reorganise the networking system of the armed forces within, and with other government and non-government agencies that have an important role to play in a future war. The first step towards this much-needed change is the establishment of the office of a Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), as a single-point advisor to the GoI, apart from other duties.

Attempts have been made to transform the defence structure, ever since independence; these, however, have been only 'baby steps', with no real success. After the Kargil Conflict in 1999, a comprehensive review was conducted, only to be left mid-way during implementation. While a tri-Service HQ was established in 2002, it has remained without a head ever since. The opening of a CDS was further pushed into uncertainty with a yet another committee appointed by the GoI in 2011; the chairmanship of the committee was entrusted to Shri Naresh Chandra, an accomplished

bureaucrat, who was ably assisted by other bureaucrats and former Chiefs of the three Services. The recommendations were similar to those made in 1999, except that the CDS was replaced with a permanent Chairman of the existing COSC.

The difference between a CDS and a permanent Chairman needs understanding. While both would be able to provide single-point advice on military and security issues to the GoI, and better coordinate the modernisation plans of the three Services through the existing HQ, the operational requirement for joint warfare would fall short by not appointing a CDS; a permanent Chairman would not be able to integrate operational plans. The most appropriate solution would be to establish tri-Service Theatre Commands, the Commanders of which would report to the CDS, while the Chiefs of the three Services would be responsible for the recruitment and training of personnel, acquisitions, and maintenance of equipment. Along with the theatre commands, there is also the need for the establishment of three other tri-Service Commands, namely, Special Forces Command, Space Command, and Cyber Command. The establishment of these Commands was agreed to by the three Services in 2013, during the tenure of ACM NAK Browne as Chairman COSC, but has not seen the light of day thereafter. There are utterances made by the present government about the appointment of a CDS, but nothing seems to have moved so far.

Theatre Commands are more of a necessity rather than a luxury. India can ill afford to 'waste' resources and the establishment of such commands would ensure optimum use of scant resources. There are arguments against such an arrangement, but it needs to be appreciated that the allotment of assets to theatre commands would not be on a permanent basis, but would rather be on an as-required basis. The CDS would be the overall Commander-in-Chief, from whom the command would flow to the individual Theatre Commanders; he would also be responsible for the security and defence of the nation, and not the Defence Secretary who holds the responsibility as of now. To cater for the shifting of responsibility from the Defence Secretary to the CDS, the Rules of Business of the GoI would also have to be re-written.

Concluding Thoughts

The nature of warfare has changed over the years. Modern warfare demands that the Services fight as a team. The team need not be as balanced as

is required in a game of football or cricket; it also does not mean that all Services have to be equally represented in all operations. Just as a captain of a cricket team, depending upon the nature of the pitch, selects a right mix of batsmen, pace bowlers and spin bowlers, so is it in war. The commander of a joint task force would need a right mix of capabilities of air, land, and sea forces to compose a comprehensive team, to apply pressure on an adversary in all dimensions, to win in battle. The larger team would necessarily start at the apex level and consist of many arms of the government machinery; for the Armed Forces, however, it begins with the appointment of a CDS.

Modern war cannot be fought with outdated structures, just as it cannot be fought with obsolete weapons. Each Service cannot conduct independent operations and coordination cannot be achieved with antiquated organisations. Even a limited war today, has to be a joint effort, wherein, if need be, the entire nation has to get involved. This truism is relevant, as waging war has become a very intricate affair, with the intricacies only likely to increase in future. The reasons for this include rapid technological advancements, the changing nature of modern war, emerging threats and challenges, and the continuing reality of nuclear weapons. Consequently, a tri-Service force is not just desirable, but an imperative.

Many suggestions and recommendations have been made either by individuals in their private capacity or as security analysts, or by Task Forces appointed by the GoI. Some suggestions may be not be pragmatic, while others may not be palatable to some; there may yet be some recommendations that need a legislative action to implement, though a time consuming process, but essential. Awareness exists, of the fact that the defence architecture needs a change, but the role players are not willing to take the decisive step forward. The aim of the restructuring is not to step on others toes but to provide an impetus to the entire decision making process and fine-tune the war-fighting machinery. It would be in our national interest that this realisation comes sooner than later or worse, never at all.

Author's Note : Even as this Article was being completed, there has appeared a media report on December 24, 2016 that the Raksha Mantri will have discussions with the PM, sometimes in early January 2017, for

expediting the decision on the appointment of a CDS and the formation of joint command structures. A welcome step, indeed.

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THEATRE COMMANDS: A DECADE TOO LATE – AND COUNTING

Rear Adm Monty Khanna*

I had written an article, titled *Jointmanship 2.0* in the 2014 edition of the Naval War College Journal, wherein I had highlighted the shortcomings of our military structures, and had proposed the creation of theatre-commands based on a threat oriented approach as against a geographic one. Much has happened in militaries of the world since, though regrettably, our structures continue to remain where they were.

As of today, we would be the only large military force, which is structured in a highly silo-ed manner. We have a total of 16 single service commands, 13 with territorial responsibilities, no two of which have collinear boundaries or collocated headquarters. To put it mildly, it is a structural nightmare that has inefficiency written all over it. While mechanisms for coordination between single service Cs-in-Cs do exist, in the absence of a unified command structure, the strength of such efforts are resident on the ability of individual commanders to maintain cordial relations at the personal level, and support one another. How these relationships will unfold during a conflict, as competing requirements for the employment of the limited assets come centre stage is unclear and ambiguous. If you add to this a steady stream of emergent and shifting requirements based on highly dynamic and fluid situations in an environment that is muddled by the fog and friction of war; the prognosis is bleak.

Nations have grappled with getting their armed forces to function together cohesively for decades. While the concept of Joint and Combined Theatre Commands was effectively utilized during the Second World War, in the period thereafter, single service parochialism reasserted itself. In the U.S., sparring between the services was evident during the Korean and Vietnam wars, and is well captured by the statement of U.S. Air Force General Curtis LeMay who famously said in 1964, “The Soviets are our adversary. Our enemy is the Navy.” Things came to a head during the

Iran hostage rescue in 1980 and the invasion of Grenada in 1983, both of which were botched to varying degrees. Realizing the danger posed by uncontrolled inter-service rivalry, the U.S. Congress enacted legislation in the form of the Goldwater Nicholas Act in 1986, which mandated a high degree of jointmanship between the services in a top-down manner. It brought about not only organizational change but even addressed training, billeting, and human resource management issues/policies. This law has been a hallmark legislation that has governed how the U.S. armed forces operate for over three decades though Ashton Carter, the outgoing Secretary of Defence, has spoken of revisiting some of its provisions.

From a doctrinal perspective, the U.S. armed forces have currently gone a step further in their relentless drive towards reinventing themselves. They have articulated a new concept of war-fighting, which, in keeping with their penchant for acronyms, has been termed JAM-GC or the Joint Concept of Access and Manoeuvre in the Global Commons. Building upon the Air Sea Battle concept, JAM-GC advocates cross domain utilization of force wherein the means available with the four services along with cyber and space assets could be seamlessly tapped by commanders in combat. It speaks of providing the means to integrate intelligence, surveillance, targeting data, platforms and ordinance from assets of different forces in a single mission. Elaborating on this concept, Rear Admiral James G. Foggo III, Assistant Chief of Naval Operations (Operations, Plans and Strategy) stated during a congressional hearing on 10 Oct 2013, “We seek to bring at the service level a pre-integrated joint force which empowers U.S. Combatant Commanders, along with allies and partners to engage in ways that are cooperative and networked across multiple domains – the land, maritime, air, space and cyber domains”¹.

We are now witnessing the surprising speed and agility with which the Peoples Liberation Army, the largest standing army in the world is going about restructuring itself. Early lessons of the first Gulf War resulted in doctrinal changes. While introducing the 1993 Strategic Guideline, President Jiang Zemin had stated that the PLA “must place the basis of preparations for military struggle on winning local wars that might occur under modern

¹Ronald O’Rourke, Congressional Research Paper, (China Naval Modernization: Implications for U.S. Naval Capabilities – Background and Issues for Congress), Appendix B. Joint Concept of Access and Maneuver in Global Commons (JAM-GC), Jun 17, 2016, p.90

especially high-technology conditions”.² In the 2004 guideline, this evolved to “winning local wars under conditions of informatization.” Further, while the 2004 guideline stressed upon “integrated operations, precision strike to subdue the enemy”, the 2015 white paper indicates that this has been changed to “information dominance, precision strikes on strategic points, joint operations to gain victory.”³ However, in spite of changes being introduced in the concept of war-fighting, the basic organisational structure of the PLA remained unchanged.

With Xi Jinping having taken over as Chairman of the Central Committee of the CPC and, most unusually, to have concurrently assumed the responsibilities of the Chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC), military reform has been brought to the front burner. Having articulated his vision in his ‘China Dream’, he has been quick to realize the existence of structural impediments in the way the military is organized. Given the heightened tensions that prevail in the Sea of Japan and South China Sea, it was this area that received his initial attention. Having a multitude of stove-piped agencies dealing with the various tenets of Maritime Security was fraught with difficulty. He therefore acted fast in merging what were commonly termed as the four dragons, i.e. China Marine Surveillance, China Fisheries Law Enforcement, Border Defence Coast Guard and the Maritime Anti Smuggling Police into the China Coast Guard. This has proved to be effective, efficient, and cost saving.

Insofar as restructuring of the PLA was concerned, given the scale of the changes envisaged, the process has had to be tempered with greater caution and deliberation. Even so, the speed of execution has turned out to be astonishing. The first official hints of a major shakeup were made public by the President on 03 Sep 15 during his speech at the Victory Parade commemorating the 70th Anniversary of the surrender of Japan. He spoke of a reduction in the strength of the PLA by 300,000 personnel and of impending organisational changes. On 31 Dec 15, he ceremonially inaugurated three new divisions of the PLA, these being the PLA Army (PLAA), the PLA Strategic Support Force (PLASSF) and the PLA Rocket Force (PLARF) by presenting their newly appointed commanders

²Jiang Zemin, Jiang Zemin xenxuan (Jiang Zemin Selected Works), Vol 1, (Beijing: Renminchubanshe, 2006), p. 285.

³M. Taylor Fravel, China’s New Military Strategy: “Winning Informationalized Local Wars”, China Brief: Volume 15, Issue: 13

with military flags. Further during a briefing on 12 Jan 16, Col Wu Qian, a spokesman for the MND briefed that the four headquarter departments of the CMC i.e. the General Staff, General Political, General Logistics and General Armaments Departments had been replaced by 15 functional units, which included seven full fledged departments, three commissions and five affiliated offices. On 01 Feb 16, the PLA announced the dis-establishment of their seven existing Military Regions and their replacement by five new War Zone Commands, akin to Theatre Commands.⁴

The scale of these changes is nothing short of breathtaking. Several of us would find a convenient explanation in stressing that in an authoritarian regime such as China, it is far easier for the leadership to enforce its will upon others. This does not stand the test of reason. The Chinese Military leadership has traditionally occupied a much higher position in national decision making than has ours. A manifestation of this is that the Minister of Defence is invariably a serving military officer and is lower in protocol in the CMC than its two Vice Chairmen. Of the 12 member Central Military Commission (including the chairman and two vice chairmen), President Xi Jinping is the only civilian, the rest all being uniformed officers from the four services. Further, the PLA has entrenched interests in a wide range of political and commercial activities which favour perpetuation of the status quo. It is therefore not surprising that the opposition to the sweeping reforms proposed was intense and closed door deliberations amongst members of the CMC had to be extended several times until a decision was finally clinched during the work conference of the CMC that took place from 24 to 26 Nov 2015.

Stratfor in an article titled 'China: The Power of Military Organisation' stated, "Technological networking is at the forefront of modern warfare and is the trend driving innovation. Networking has enabled almost instantaneous command and control, enhanced situational awareness and precision kinetic strikes. To be competitive in this networked environment, however, countries must design military structures that can coordinate combined arms on the battlefield. Militaries must also accept broad cooperation between their branches for the purpose of training, supporting and equipping combat elements. Inability to effectively meet these requirements promises tremendous inefficiency at best and military disaster at worst."

⁴Manoj Joshi, Xi Jinping and PLA Reform, ORF Occasional Paper, February 2016, p. 20.

The point being made is that structural reform is a difficult task in any large military. Mammoth government organisations tend to be status-quoist and it requires strong and astute leadership, political and military, to make them adapt to changing realities and become more nimble in their functioning. Unlike business entities, determination of 'Measures of Effectiveness' in the armed force of any nation is a challenge and this ambiguity is often used to perpetuate the status quo on the grounds that the "current system meets our purpose adequately".

Amongst the arguments made to persist with our current structures, is that theatre commands are primarily required by an expeditionary force and are not relevant in our context. The narrative goes on to state that since we have to still contend with unsettled borders, single service commands are better suited for cogent functioning and rapid decision making. Further, has this not stood the test of time, given our victory against Pakistan in the 1971 conflict? What we fail to understand is that warfare is in a constant state of evolution – if not revolution. To quote the rule of scoundrels: 'if you are not one up, you are one down'. We would be foolhardy to rest our oars based on past laurels and not constantly revisit optimization in the application of force. The essence of speed and simultaneity is ingrained in modern warfare. Admiral Mike Mullen, former Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) when asked what he considered were the three major attributes of a modern day force replied 'speed, speed and speed'.

To assume that we would be able to achieve the required degree of speed in decision making to support synchronization, sequencing and simultaneity of multiple lines of force operating in different dimensions without structural reform is risky at best; though more likely foolhardy. There are also issues pertaining to inter-service distribution of the new set of appointments created/extinguished and their equivalence with the prevailing civil hierarchy that will act as a further disincentive to change. However, holding up military reform for parochial reasons such as those mentioned above is doing disservice to the nation and its security.

While change is therefore necessary, its contours have to be carefully crafted and tailored to our specific needs. Given the speed and agility of today's warfare, the predominance of geography and terrain friction is diminishing. To have our theatre commands anchored in this philosophy would therefore be sub-optimal. Further, with the wide array of options in different domains available for military use, there is a crying need for a

‘master puppeteer’ who would ensure that these vectors are employed in a highly choreographed manner to produce the maximum effects. Speed of decision making, as mentioned earlier, is of paramount importance and the military structure has to facilitate it to the greatest possible extent.

In the Indian context, a fragmented command structure, with Areas of Responsibilities (AORs) based on purely geographic rather than functional or threat-based considerations are clearly detrimental to national security. Once in combat, organisational seams always generate friction; the greater the number of seams, the more the friction. What is therefore proposed is that we adopt a threat based approach in drawing out the boundaries of our theatre commands. If Pakistan is our concern to the West, then let a single Joint Command look after this theatre in its entirety. Similarly we could have a Joint Command looking North (China with Nepal and Bhutan included for reasons of contiguity). As the security issues related to the East are of a lesser order, multiple nations in this sector (Bangladesh and Myanmar) could be addressed by a single command. Lastly would be a Joint Command trusted with the Indian Ocean Region (other than forces assigned to the theatre command listed above for their AORs) as well as for tackling Out of Area Contingencies (OOACs). A construct with four Joint Commands (West, North, East and South) neatly fits into such a proposition.

In the above structure, the all important task of determining the mission (based on the directions of the CCS) and allocating forces for its accomplishment would rest with the COSC and its Chairman. In addition, single service chiefs would also be tasked with the “raise, train and sustain” functions for their respective services.

Could this be done in a phased manner? To my mind, it would be better to bite the bullet in its entirety and endure the inevitable pain of restructuring for the shortest possible period. If, however, this were to be unacceptable, than the next best methodology for implementation would be to define the geographical contours of each of the theatres and get the services to realign their existing commands to the new coordinates while retaining independent command and control of forces. Once collinear boundaries are achieved, the next phase of joint theatre commanders with collocated headquarters of component commanders could progress. The danger in the phased approach would be procrastination by the services thereby giving room to naysayers to stall the process on completion of Phase One; or worse – even earlier. To an extent, we have already witnessed such

a phenomenon in the Andaman and Nicobar Command where the co-existence of joint and single-service Theatre Commands has resulted in the former being persistently starved of resources. It is but natural for service headquarters functioning in a resource constrained environment, to always favour their 'own' commands over the needs of the 'joint' organisation. What's worse, the inability of the joint command to thereafter function as envisaged is then used as ammunition to bolster the argument that joint structures are unsuitable in our context. We would therefore need to proceed down the phased approach with caution, setting rigid timelines and insisting on adherence to them.

Reorganizing our force into theatre commands would have multiple benefits. Apart from addressing integration amongst the armed forces and concerned agencies in government, it would also have a positive impact on the procurement process. One of the biggest lacunae in the present system is lack of an effective mechanism to carry out a realistic inter-se prioritisation between requests for procurement of assets received from the three services. The Long Term Integrated Perspective Plan (LTIPP) conveniently skirts this issue by addressing requests from the three services separately, albeit in the same document. If finances were to dictate that a choice be made between the army's Mountain Strike Corps, the air force's Medium Multi-Role Combat Aircraft (MMRCA) and the navy's Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (Two), with our present structures, a dispassionate decision would be near impossible. However, in a structure based on theatre commands, the decision would flow much more on the employability of the asset under consideration. A theatre commander tasked with waging war against an adversary in its entirety is likely to shed the colour of his uniform early in his tenure. Knowing that he is responsible for the outcome of the conflict, his requirement of assets for task accomplishment is likely to be oriented, much more towards acquisition of capabilities rather than the hardware or who operates it. This would become a key driver for prioritisation in the procurement process.

It needs to be recognised that the need for optimum utilization of our defence budget will only grow with time. Progressive improvements in service conditions essential for attracting talent will invariably result in higher revenue spending thereby putting pressure on the capital outlay. While there are many proponents for a substantial hike in defence spending (as a percentage of GDP), a realistic assessment tells us that this is unlikely. Though we are an ancient civilization, we are still young as a nation state

and confront numerous challenges. Our human development indices remain weak, even amongst the ranks of developing nations. While it is the job of the state to keep its population secure, there are many dimensions to security. Security of livelihood demands good health and the possession of a skill set that supports employability. Food security necessitates investment into a persistent green revolution that can keep pace with our growing population. Energy security places requirements on investment into renewable and non-renewable resources and creating downstream facilities to ensure that growth is not stifled but power constraints – the list goes on. Security from external threats is thus just a subset of the overall requirement to keep our people secure. Given the crying need for investment in each of these facets of security, expecting the defence budget to climb above two percent of GDP is wishful thinking. What we are more likely to witness, is a continuation of the annual hike of six to eight percent, consistent with the growth in our GDP. It therefore becomes all the more imperative for us to ensure that the money allotted gives the best available returns in terms of the protection of the nation against external threats.

Structural reform of our armed forces is a crying necessity. Our basic structure, with the exception of a few tepid changes, remains what we inherited from the British close to 70 years ago. Technology has changed the nature of battlefield where speed in all its dimensions, with the final aim of narrowing the sighter-shooter gap, has become critical. Our military structures have to support this speed of decision making to effectively utilize the available force. Most armed forces world over have evolved their structure cognizant of this requirement. Regrettably, we remain an aberration and anachronism. Justification for the perpetuation of today's structures is sounding weaker by the day. We would be wise to bring about this reform internally lest it be thrust upon us in a form that may be much more unpalatable than what we devise ourselves.

***Rear Adm Monty Khanna is
the Commandant of NWC**

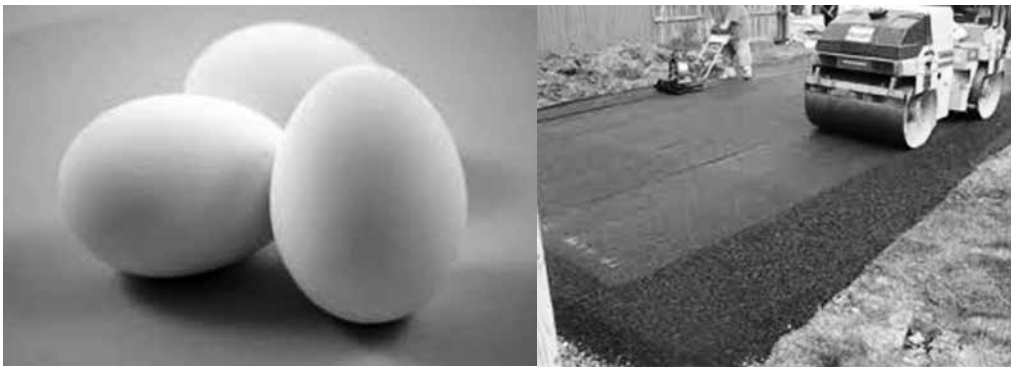


FROM ROTUNDITY TO THE MACADAMIZATION

Air Marshal PP Khandekar, AVSM (Retd)*

“Where there is no vision, people perish.” – Old testament, Proverbs, XXIX

The Title



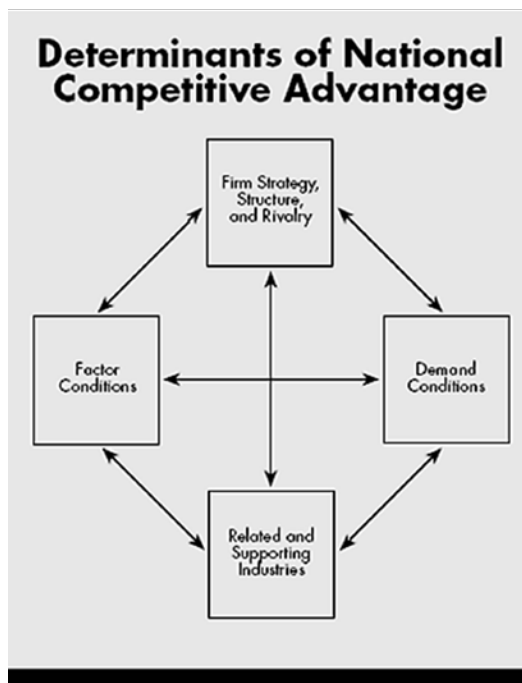
I spent some time in deciding the title of the article. Are we still joint? Or disjointed? Or have we crossed the bridge- courtesies the brains that worked in HQ IDS, SFC and ANC over the last 15 years and more- that we have almost graduated from jointmanship to rotundity? The sharp edges that the “Joints” had, have definitely smoothened out to achieve necessary rotundity. Much water has flown under the bridge as they say and HQ IDS has progressed well over these years, chartering the rough and tough course- in spite of the strong “market forces” opposing- in the areas of doctrines, training, long term perspective planning to name a few and is at a pedestal from where CDS launch is possible. Jointness does not have any standard definition and hence all may agree on the jointness but would differ in the degree, area and timelines in which we need to be joint. If we have achieved some rotundity, are we ready for macadamization?

The Background

“We can not properly know things as they are unless we know how they came to be what they do.” - C Z Becker

I do not intend to waste paper and time of the reader on the historical facts and events in pre-independence and post-independence era in and outside the country wherein Jointmanship succeeded and failed, where it was found lacking. When it succeeded, it was mostly on personalities involved, the “assi-tusi” net and few honourable exceptions who thought of joint approach irrespective of what. Enough has been written about Kargil Committee (K Subramanyam), Kelkar Committee, Naresh Chandra Task Force, the advantages of CDS et al. Hence I do not wish to repeat the same except stating that CDS is long overdue in the VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity) and PEST (Political, Economic, Social, Technological) Analysis of the environment around us. Michael D Haskins of USN has said, “one who is against jointness lacks vision and the courage to accept reality.”

National Competitiveness



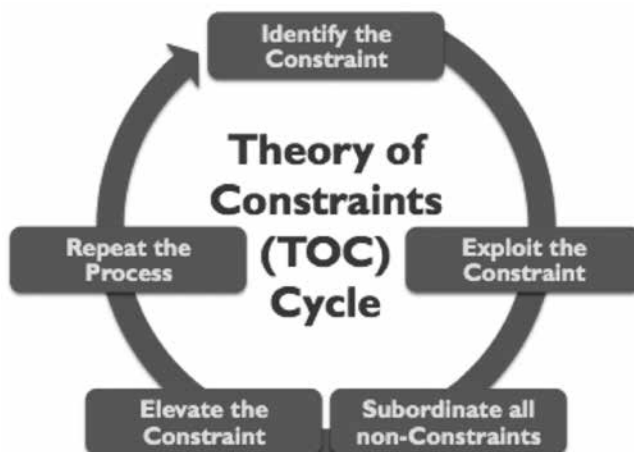
Michael E. Porter has defined National Competitiveness and the diamond of National Advantage. The four corners are- Factor conditions, demand conditions, related and support industries and Firm strategy, Structure and Rivalry. The reader is encouraged to read the book to get an insight into its applicability to defence forces.

Theory of Constraints

“We have no simple solutions after kindergarten.” – John W Turk

In Theory of Constraints described in the book “The Goal”, the author Eliyahu M. Goldratt has brought in a management paradigm that views any system (Armed Forces) as being limited in achieving more of its goals (synergistic outcomes with economy of effort) by a very small number of constraints (CDS and Integrated Theatre Commands). There is always at least one constraint and the theory of constraints focuses the processes that identify the constraint and restructure the rest of the organisation around it. Constraints can be internal (the services) and external (the ministries) to the organisation. Though the name is Theory, it gives a practical approach to address the constraint that is the weakest link for the organisation to continually achieve its goals. It entails answering the following basic questions:-

- (a) What to change?
- (b) What to change it to?
- (c) How to cause the change?



We know we have to change the organisation. It has to change to CDS and Integrated Theatre Commands. How to cause change in the organisations is the million dollar question because of people. The emphasis should therefore, be more on people who matter most in any transformation or changing the orbit so to say.

It is likely that guarding own turf and mindsets may be the two single constraints prevailing in high ranking officers. If one likes to compare Services with corporate world (some talk of company policy while there is no company!), then changes must be brought about with boldness, vision and philosophical attitude.

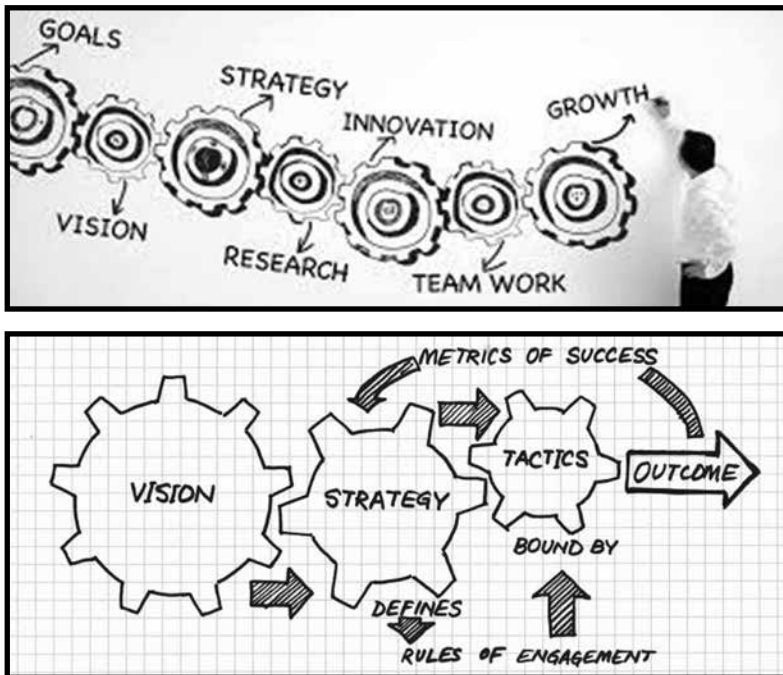
Whither Jointmanship



The very fact that jointmanship is taught from NDA to NDC, speaks volumes of the conviction or the lack of it, in the generations of uniformed officers at all levels over the decades. Before I touch upon the main issue, it is surprising to see that those who get posted to HQ IDS and units under, fervently propagate Jointmanship on which they very conveniently turned a Nelson's Eye till then and perhaps would have been vehemently opposing if not posted to! If true, it indicates the deficit in thinking and seeing the larger picture as one grows. It is said that wisdom does not necessarily come with age, rank, arm, decorations....and one can keep on adding further. Does it have the roots in the way an officer is groomed right from NDA days when he is at a tender age? Even today one hears talking of my batch, my sqn, my unit, my regiment, my branch, my service. The interaction is mainly

based on which course you are and thus imploding in the Covey's circle of minimum radius with a confidence of knowing everything! I have heard very high ranking officers exclaiming, "I did not know that in our country, this exists" after visiting a DRDO Lab or an industry. This is in spite of the fact that they must have visited many countries many times over! Then, where is the catch?

Strategy and Tactics



Strategos is the art of Generalship. The word "strategy" derives from the Greek word strategos; which derives from two words viz. "stratos" – meaning army and "ago" – which is the ancient Greek for leading/ guiding/ moving. In its military aspect, the term had to do with stratagems by which a General sought to defeat an enemy, with plans he made for a campaign, and with the way, he moved and disposed his forces in war. Strategy is not planning. Strategy deals with competitive situation in an uncontrolled environment. Tactics is the science and art of disposing and maneuvering forces in combat or the art or skill of employing available means to accomplish an end. Thus the difference can indeed be confusing.

There are wheels within wheels- RIMCOLIANS, Sainik schoolians, ex-NDA, to name a few. And that results in a myopic view that gets supported by the individuals of similar thinking, which seems to be the majority. Does this make one compete with the junior (rather than the senior) and be at company level, serviceability of aircraft tail number-wise like what a flight commander would be interested in, even at higher levels in the organisation? Do we remain tactical in thought though our force levels and equipment have strategic reach? That is why sometimes it looks easy to fight the enemy than to co-ordinate with friends! Does one understand difference is strategy and tactics in real terms? Technologies are driving the Armed Forces thus reducing the “Art” content of warfighting. Are we ready for the paradigm shift?

Xenophon has said, “No one can be good officer who does not know more than those he commands.” Does it mean one is so straight jacketed that he can not open his mind and remains glued to his past and the tunnel vision as brought out earlier? Even if he gets wider exposure, his basics remain same and may not make him suitable to look at a larger picture. Sir Lan Hamiltong said, “The ideal General Staff should, in peace time, do nothing! They deal in an intangible stuff called thought. Their main business consists in thinking out what an enemy may do and what their Commanding Generals ought to do, and the less they clank their spurs, the better.” Lt Gen J Yeosock, USA commander ARCENT quipped what the C-in-C said, “I am the concept man, you all (the services) work out the details.” Do we develop and accept Thought Leaders? One has to understand the larger meaning of the oath, “I will look after the interests of my subordinates” and not take it literally as one grows in the organisation. While pride is always a must, how long and how much one should see through such tinted glasses is the larger question.

Posting to HQ IDS

Another aspect is that the officers who get posted to HQ IDS and units under by and large are either “parked” or are “second rung” or are those with “hat ke thinking”, which in most cases is not palatable to the “fixed sight” Commander! Naval Flag officers by virtue of age do get rotated in HQ IDS and units before becoming Chief. How many from Army (leaving DGDIA/ DGMI since it is almost Army centric) and Air Force have risen to be Chief? A moot question. In fact an exception will only prove the rule.

One observes Jointness only when pitted against Nature and when the Armed Forces have to deal with the Ministries (Common Enemy-enemy's enemy is friend dictum). Even there, individual branch/ service takes its toll depending upon the issue. Stephen Covey in his book "Seven habits of highly effective people" conveys transition from dependence to independence to interdependence. If he is to be believed then, as an officer grows more in the service he is to become more and more interdependent and not remain stuck at independence level. There are many who talk of service interest before national interest. He also says, "Paradigms are powerful because they create the lens through which we see the world. The power of paradigm shift is the essential power of quantum change, whether the shift is an instantaneous or a slow and deliberate process." One has to decide whether or not to see through the new lens. The problem of grooming officers today perhaps is that they sing the tune where they get posted- a la "Ganga gaye Gangadas, Jamna gaye Jamnadas. Where is the objectivity then and an impartial view from a high pedestal of the things that exist?

Who moved my Cheese

The parable in "Who moved my Cheese" is relevant. We require those common sense rats Sniff, Scurry and Haw that would search for new cheese and not Hem who gets hooked to the available cheese and be happy with it. The Hems in the organisation can afford to do so because of lack of accountability and the tenure concept. We are looking for a change in the system but people won't change unless purpose and process change. Gandhi once said scathingly, "Everybody is looking for a system so perfect that no one inside has to be good. Such system does not exist."



The Indian Way

We seem to have been hypnotised by US so much that majority of our military minds get impressed by quoting US, most of the times out of context, as it suits and is convenient to support one's views and arguments. Winston Churchill during/ after WW II said, "The Americans have always got it right- after they have tried everything else." One of the reasons of US allowing its theories, organisations, systems to be made available in the open domain is to mould the mind of the Commander (in whose mind the battles are really fought) to think the US way, to act the US way, to buy the weapon systems and equipment what US publicizes, without paying necessary heed to the larger issues of commercial interest amongst others. It must be remembered that just as US will fight wars US way, India will fight wars Indian way. Hence, appropriateness and holistic view is of paramount importance.

The Cracies

"Though this may be madness, yet there is a method in it."-William Shakespeare

Meritocracy, bureaucracy, autocracy, theocracy, democracy, mobocracy- each one is a 'cracy'. And 'cracy' means a form of government, or a social or political class of powerful people. Meritocracy is of course leadership by the talented. If the industrial and commercial complexes function somewhat better, it is because they are governed by system of meritocracy however imperfect it may be. There is a need to introspect about which cracy each service is functioning and which cracy the Macadamised Forces should follow.

C4I2 and Interoperability

"Far better an approximate answer to the right question, than an exact answer to a wrong question, which can always be made precise." – John W Tukey

C4I2 doctrine entails defining Operational view based on which Systems view and Technical view could be arrived at. Since we have not been able to define operational view it would have been better to develop systems view and technical view and operational view could have emerged from there as an evolutionary process. There has been no headway in this area.

Seven Interoperability Studies were to be undertaken on following topics:-

- (a) Joint Command and Control.
- (b) Strategic Surveillance.
- (c) Joint Communication.
- (d) Integration of Tactics C3 I Systems.
- (e) IW (Electro-optics).
- (f) IW (Cyberspace).
- (g) IW (Perception).

The status of these studies is not known. By now they should have been brought to logical conclusion at HQ IDS. Interoperability is a small word but has huge dimensions. Operational people think it as a highly technological field while the technical people are hemmed in due to lack of clarity on operational view.

CDS

“Striking a balance between formal planning tools and creative thinking may be the answer to strategic planning riddle.”- Harold W Fox

Our ancient rulers did not seem to promote strategic culture till Alexander the Great invaded the consequence of which was the establishment of the concept of CDS in Arthshastra by Kautilya. Admiral Madhavendra Singh said, “Since the Services are unlikely to evolve a consensus, what will work perhaps is, a Top Down Approach through an Act of Parliament.” This is the US way and we are happy to quote and be the status quo as it looks! Vice Admiral SS Byce has said, “CDS must have operational mandate; service chiefs to raise, train and sustain.” Gen WJ Slim has said, “when you can not make up your mind which of the two even balanced courses of action you should take, choose the one that is bolder.” Even Lt Gen HS Lidder has said, “Integrate substantially at the top and the lesser issues will automatically fall in place.” Bharat Karnad has said, “CDS should be set up immediately with a full fledged operational mandate. Arguments for a step by step evolution are nothing but an excuse for a “do nothing” philosophy.” Vice Admiral SCS Bangara has said, “CDS is the essential pre-cursor to drive the process of jointmanship and integrated theatre commands.” According to Win chi, the Commander is one in whom civil and martial acumen are combined. I quote Sun Tsu, *“The enlightened ruler is heedful and the good General full of caution.”* Chief of Defence Staff should be one

such five star officer and a single point contact for advice to PM through RM. Lt Gen DB Shekatkar has said, “India needs a Chief of *Defence Staff* but his role, responsibility and accountability have to be defined as per Indian requirements and Ministry of Defence should not directly adopt a Western model.”

Interests

A beautiful theory killed by a nasty, ugly little fact.”- Thomas H Huxley

Why CDS is not appointed? One shudders to think but is it the self interests of the Chiefs that stop it- that they will lose the power! Then, how can one possibly rise to the highest post with this thinking when National interests are involved? The author Shrinivas Pandit in his book of Exemplary CEOs has brought out the Source Code in 22 Thought Leaders and eight exemplary CEOs as Commitment, Persistence, Distinctiveness, Curiosity, persuasiveness, risk taking, focus, high energy, learning, humility. Does our rating system check these qualities in upcoming officers? How effective is it in the career progression of the officers? What needs to be done further?

Integrated Theatre Commands

Gen S Padmanabhan said, “*There is no escaping the military logic of creating a suitably constituted Theatre Commands and Functional Commands for the Armed Forces as a whole.*” Integrated Theatre Commands need to be formed. ANC should remain with Indian Navy due to its peculiar position. Rest all theatre commands need to be worked upon. Eastern Air Command and Eastern Command need to be merged with rotational posts (IA and IAF) of the Overall four star Force Commander. Same model could be followed for Western Air Command and Western Command, SWAC and SWC, CAC and CC, SAC and SC. Naval element can be considered whichever Commands have sealines. Functional Commands should be formed as Cyber Command, Special Forces Command and Aerospace Command. Since they are functional, they could be rotational.

The Views

The groups related to appointment of CDS and Integrated Theatre Commands can be broadly divided as follows:-

- (a) **Not required- the status quoists.** This group thinks simplistically as being groomed that way- “we do not require all

this, just a call and things will work. Did it not work till now, so it will work henceforth as well. Hard nut to crack with a strong conviction “I’m OK you are not OK”.

(b) **Required.** The revolution in Military Affairs, the ever changing environment, the shrinking OODA loop in time domain and complexity of operations with technological breakthrough, economy of effort and exposure has made a group accept the inevitable. In lighter vein, it is found that “the lower the rank, more the jointness”.

(c) **The Fence Sitters.** This lot argues with pros and cons and follows the middle path as a practical approach and may shift the stand as per the flow.

Action Plan

“Act as if it is impossible to fail.” - Carl Jung

As Lt Gen SRR Aiyengar suggests, this can be achieved by triple As- Appreciate, Acknowledge, Accept. Another I will add- Act. It reminds me of the Nike advertisement, ‘Just Do It’. We know where to go. We know the direction. Let us not get worried about SERP (Status, Ego, Rank, Position) and BRS (Branch, Region, Service) but Values. Let us work together and walk that extra mile and not mind that extra credit another person may get along the way. Let us co-operate and inter-operate. Brig Reddy in his book has brought out that the national values are never discussed in NDC, Army War College or DSSC or CDM. According to him, out of 18 Core Indian values and 16 Military values, barely five values (Truthfulness, Justice, Humility, Selflessness and Integrity) are common. Something needs to be done in this arena as brought out elsewhere.

Orbit Shifters

A word about innovation. George Bernard Shaw had it right when he said that all progress depends on the unreasonable man. Without a clear purpose nothing will work. The purpose is the compass. And the purpose comes from the orbit shifting challenge- something that is both unreasonable and unambiguous. An unreasonable challenge always needs one to break out of the boundaries of the conventional thinking. It needs enrolment of individuals who are inspired by the challenge and it needs an almost fanatical eye for dilution so that the challenge gets so much diluted that it

seems so reasonable that there is no need to shift orbits!

Engineer

Military life and work is, by its very nature full of contradictions. Conformity to well defined codes of conduct on one hand and initiative, personal action and dynamism on the other makes military creativity unique. One needs an Engineer. I am sure many eyebrows would be raised when I say this. When I went through Google and Wikipedia, I found that the term 'Engineering' is derived from the Latin language *"ingenium"* meaning *"innate quality, especially mental power, hence a clever invention. cleverness"* and *"ingeniare"* meaning *"to contrive, devise."*

So, we need engineers to engineer the transformation, the orbit shifters. I end the article with what Walter Lippman said, "When all men think alike, no one thinks very much" and what Verghese Kurien said, "Where you have the will, you will have the skills." Amen!

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CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF: A TWO PHASED APPROACH

Brig Rahul K Bhonsle (Retd)*

The article proposes a two stage process, the first stage being CDS and an integrated apex level structure and in the second stage Theatre Commands based on a review of the trends in resistance to the same and acceptance at the national, MOD as well as the services.

CDS and Challenge of Military Transformation in India

Theme. Militaries are complex organisations which flexible in conduct of operations but rigid transformation of hierarchies and organisational structures. This is not surprising given controlled bureaucratic hierarchy, necessity for standard norms and form of functioning, which cannot be otherwise, given nature and role that military has to perform. Reforms in the military are dictated more by force of circumstances and less by organisational needs or efficiency even when benefits of the same are evident.

This is amply proved by the case for jointness and introduction of the appointment of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) in the Indian Armed Forces. While a Group of Ministers, the highest body for deliberation on issues of national importance had decreed the necessity for introduction of the all important appointment in the armed forces in 2001 there continues to be debate on not just the role or the charter but necessity of a CDS. The resistance flows from the overall security culture at the national level, conservative nature of the military and inters services discord. A review of these issues may be necessary to understand the resistance likely to be faced in undertaking the model (s) of introduction of the CDS and Theatre Commands proposed herein.

National Security Culture. National security culture or absence of the same in the classical Western sense has been deliberated for some

time now. While frequently it is stated that India's political leadership is not conversant with precepts of defence and security this may be doing injustice to the intellect and wisdom of our leaders. Many of these are erudite scholars of history, noted authors on security and foreign policy and have a very acute perception of the security needs of the nation in the larger context. The absence of experience on military issues remains a deficit, for which sound advice is essential. Yet the reluctance to obtain a single point contact remains perplexing. Possibly nature of a parliamentary democracy where all decisions are by Committee may be leading to greater confidence in the Chiefs of Staff Committee and a rotational chairman rather than a CDS. The limited exposure to military affairs also leads to wariness in forcing reforms that are not driven from the bottom up. Transformation of the military is not only expensive but can be disruptive in the wake of the security environment that is faced by the country today. Nature of electoral democracy denotes that the government of the day could lose power or hold a diluted mandate despite a thumping electoral success at the national level in case of an operational lapse thus there could be resistance for military reforms. The norm is not to rock the boat despite some sound studies that have been undertaken such as the post Kargil Subrahmanyam Committee report or the Naresh Chandra Task Force.

Military Dominated Governments in the Neighbourhood. Exposure to frequent military takeover in the neighbourhood has been one of the bane which has led to resistance for placing the military under a single commander, howsoever diffused his command may be. India is surrounded by Pakistan, Myanmar and Thailand where militaries have usurped power or been in power in various forms in the past decade. In Thailand the military is running the so called National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) since May 2014 and there are no signs of elections for another year or so. In Pakistan even though there has been a civilian government since 2008, powers of the same has been restricted and Generals in Rawalpindi continue to control the Afghanistan and India policy while threatening to depose elected governments. The most recent examples being the 2014 blockade in the national capital Islamabad and warnings issued in the wake of the Panama Paper scandal in 2015 to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif whose children faced allegations of establishing offshore companies by evading taxes in the country. Myanmar has transited to the first elected civilian government led by democracy icon Aung Suu Kyi in April 2016, yet the lady who led the democratic revolution against the military junta

remains shackled on the military and security front where the Tatmadaw or the Myanmar Army calls the shots.

These examples of warped contemporary civil military discord in the region could be inferred as being one of the reasons for hesitation in the Indian political class to nominate the CDS. This conclusion is substantiated from replies given by the Ministry of Defence in the parliament on the subject when questions are raised by parliamentarians. The most recent response dated 06 May 2016 is quoted for reference as below and a series of such standard replies have been posted over the years,

“Creation of post of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) was recommended by Group of Ministers in 2001. A decision in this regard was to be taken after consultation with political parties. The consultation process however could not be completed because all political parties have not yet responded. Subsequently, Naresh Chandra Task Force (NCTF) on National Security had recommended creation of the post of Permanent Chairman Chief of Staff Committee in 2012. Both the proposals are simultaneously under consideration of the Government. This information was given by Defence Minister Shri Manohar Parrikar in a written reply to Shri Pralhad Joshi in Lok Sabha today”.ⁱ

The Indian media quote instances of unbounded risk proclivities of some military chiefs in the past, yet there is no tangible evidence to suggest that intent to stage a coup existed. Noted academic Professor KC Mehta has summarised some of the instances through the history of the Indian Army when there was a sense of discomfort in the political leadership and concluded that the fears were unfounded.ⁱⁱ

Quite apparently political parties will require, “leap of faith,” to evolve a consensus on the CDS. More over as covered in the next paragraph, discord amongst the services militates provides a fait accompli for not implementing the proposal.

Discord Amongst the Services. Inter service rivalry is not unknown in any military. Organisations strive on positive conflict, yet they have to come together for common good. Organisational and personal egos are dominant and cannot be wished away. There is anecdotal evidence supported by documented statements made by senior commanders of services, serving

and retired to parliamentary committee on defence stating that the CDS is not required. The main argument is of past experience of hen things having worked just fine, in wartime, so rocking the boat is unnecessary. Individual services and even chiefs have expressed opinions against the CDS in the past, but today it appears that there is reasonable consensus on the issue. However in as much as theatre commands and jointness is concerned there continues to be resistance. Some of the opposition is pithy of possible reduction in the Commander in Chiefs which may accrue with the co-joining of theatres; other is on more substantial functional reasons as well. Thus overcoming these differences is necessary and needs serious consideration.

Praxis of Major Military Transformation – Lessons from Other Forces. Study of major changes brought about in other militaries in the World mainly in contemporary periods – the United States, China, UK and France highlight three essentials that are necessary to trigger transformation. First is military defeat, second political will and thirdly peer conformity or demands of coalition operational functioning. The United States joint structure is a combination of the travails of Vietnam in the 1970's and the push given by the political leadership to jointness through the Goldwater Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of October 4, 1986. China's most recent military reforms which commenced in 2016 are the outcome of a strong Presidential will to enforce the same in line with other reforms that have been undertaken by President Xi Jinping. In the case of France and the UK, the need to conform to coalition functioning which first became obvious in the 1991 Gulf War led to transition to joint command structures. While application of these examples have to be in the context of the environment obtained in India, these could act as pointers for progression of reforms.

Non Conformism in Governance. Given the challenges outlined above there is however hope as the present Central government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is certainly not risk averse. This is evident from the demonetisation that was undertaken on 8 November 2016 which has been hailed as a step to disruptively impact scale corruption. The Prime Minister has taken the step despite the possible assessment of the impact that this may have on the economy which had been chugging along fairly comfortably at seven percent plus. More over on the face of it appears that the Prime Minister is not likely to weigh down by the apprehensions of the civil or military bureaucracy. Given right impetus by the strategic community, the proposal for CDS when outlined convincingly at the highest level has fair chances of success and the same needs to be pursued with vigour.

Summary of Conclusions. A summary of conclusions drawn from the above review would indicate the following:-

- (a) While the political leadership has been averse to nomination of a CDS so far, a logical projection undertaken with deliberate thought and through the right quarters should sow the seeds of a positive decision on the same including theatre commands.
- (b) Regional environment of fractured civil military relations and take overs are not relevant to the Indian context and thus apprehensions over the same could be safely dispelled. Political consensus needs to be build up for the purpose and while, “lobbying,” may seem a dirty word promotion is healthy and will be in the interest of national security at large.
- (c) Services may be ready for accepting a CDS; however some time may be necessary to build up consensus on theatre commands.
- (d) A phased approach may be necessary to bring about the changes required that is CDS in Phase 1 and Theatre Commands in Phase 2.

Phase 1 – The CDS

The Proposal. As outlined hitherto fore, in the first phase government approval of the appointment of the CDS is proposed given that discussion on the issue has reached a fairly advanced stage. The need is for a CDS and not Permanent Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) despite the adage of what is in a name. The difference in connotation in the rigid hierarchical structure of the military denotes that CDS is far more empowering both in name and substance than Chairman COSC. Practically speaking permanent Chairman COSC would be, “primus inter pares,” over the service Chiefs whereas the CDS will despite the equivalence in, “star status,” will be seen a notch over them. While initially this difference may seem nominal yet as the appointment and functioning matures, CDS will be able to exercise greater authority than Permanent Chairman COSC.

Role of the CDS. The role if the CDS has been as articulated in various forums from time to time and has also been elaborated in the Concept Paper by CENJOWs. Some issues which need focus are as follows:-

(a) A Buffer. Being the Principal Military Adviser (PMA) to the government, the CDS will also shield the service chiefs from gratuitous pressures in dealing directly with the Government as a whole. While it is anticipated that the Service Chiefs will continue to have direct access to the Government that is the Defence Minister or the Prime Minister, on issues where they deem to seek a firewall against interference by the political hierarchy or the bureaucracy the CDS could act as a buffer. This will also effectively remove apprehensions of the military of service interests being subject to influence of the civil service.

(b) Integration of Ministry of Defence. Full scale integration of the Ministry of Defence is necessary rather than nominal as at present. This would imply that placing military officers in the operational, training and administrative portfolios in the Department of Defence and Department of Defence Production, and the Department of Defence Production. Locus and functioning of the CDS and the integrated ministry of defence should be formalised to eliminate any points of discord in the future in the Allocation of Business Rules. A direct chain would have to be established formally between the CDS and the Defence Minister. This may involve creating a Department of the Military or Armed Forces which will be headed by the CDS; in effect this would imply conversion of the HQ Integrated Staff at present into Department of Military under the overall ambit of the ministry of defence.

(c) Department of Military. The main function of the Department of Military would be to coordinate and conduct of business with the Service HQs. Inter se distribution of work with the Department of Defence and other related issues need to be worked out in detail. Role of the Department of Military should include at the present stage the following:-

(i) Formulation of national defence policy as an outcome of perspective planning and in concert with the overall priorities of national security.

(ii) Based on the defence policy planning, coordination and implementation of the capability plan.

(iii) Presenting an annual assessment of military capability to the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) through the Defence Minister.

- (iv) Operational command of the strategic and joint forces including the responsibility for their capability sustenance.
- (v) Joint management of the administration of the force in peace time. Operational logistics will remain with the services.
- (vi) Management of veterans in conjunction with Department of Ex-Servicemen's Welfare.

Phase 2 - Theatre Commands

The Proposal. Stabilisation of the institution of the CDS and the Department of Military or its equivalent is expected to take five years or so, which should be in line with the time line of the Thirteenth Plan in 2022 [though now abandoned could be a benchmark]. A review thereafter should lead to the creation of Joint Theatre Commands. The models in the Indian context will involve geographical cum functional commands. In the larger context allocation of these commands should not be service centric as the prevailing discourse on the subject denotes. For instance the current debate is that Northern and Eastern theatre commands should be led by Army Commanders in Chief given that campaigning will be over land, southern theatre command by the Navy and so on. While the logic stands to reason from the perspective of building jointness the same should be an unstated rule rather than written in stone.

The Command Chain. The command chain would need some consideration. There is essentially the American model on which to work upon with Theatre Commanders reporting to the Department of Defence or the Pentagon headed by the Secretary of Defence and Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff in the loop. Service Chiefs are not in the operational chain but are responsible for capability creation and fielding services fit for fighting in the American system.

In the Indian case this would work if proposed Department of Military is configured like the Pentagon with a larger role in operations. Theatre commanders would in such a scenario be given the operational tasks by the CDS and would be responsible for conduct of operations, while the service chiefs for fielding the forces through training, equipping and administration during peace time. This would be reversing the model proposed in Phase 1 that is the CDS being responsible for capability building of the force though in an indirect way.

As a contemporary example of the model, for instance the Surgical

Strike across the Line of Control undertaken by the Indian Army on 29 September 2016 will be carried out by the Headquarters Northern Theatre Command under the overall direction of the CDS rather than the Army HQ.

The alternate model of operational command and control remaining with the services as at present is not considered conducive to efficiency. As a theatre command is an inter service establishment it has to report to a unified commander the CDS rather than distributed chain of command which may seem acceptable on Paper but is practically unworkable. Experience of the functioning of the Andaman and Nicobar Command could be used to evolve a suitable framework of functioning.

Conclusion - Promoting Transformation

Evidently while the CDS has been officially accepted in 2001, 16 years later implementation has remained distant. There is a need for promotion or in plain words lobbying which will have to be undertaken through a sustained campaign. For this the veteran community appears to be most appropriate for anecdotal evidence suggests that on shedding uniform, there is a more acute realisation of need for jointness and opportunities that were missed towards the same while in service. Building public opinion amongst the service chiefs or the existing COSC, followed by the political and civil bureaucracy is necessary. As a first step brainstorming will be necessary for this purpose and needs to be undertaken by think tanks as the CENJOWS.

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ⁱChief of Defence Staff. Press Information Bureau. Government of India. Ministry of Defence, Available at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=144984>. Accessed on 10 January 2017.

ⁱⁱMehta, KC Professor. Trust our Generals, they are patriots. The Hindu Updated 12 July 2016. Available at <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/open-page/trust-our-generals-they-are-patriots/article3436815.ece>. Accessed on 10 January 2017

THEATRE COMMANDS FOR THE INDIAN ARMED FORCES: AN IDEA WHOSE TIME HAS COME

Capt (IN) Vikram C Mehra*

On 01 Feb 16, the PLA announced the creation of five theatre commands out of the existing seven Military regions. On the occasion, President Xi Jinping said that the move to establish the theater commands and form the joint battle command system is a strategic decision by the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and the CMC to realize the Chinese dream of a strong military.¹ To put it simply the CPC created the Theatre commands to enhance the ability of the PLA to operate jointly in their respective Strategic directions to maintain peace and win wars.

The formation of theatre commands in China has again brought to fore the debate within India of whether the time has come for the Indian Armed Forces to move from its present command structure of individual service commands to one of Integrated Theatre Commands (ITC). The views are many and no one view can be agreed or disagreed with. The aim of this paper is to look at concept of Integrated Theatre Commands holistically and suggest a way ahead for the Indian Military.

The formation of Joint Commands or Theatre commands has historically been undertaken to improve operational effectiveness and enhance jointness. However prior to recommending a model for India ,it is important to understand the theoretical underpinnings of the concept of a theatre and the difference between jointness and integration.

Concept of Theatre: A Literature Review

Theatre or Theatre of war is not a new concept and before examining its modern conception it is essential to briefly explore not only its origins but also what the “Masters of War” like Clausewitz and Jomini espoused upon

¹http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-02/01/c_135065429.htm#

in their writings. This is essentially to give a theoretical framework to the requirement of Theatre Commands in the Indian context.

The origins of the concept of theatre can be traced back to the 17th and 18th century when the size of the battlefield increased due to the development and induction of more advanced weapons with longer ranges and the introduction of conscription which significantly increased the size of the armies compared to that of the 18th Century, thereby increasing the area in which battles/ wars were taking place.² This led to the prominent military theoreticians of the day to discuss the concept of the theatre.

Carl Von Clausewitz on 'Theatre of War'. Carl Von Clausewitz, in his book "On War" expounded on the term 'Theatre of War'. The gist of his writings on 'Theatre of War' can be summarized as follows³: -

(a) **Definition.** Clausewitz defines a 'Theatre of War' as a portion of space over which war prevails. It has its boundaries protected and thus it possesses a kind of independence. The protection can be a fortress or important geographical obstacles/barriers. The Theatre of War is not just a piece of the whole but a small whole complete in itself and that changes occurring elsewhere in the war would only have an indirect influence upon it.

(b) **Command & Control.** In a Theatre of War which is well organized, there should exist only one supreme command, and the Commander-in-Chief in a Theatre of War should always have a proportionate degree of independence.

Jomini on 'Theatre of War'. In his book, "The Art of War" Baron Antoine Henri De Jomini espouses on the concept of "Theatre of War". The key aspects are as follows: -

(a) **Strategy & Theatre.** Jomini articulates that the art of war has six distinct parts of which the second part is "Strategy or the art of properly directing masses upon the Theater of War, either for defense or for invasion."⁴

²Adapted from Milan Vego, Joint Operational Warfare, Theory & Practice, US Naval War College, 2009 pp IV-4

³Carl Von Clausewitz, On War, Translated by Col JJ Graham, Kindle edition, Book V, Chapter II

⁴Baron Antoine Henri De Jomini, The Art of War, Restored Edition, Legacy Books Press, 2008, pp 1

(b) **Theatre Definition.** Jomini defined the 'Theater of a War' as that geographic entity which comprises all the territory upon which the parties may assail each other, whether it belong to themselves, their allies, or to weaker states who may be drawn into the war through fear or interest.⁵ A theatre according to Jomini can encompass both the land and maritime environment.

(c) **Theatre Analysis.** A through study and analysis of the Theatre of War, with all its topographical features, obstacles, natural or artificial is a matter of Military policy and that the Commander and his Chief of Staff must be provided this information under the penalty of the cruel miscalculations of their plans.⁶ This was important because he espoused that an army which operates upon a theatre of which all natural and artificial features are known and where all movements are aided by the constituted authority has a definite advantage.⁷

The Modern Concept of the Theatre

Definition. The modern concept of a theatre has drawn on the writings of Clausewitz and Jomini and today a theatre defined as a geographic area of significant size that contains several potential strategic objectives.⁸ In case of war, the theatre would be transformed into a Theatre of War. A Theatre of War can be promulgated in wartime by the national political-military leadership or an existing peacetime theatre can be designated as a Theatre of War. The PLA with its recent formation of Theatre commands is clearly indicating the areas in which it is expecting to fight local wars under conditions of informationisation and is preparing for the same in peace time.

Key Characteristics. A few key aspects remain relevant to the modern concept of a theatre even in the technology centric 21st Century. These are: -

(a) **Geography. The Theatre is a geographic entity and geography trumps technology even in the 21st century.** Macro

⁵Ibid, pp 50

⁶Ibid , pp 22

⁷Ibid ,pp 5

⁸Milan Vego, Joint Operational Warfare, Theory & Practice, US Naval War College,2009 pp IV-4

geographic factors, in whatsoever small measure, affect performance of all military equipment and systems. Hence, it is prudent to divide regions of military concern into geographically distinct sub-regions or geographical theatres, macro terrain characteristics of which, would impact, in some measure, on performance of each military platform and system. The inability of the Attack Helicopters to operate at higher altitudes during the Kargil War⁹ a fitting example of the effect of geographic factors on equipment performance. Theatres divided geographically are called Theatre Commands or as in the case of USA they are also known as Geographic Combatant Commands.¹⁰ The Theatre commands are invariably integrated and would have elements of all three forces, namely the Army, Air Force and if required the Navy.

(b) **Strategy & Unity of Command. The division/articulation of theatres is an important matter of military policy.** This is because each theatre/Theatre Command, irrespective of its geographical size, must have a strategy (or concept of operations) coined for it specifically, aligned with overall military strategy, in sync with the strategic guidance and the geographic imperatives that likely to have an impact on the selection and attainment of objectives This also implies a Unified Command Structure/Unity of Command working towards achievement of the Theatre objectives.

(c) **Military Capabilities.** Military capabilities must be developed suited to and for each specific theatre taking into account not only the geographical imperatives but also threats envisaged and capabilities of the adversary.

Jointness and Integration

Jointness. Jointness and integration have been the buzz word in the Indian Armed Forces in the recent times. Much lip service has been paid to both concepts but nothing or very little has materialised on ground. Jointness implies that while the three services follow their individual development trajectory in their respective spheres, guided by a Joint Military strategy, they function together and coordinate their actions in a conflict to achieve

⁹General VP Malik, Kargil From Surprise to Victory, Harper Collins India ,2006, pp 121

¹⁰<https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R42077.pdf>

the desired strategic objectives. To achieve jointness, coordinating mechanisms are constituted which plan for envisaged operations under various contingencies/ scenarios.¹¹ The coordinating mechanism obviously must be robust and responsive enough to come up with a coherent and synchronised response in a time bound manner in case the war takes a different trajectory than that was envisaged. Thus, while retaining individual Service identity, it seeks to achieve a coordinated response to developing situations during operations.¹²

Integration. Integration on the other hand goes beyond jointness. In the manner of the US Combatant Commands or the recently formed PLA Theatre Commands it requires elements of all services to be put under the command of a single unified commander who has the independence to deploy and employ the forces in consonance with a broader military strategy. The unified commander reports to a Chief of Defence Staff or equivalent for conduct of integrated operations. The three services are then responsible only for training and equipping their respective service elements in lines with the needs of the respective theatre commands.

Operational Commands in the Indian Armed Forces: Present Structure

The above literature review and analysis was carried out to provide a framework against which to benchmark the present Indian Structure of service specific geographically oriented operational commands and seek a way ahead for the Indian Armed Forces.

Geographically Oriented Operational Commands. India being a large and geographically diverse country, the Indian Armed Forces have understood the need for geographically oriented commands. These are not theatre commands in the classic sense and while each service has its own geographically divided commands, the geographic boundaries of each services commands do not overlap or match. In effect India today has 17 operational commands, with the Army and Air Force having seven commands each and the Navy three commands. The Army's ARTRAC, the Air Forces Maintenance and training commands are functional commands and not geographic oriented. In addition the Strategic Forces Command is

¹¹http://www.claws.in/images/journals_doc/1394685182Deepak%20Kapoor%20%20CJ%20Sum-mer%202013.pdf

¹²ibid

another functional command, leaving the ANC as the only theatre command of the Indian Armed Forces with a unified command and control structure and a largely integrated methodology of functioning, though push and pull for distribution of resources continues within the three services even in ANC. *The Indian Armed Forces Operational Commands thus have none of the attributes necessary for a Theatre Command.*

Command and Control. Unified command and control is an essential element of operations during a conflict. However, either by design or accident none of the 14 geographically oriented Command HQs of the Army, Navy or Air Force are co-located in the same station. It is as if a conscious effort has been made to stay away from each other and not tread on one each other's toes.¹³ Thus it is very clear in case of a conflict a Theatre of War would have to be declared and the Armed Forces would attempt to then establish a chain of command to then fight the conflict. This task of coordination would fall upon the Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee who would in addition also performing the role of being the Chief of his service. More importantly he and his staff would be trying to establish coherence and synchronization amongst service specific elements in the Theatre of War whose operational commanders are in geographically dispersed locations. Thus, for eg, in case of a contingency on the Eastern Front, with the Eastern Theatre of War (which would have to be established at the time of the conflict), the Army would fight from Calcutta, the Air Force from Shillong and the Navy from Vishakapatnam. The result would be "Joined planning and Warfighting" and not "Joint Planning and Warfighting". That the situation and Command and Control is even more complex on the Western Front is well known to all. *To summarise the principle of Unity of Command has been given a short shrift in the present operational command structure of the Indian Armed Forces.*

Jointness & Integration. In India in the recent times the only panacea to improve jointness/ integration amongst the Armed Forces is the appointment of a CDS. The same has been recommended by innumerable committees and according to some media reports and speculation may see light of the day soon. However, the CDS in its present form is likely to be as ineffective in improving jointness amongst the Armed Forces as the HQ IDS, which has been trying to promote integration and Jointness since 2001. This is because the CDS in its present form goes totally against the grain of unity

¹³ibid

of command. The appointment of the CDS, while providing the Armed Forces a seat at the higher decision making table in the nation is not going to change the way the armed forces plan, fight. The Indian Armed Forces presently are neither joint nor integrated. This is going to be possible only if the Armed Forces break out of their respective service silos and look more closely at the formation of Joint Theatre Commands in the short to midterm and Integrated Theatre commands in the long term.

Arguments against Joint / Theatre Commands

A literature review of the writings/views on Theatre Commands can generally be summarized under the following: -

- (a) The air force has too few assets to be able to be distributed amongst theatres and that this would lead to a dilution in the combat potential of the air force.¹⁴
- (b) Inter -service rivalry which effectively turns the so-called integration turns into a farce since the army refuses to integrate its 4 commands into one, but insists on splintering and geographically confining an already numerically challenged Air Force to 4 separate commands.¹⁵ This also leads to another issue which is the distribution of the higher rank posts between the services.

Joint & Integrated Theatre Commands: The Way Ahead

If the Indian Armed Forces are to deter conflict and win wars decisively in the future the need of the hour is to integrate and this must be done through a two -step process namely to have Joint Geographic & Integrated Functional commands in the short to midterm and graduate to Integrated Theatre Commands in the long term. This phased process would not only allow the necessary infrastructure to be built over a period but it would also allow change in mindsets as the Indian Armed Forces migrate to a Joint Geographic Command Structure from an individual service specific geographic command structure.

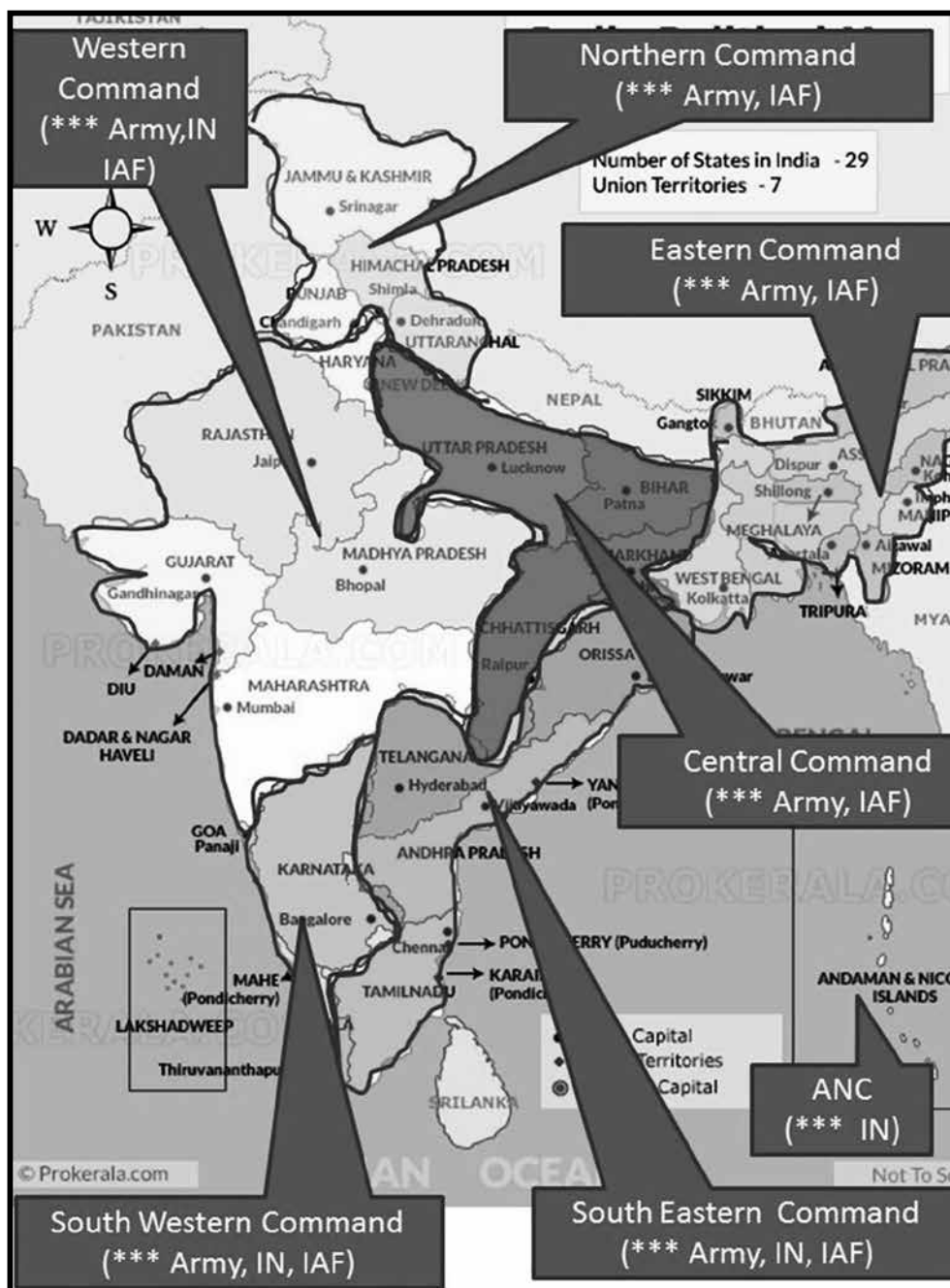
¹⁴<http://www.lancerpublishers.com/Gp%20Capt%20AS%20Bahal.pdf>

¹⁵http://www.business-standard.com/article/punditry/integrated-theatre-commands-boon-or-bane-for-the-indian-military-116093000226_1.html

Joint Geographic Commands. As a first step towards achieving integration it is important to make the Armed Forces Joint. This needs to be carried out by the formation of Joint commands with common geographic boundaries across the three services. This is akin to establishing Theatres of War in peacetime and ensuring that the armed forces plan, train, equip to fight a war in their respective theatres jointly. This would require promulgation of the geographical boundaries of Indian Joint Commands cutting across the present command structure of each service. The Command HQ of each service will also have to be co - located in a common geographic location designated as the Joint Command HQ so that inter-service coordination and synergy can be achieved with greater efficiency. The command and control structure would remain the same with each service C-in-C reporting to his own service chief. In case of a conflict, a Joint Theatre Commander would be appointed and all service elements would then operate under his command and control to achieve Joint Theatre Objectives. The coordination as hitherto would have to be carried out by the Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee but would now be easier as Jointness at the theatre level already exists.

The proposed Joint Command structure would also ensure that the higher rank aspirations of each service are met. The following Indian Joint Command Structure is proposed: -

Ser	Command	States	Joint HQ
(a)	Northern	J&K, Himachal Pradesh, Uttranchal, Punjab	Udhampur
(b)	Western	Haryana, Delhi, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Goa, Madhya Pradesh	Ahmedabad/ Jodhpur
(c)	South Western	Karnataka, Kerala, Lakshadweep	Kochi
(d)	South Eastern	Tamil Nadu, Telengana, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa	Vishakapatnam
(e)	Central	Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chattisgarh	Bareilly
(f)	Eastern	West Bengal, Sikkim, Mizoram, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura	Kolkatta
(g)	Andaman & Nicobar	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	Port Blair



Proposed Joint Commands: Indian Armed Forces

Functional Commands. Functional Commands would operate across geographic boundaries and provide unique capabilities across geographic Joint Commands and the services. The functional commands would operate under the Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee and would be Integrated Functional Commands with their integral tri -service components. These functional commands would be as follows: -

- (a) **Joint Training Command.** This command would synergise training of all three services under the aegis of the HQ IDS. This would do away the need of individual training commands and would also subsume the respective services training directorates under its charter.
- (b) **Joint Air Craft Maintenance Command.** The three services operate a large number of air craft and helicopters some of which are common across the services and some are service specific. To consolidate air craft maintenance and benefit from best practices of the three services, a Joint Air Craft Maintenance Command needs to be raised. In fact, the charter of the present Air Force Maintenance command could be enhanced as a Joint Aircraft Maintenance Command.
- (c) **Joint Cyber and Space Command.** A joint Cyber and space command consolidating all information warfare assets under one structure is the need of the hour. This would be on the lines of the PLA Strategic Support Force which is likely to form the core of China's Information warfare force.¹⁶ This command would be responsible to provide cyber support activities across all services and geographic joint commands and manage and control the Armed Forces space assets.
- (d) **Special Operations Command.** The special operations command would synergise the training and employment of Indian Special Forces.
- (e) **Strategic Forces Command.** The Strategic Forces command would manage the nation's strategic forces as hitherto.

¹⁶www.cimsec.org/startegic -support-force-china's-information-warfare -service/272000

Integrated Theatre Commands

Integrated Theatre Commands should be the goal of the Indian Armed Forces and they are a logical progression post the appointment of a CDS or permanent Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee. Integrated theatre commands would ensure a unified command structure under which the Armed Forces could fight and win decisively if deterrence fails. This would require the following: -

- (a) **CDS & Joint Force Headquarters.** Appointment of a Five Star CDS who would be responsible for all operational aspects in the Indian Theatre Commands. He would be suitably supported by the HQ IDS and its Staff, which would become the Joint Force Headquarters of India.
- (b) **Theatre Commanders.** Creation of four star posts for the Theatre Commanders who would report to CDS and Joint Force Headquarters. The existing three-star C-in-Cs would remain the service component commanders in their respective geographical commands.
- (c) **Change in Responsibilities of Individual Services.** With the formation of a Joint Force Headquarters India, the services would be responsible to induct, train and equip while the Integrated Theatre Commands would be responsible for all combat operations.

Conclusion

The concept of Theatre Commands/Theatres of War is an old one and even military theoreticians like Clausewitz understood the importance of a unified and integrated chain of command in the early 19th Century. Today as the Indian military operates in a Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous and a fiscally constrained environment thinking purple is the way ahead. Joint and subsequently Integrated Theatre commands are an idea whose time has come for the Indian Armed Forces. The Armed Forces leadership of today thus have a responsibility to the generations to come to set in motion processes for the establishment of structures which would enable the Indian Armed Forces to face up to the challenges which are adversaries would pose in the 21st century and beyond. The gradual approach towards Integrated Theatre Commands articulated above would allow not only the airforce to build up its combat power to the required 42 sqns, it would also

take care of the higher rank aspirations of each service. It is thus time that inter service turf battles and parochial interests be put behind to enhance the capability of the force to fight and win in an uncertain environment because without capability there is no credibility and without credibility there is no deterrence.

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DOES INDIAN MILITARY REQUIRES APEX LEVEL RESTRUCTURING AND INTEGRATED THEATRE COMMANDS LIKE US AND PLA

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The Indian Armed Forces had recognisable accretions in size and equipment since independence, but the Service specific structure at the top hierarchy and theatre level has broadly remained same, despite lessons learnt from few wars, campaigns and small scale operations. After every war **one specific lesson always came out loud and clear, that the military and political hierarchy were not on common understanding in most cases, a credible one point military advice was missing, the joint planning has rarely been optimal, and the synergy amongst all the three services, Intelligence agencies, and other elements of the Government was not in the best form.** The concept of so called ‘Jointmanship’ has not worked well, and there has been sub optimal utilisation of resources including logistics. Although having three equally ranked Service Chiefs and each service having its own set of commands, which are not even co-located, may have been a compulsion considering the geography/terrain, peculiarities of borders, conventional and sub conventional challenges so far, but with **extension of domain of warfare to include strategic arsenal, counter terrorism, cyber, space, information warfare** and other forms of operations including out of area contingencies, there may be a need to objectively look at reorganisation of top hierarchy and theatre commands. Post Kargil intrusion, The Group of Ministers (GoM) Report, Kargil Review Committee Report (KRC), some restructuring to address some of these aspects was done, with formulation of HQ Integrated Defence Staff (IDS), Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC), and Strategic Force Command (SFC). A plethora of articles have appeared in the media on this subject in the recent past, after Government indicated some consideration about Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), recommended by GoM Report and need for Integrated Theatre Commands. An attempt is being made in this paper to discuss the need, problems, and **proposed model for India, after**

analysing the pros and cons of recently announced major overhaul of PLA of China, a neighbouring military force bordering us, and looking at some other global models.

What kind of Military a Nation Needs?

The kind of Armed Forces a nation should have, is governed by its **National Interest** in the existing **global and regional political, diplomatic, and security environment, the National Aim** derived out of it. The nation has to have a grand strategy in place to achieve the stated Aim, by having a comprehensive national power, and a sound stated **Military strategy** to achieve it. The kind of **Military Hierarchy and Command structure will then be dictated by the roles assigned, the geography/terrain, the threat envisaged, the technological advancements and all the resources** of the nation including economic resources. There are some other factors which do affect the Force structuring like weaknesses noticed in existing structures, its existing size, changes in any or all the above mentioned factors of the potential adversary, and the economic cost of maintaining it. Normally a major overhaul is necessitated by lessons of last war, change in National ambition/aim/objectives, change in threat perception, strategic environment, and sometimes internal political and domestic compulsions, technological changes, and change in leadership.

Let us apply the above mentioned factors to US Military. US has **global strategic interest**, aims to dominate the world, and needs **an expeditionary military force capable of global deployment**, and be effective everywhere. It has no direct military threat to its mainland (leaving aside terror strikes). The institution of **Joint Chiefs of Staff has been in place since 1947**. However, in 1986, after Goldwater and Nichols Defence Reforms Legislation was passed to ensure closer integration of the US military, leading to evolution of the present structure based in **Unified Commands**¹. The five regional unified commands namely US Atlantic Command, Central Command, European Command, Pacific Command and Southern Command are expected to operate independently, away from the mainland and other commands, sometimes on expeditionary role in designated areas of the globe, require integrated combat power of the three services, which justifies the need of unified commands. They do require some other force multipliers needed to be controlled centrally hence they have functional US Space Command, and the Strategic Command. For Special Operations, a Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF) is formed to plan, rehearse

and execute operations regardless of their geographical location. **Russians also have four Strategic Commands since 2010, with appropriate allocation of resources from the three Services and independent arms directly under the Centre viz. missile, space and airborne forces, following almost similar logic.** The experience of Western models reveal that forced jointness of all combat elements through joint structures, also has problems, because land forces still dominate the war plans, as the notion of “Boots on ground” being more important than precision strike does not go away, because victory cannot be claimed otherwise. In US operation Anaconda, the senior Army Commanders were widely criticised by their air and naval counterparts for not coordinating with them effectively during the weeks preceding the commencement of the conflict, highlighting that unified structures can facilitate forcible co-operation up to a limit, but the true test of actual jointmanship lies in dismantling established mindsets².

Overhaul of PLA of China Under Xi Jinping: The new Model

Let us analyse the case of China. The **National interest is to grow economically, and militarily, invest globally to fuel its growth, with an aim to become a Superpower by 2049.** In the interim be the **most influential regional power; protect its claimed sovereignty, and strategic interests.** It also faced a change in threat perception with sabre rattling in South China Sea (SCS) and East China Sea (ECS). After ‘Not so impressive’ performance in conflict with Vietnam in 1979, a similar large scale revamping took place, and thereafter PLA has been continuously modernising its Armed Forces and its war doctrines, based on lessons learnt by other militaries in various wars, because they are yet to fight one to realistically test their operational effectiveness since then. All the other factors mentioned earlier for reorganization, are equally true for **China with her growing global ambitions with growing economic muscles, problems in SCS, ECS and Taiwan Strait. They need to have global connectivity to offload trade surpluses and overcapacities, security of SLOC for inflow of energy and raw materials. As a subset of her Grand Strategy, It formulated a well orchestrated National Military Strategy, released in early 2015. Most of these factors can easily be deduced from in depth analysis of full text of National Military Strategy and Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)³ documents, and released in early 2015. An intent of expeditionary design to increase its global footprints, and protect its SLOC and trade interests globally can easily be inferred.**

The most important factor in addition to the above, in case of China is the **growing strength of President Xi Jinping, and his determination to have tighter control of CPC over Armed Forces**, besides efforts to curb corruption in Military Hierarchy. The need to cut down numbers and divert funds towards modernization, learning from experiences of US and allies in Afghanistan and Iraq, technological military advances of Defence Forces of other countries, have been a common factors in earlier modernization efforts of China. **President Xi Jinping is looking at PLA to be able to safeguard China's security, maintain global and regional peace⁴, and have the capability to win wars, should such a situation arise.** The overhaul tightens President Xi Jinping's grip over PLA, who besides being the **Chairman of the CPC, Central Military Commission (CMC), also assumed the appointment of Commander-in-Chief of the newly-established CMC Joint Battle Command Centre on 20 April 2016, over-ensuring PLA's loyalty to CPC⁵**, in context some political and domestic compulsions. With this overhaul at Apex level, the problem of common understanding between political and military hierarchy does not exist, and the problem of single point military advice for political decision making is also taken care of, however this model has a major **weakness of over-centralisation**, because expecting Xi Jinping to take all major military decision is difficult, and most subordinates may develop the tendency to look at him at the time of crisis.



However from the eyes of a military analyst, some glaring issues in this model which attract attention are:-

- Is the projected model of overhaul of PLA of China, is genuinely the most operationally effective one, or is *marred by political considerations, control corruption in PLA hierarchy*.
- The reorganization of Theatre Commands seems to be in sync with **concerns in South and East China Sea and Taiwan Strait**. As per the published maps by Chinese media ,PLA has **reduced erstwhile Military Regions (MRs), from seven prior to 2015, to five, by merging Lanzhao and Chengdu MRs as Integrated Western Zone/Command/Theatre**, and merging Beijing and Shenyang as Northern Zone/Command/Theatre, with **no major changes in erstwhile three coastal MRs**. The concentration of group armies are therefore likely to be more in the three coastal military commands/zones, along with allotment of the three Naval Fleets also allotted to them. The teething command and control problems of other services may take large time to resolve, if they have not been completely resolved in US military, having such structures for quite some time.
- **The Western Theatre too large to be managed**, having more than one third territory of China, **including Indian borders, trouble prone Xinjiang and Tibet**, especially when China is engaging in **CPEC**, and seems to be showing interest in Afghanistan and Iran. In context of India, **China will have an advantage of single Command/theatre dealing with operations, easing problems of coordination**.
- The concept of Theatre Commands, although successful in many countries, but has some limitations like the Theatre Commander may not be well versed with employment of other services and may overrule certain decisions at a wrong time. ***The training to produce Joint theatre commanders is a very time consuming affair needs consideration.***⁶
- With 15 agencies controlling PLA instead of four military departments, with equal status, will the problems of coordination between them affect the operational effectiveness of PLA adversely ?
- Despite modern equipment, modernization, diversification based on

experiences of defence forces of other countries, PLA continues to be an operationally inexperienced force (last operational experience in conflict with Vietnam). With such a tight political control, how well will it deliver in operations? The faith in military commanders and decentralized command and control is the key to success in operations.

- The newly designated PLA strategic support force may also become a unified command structure, equivalent of an erstwhile Army. It will bring together diverse elements like erstwhile PLA Rocket Force, Space Warfare elements, Cyber Warfare, intelligence gathering, and other Information Warfare capabilities. This will help in better development of force structures, doctrinal concepts as also certain independent funding and autonomy. This will also be of help to bolster their expeditionary capabilities.⁷
- How will PLA perform the role of “Ensuring world peace” listed in their White Papers, with existing force structure? Even their modernization trajectory does not give them this capability at least for next two decades, especially in Naval and air component of PLA, in comparison with US.
- Is desire for connectivity through BRI, a tool for global deployment capability?
- The impact of overhaul of Dragon Army on military posturing in the region, with global ambition can only be gauged after few years, hence drawing lessons from them may not be appropriate.

Problems and Compulsions of India leading to Existing Apex Organisation and Proposed Model

Let us analyse the Indian Apex level decision making structure and Model of Theatre Commands, in the manner we analysed for US and China above. India, a fast growing economy, seems to be having the **National Interest of peaceful development, inclusive, growth, and has indicated no expeditionary interest so far. It needs a grand strategy to have comprehensive national power, to be able protect its strategic interest, strategic choices, sovereignty, maintaining peaceful periphery, and protect its growing area of interest. There being no**

structured National Security Strategy in public domain, there are many contradictions in decision making for security for the country. As per Know India, Indian Armed Forces in National Portal website⁸, the President is Supreme Commander of Armed Forces, but has no powers to formulate policies for security. The responsibility for national defence rests with the Cabinet, discharged through inclusive Ministry of Defence, providing policy framework and wherewithal to the Armed Forces for the defence of the country. The contradiction starts from the fact that except for Line of Control with Pakistan, the entire land borders of the country are being manned by Para Military Forces, operating directly under Home Ministry, and not Armed Forces/Defence Ministry. The Home Ministry, directly responsible for internal security, is involved in borders, and conversely the Military is increasingly getting involved in internal security. The intelligence agencies are getting coordinated at the level of National Security Advisor, who also gets increasingly involved in External Affairs, becomes overly burdened and powerful to call the shots in all security matters including Defence without being trained for it. In such a complex arrangement, one point professional military advice directly to National Decision makers is rarely possible, but is an utmost necessity.

In case of China, the President being the Commander in Chief of PLA, National Command Centre and heading the Central Military Commission (CMC), the problem of the top Decision maker not getting direct professional military advice is not there, but the PLA allegiance to Communist Party of China (CPC) makes it a political Force. With our other adversary Pakistan also, the Army calls the shot, hence military decision making is simpler, but with the drawback of the military being politicised, does not suit a secular, multi-ethnic democracy like ours. In case of US, despite being a multiparty democratic country, the Joint Chief of staff makes it possible to render one point professional military advice directly to National Decision makers, without politicisation of military. Unfortunately in India, with undue fear of politicisation of Indian military (as is the case with our potential adversaries both sides of the border) in political class since independence, fuelled by growing dependence on bureaucrats, the gradual reduction in status, importance, relevance, and emoluments (deciding relative status) of military took military away from decision making process for tackling external and internal threats. The nation faced the ill effects of this system in 1962 conflict and later during Kargil intrusion. This anomaly was rightly pointed out by GoM and KRC, and needs to be resolved at the apex level urgently by

appointment of a credible, empowered, Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), who has the right place in decision making hierarchy to fill this professional military vacuum, so crucial for national defence, with adequate wherewithal, on the lines of US. The existing CIDS, ANC, and SFC could come under his command immediately, along with the proposed Aerospace Command, Cyber Command (which should be upgraded to Information Warfare



Command), and Special Operations Command (integrating all Special Forces Units). The basic requisites for this system to work, which exist in some form in US model, would be:-

- Should be a four star General, first amongst Service Chiefs, equivalent to Cabinet Secretary, invitee to CCS. The Defence Secretary should continue with existing responsibilities of peacetime policy making and providing wherewithal hither to fore, and the operational matters including rendering military advise to Defence Minister and CCS should be dealt by the CDS.
- The CDS should also be responsible for Joint operations, Out of Area Contingencies, Military operations other than War (MOOTW) and asymmetric warfare, with a priority right over common resources, in consultation with Service Chiefs for any type of joint operation. The organizations under CDS should be treated at par with Fourth Service.
- **National Command Centre should serve as the operation Headquarters for CDS.**
- The existing CIDS Headquarters, and all organizations under CIDS,

along with the functions being performed by them should be placed under the CDS and all the current responsibilities of CIDS like Joint Planning (Formulation of Long Term Integrated Perspective Plan), joint intelligence (DIA), centralized procurement planning, budgeting, and other similar tasks being performed by CIDS, should become part of his responsibilities, and the **CIDS should become his Deputy Commander to ensure ease of transition.**

- **The SFC should be placed under the CDS, with no change in the existing arrangements for use of strategic/ nuclear weapons.**
- Should bring minimal changes to the existing organizations, status and powers of the Service Chiefs; yet achieve joint strategic planning and desired integration.

Compulsions of Existing Regional Commands of Three Services in India

Indian geography, border commitments, Counter insurgency/terrorism involvements, threat perception and military resources has led to formulation and location of Service Commands in the manner they are currently disposed on ground. Amongst Army Commands, except for Southern Command, not many operations with Navy are visualised, unless some formation is picked up for Out of Area Contingency Tasks or MOOTW. In case of Southern Command also, a major responsibility of Andaman and Nicobar and islands in Bay of Bengal has been taken away by correctly raising the Integrated ANC. In most cases the Indian Navy is looking after Indian Maritime interest from Malacca Strait to Gulf of Eden, largely with its currently organised Naval Fleet Commands, in coordination with Coastal Guards for coastal security, and Indian Air Force (IAF).

The IAF is working in close cooperation and coordination with all the Army and Naval Commands. In India the existing locations of their Command Headquarters is a compulsion, and its co-location with Army or Naval Commands is not that relevant for the following reasons:-

- The IAF has the flexibility to mobilize the required No of aircrafts at the point of application which is more relevant than the co-location. To coordinate that a skeleton integrated staff has already been co-located with all these Command Headquarters, with some elements at Corps Level.

- The distances in Indian theatres are not as large as US integrated theatres; hence the requirement of co-located Air Force is more critical in their case, in comparison with India.
- India does not have the luxury of adequate IAF resources to be allocated to Army/Naval Commands ab initio, hence switching of IAF resources is a must for their optimum utility.
- IAF like other Services is a National Resource, with many other national commitments besides being exclusively available for Army/Naval Commands.

With no major change in geography, border commitments, counter insurgency/terrorism involvements, threat and military resources we should not disturb the existing structure of Service Commands. We can think of Integrated Theatre Commands after we have adequate air resources and there is a major change in some or any of the factors mentioned above. One major factor which is changing rapidly is Technology, especially in Information Warfare domain; hence the paper fully **endorses the raising of Information Warfare Command, with cyber as a component and a Space Warfare Command.**

Integration of logistics

At national level there are various ministries looking after various components of logistics including military logistics, however the coordination for military logistics is being done by Ministry of Defence (MoD). Major military powers across the world have steadily integrated their military logistics for enhancing efficiency and rationalise defence spending. Indian Military has majority of logistics as Service specific component, and has a very limited component on Joint logistics model like Medical services, MES, DGQA, DRDO and few more organisations, which is not a cost effective model. This aspect will need to be addressed by introducing incremental changes towards commonality in logistics functions. For instance, it's not cost effective if in one military station there are three supply chains working and meat being procured at three different rates for three Services.

To ensure efficient logistics system, national logistics assets under various Ministries relevant for military, need to be integrated with all the Services through MoD. China has adopted it successfully, where almost 80 percent of PLA logistics is joint, and only 20 percent is Service specific,

which has proved to be quite cost effective. CDS can be an important bridge between Ministry of Defence and Service Headquarters. The 'Defence Logistics Cell' which interacts with respective service Headquarters can be placed under CDS, to coordinate the Integrated Logistics System.

Joint Training

It was apprehended in case of PLA that it may not be easy to train the integrated Theatre Commanders; the same logic is true for CDS and other commanders handling joint forces in Indian Army. Except for Defence Services Staff College, a small capsule at Army War College, and NDC, there is very little joint training being conducted in Services. We need to expand and utilise Tri-Service organisations like CENJOS, USI of India and NDU to organise more Joint Training Courses for all Services to promote integration.

Conclusion

The model of having a CDS to give single point military professional advice to the National Decision makers, and having integrated Theatre Commands, has been successful in many countries. China has also adopted the idea of Integrated Theatre Commands, but India should adopt only those changes which suit us, in light of our peculiar geography/terrain, threat perception, peculiar challenges, resources and technological threshold. The paper recommends empowered CDS and not glorified CIDS, no change in existing Service Commands for the time being, and supports the proposal of Information Warfare Command with Cyber capability as a component, and proposed Space Warfare Command and Special Operation Command.

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SINGLE POINT MILITARY ADVICE TO THE GOVERNMENT THE UNENDING SAGA OF INDIA'S SEARCH FOR IT

Cmde Lalit Kapoor*

The Shekatkar Committee¹ has joined the numbers of those to recommend single point military advice to the Government through appointment of a Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) or Permanent Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (PCCOSC). There is tangible² evidence that in the immediate aftermath of independence, Lord Mountbatten had proposed the appointment of a CDS³ when asked to suggest a higher defence organisation for India⁴, but did not push his point and settled for the COSC. The same evidence suggests that before the war with China, Nehru had accepted the need of a CDS, but was not confident of getting the then Defence Minister, Krishna Menon, to agree to the appointment⁵. Field Marshal Manekshaw is believed to have brought up the subject following the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971⁶. The Arun Singh Committee recommended the same in 1990, as did

¹Nitin A Gokhale, "All You Wanted to Know About the Shekatkar Committee Report", 09 January 2017, sourced from <http://bharatshakti.in/all-you-wanted-to-know-about-the-shekatkar-committee-report/>

²Verification of this evidence will become possible only when Government chooses to declassify the relevant papers.

³Letter from Lord Mountbatten to Lt Gen ML Chibber, published in "Mountbatten on CDS" by Indian Defence Review 07 Sep 2015, <http://www.indiandefencereview.com/spotlights/mountbatten-on-cds/>. The letter states "Lord Ismay and I worked hand in hand on these proposals but I thought it would come better from him than from the constitutional Governor General as I then had become. He also tried to negotiate a CDS but met with the same opposition from Nehru and for the same reasons". The obvious deduction is that both Mountbatten and Ismay proposed a CDS, but did not push their proposal and settled for a compromise COSC.

⁴Lt Gen EA Vas, "Truly, An Extraordinary Fellow", 18 May 2014, sourced from <http://www.rediff.com/news/special/special-truly-an-extraordinary-fellow/20140518.htm>.

⁵Letter from Lord Mountbatten to Lt Gen Chibber, Op Cit.

⁶R Adm Raja Menon, "Jointness in Strategic Capabilities: Can we Avoid it?", Journal of Defence Studies, Vol 1 No 1, August 2007, p 35

the Kagil Review Committee in 2000, and the GOM 2000-01⁷. The Naresh Chandra Task Force made much the same recommendation, changing the title of the adviser to PCCOSC. Will vested interests, which have successfully stalled the appointment for nearly seven decades, triumph again and prevent vital reform to the national security apparatus? The answer depends on whether parliamentarians and the Government formed by them understand and acknowledge the nation's need for professional military advice and fulfil their responsibilities for national security, or remain content to continue with abdicating their oversight responsibilities in favour of the bureaucracy⁸. The deliberate exclusion of institutionalised military input into decisions with long term national security implications, such as acquiescing in China's conquest of Tibet, the forward policy that led to Sino-India conflict in 1962⁹, reluctance to use the IAF in 1962 or the Navy in 1965, consistent support for China's permanent UNSC seat, returning POWs without quid pro quo to Pakistan in 1972, Op Pawan, Op Parakram and many more cases, speak of a feudal mindset that has already cost the nation immeasurable amounts in terms of lives and money. Despite this, such decisions continue being made on half-baked or dubious knowledge while systematically excluding professional inputs to the national security apparatus.

The proposition (single point military advice) continues to attract proponents and opponents, some with extreme views. At one end of the spectrum is the call for a CDS with "full operational powers and with HQ IDS getting fully merged with the Ministry of Defence"¹⁰, conflating two different propositions and ignoring sound reasons for separation of command and

⁷V Adm KK Nayyar, "Need and Desirability of Establishing a CDS System in India", *Journal of Defence Studies*, Vol 1 No 1, August 2007, p 140

⁸To paraphrase MG Devasahayam, "To Correct an Institutional Mismatch", published in *The Hindu*, 01 November 2013, sourced from <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/to-correct-an-institutional-mismatch/article5301812.ece>

⁹Lt Gen SK Sinha states that "Prime Minister Nehru's order to throw the Chinese out from the Himalayas was conveyed to the then Army Chief by a Joint Secretary. The Chief asked for a written order, which was duly given", indicating that the Chief was not consulted when this decision was taken by the Cabinet. See "Stop Marginalising the Military", *The Asian Age*, 15 June 2016, sourced from <http://www.asianage.com/columnists/stop-marginalising-military-645>

¹⁰See for example Lt Gen PC Katoch, "Chief of Defence Staff Coming? A Flood of Questions on 'when and 'who' but Still no Answers", 20 December 2016, sourced from <http://www.firstpost.com/india/chief-of-defence-staff-coming-a-flood-of-questions-on-when-and-who-but-still-no-answers-3165362.html>

advisory (staff) functions. At the other is strong opposition directed against a “Defence Supremo”¹¹, arguing that the office providing such advice would violate the principle of civilian authority over the military, could result in declaration of war without Government approval and could prove suicidal for the nation, essentially bureaucratic rhetoric and obfuscation. A third view posits that true jointness must precede the appointment of a CDS¹², or that the nation is not ready for a CDS – the proverbial chicken and egg question. All are perhaps the narrow viewpoints of the organisations their authors have grown up in. They cannot represent a national view, which must manage the contradictions always present between parochial and holistic viewpoints. Statesmen¹³ are needed to address questions of what is needed to correct the “Drag on India’s Military Growth”; improve the nation’s ability to not only defend against critical security threats but also provide it, as an emerging regional power, the ability to shape it’s external environment; alter it’s strategic relationship with an adversarial neighbour less than a fifth of it’s size; and remove the “lack of political guidance, disunity of purpose and effort, and material and intellectual corruption” that forces a policy of “strategic restraint” on its leadership¹⁴; but statesmanship is a trait that India’s leaders have conspicuously failed to find in at least the last few decades. The answers to these more relevant questions can only be attempted after understanding the institution of military advice; how and why Chiefs of Staff were created to provide corporate advice to the Government; and why the corporate COSC system (or its American equivalent, JCS) evolved into the single point CDS/Chairman JCS system found in all countries of note in the world today. The origins lie in England, a parliamentary democracy like India, and it is into these origins and subsequent evolution that we must

¹¹Ashok Kapur, “Defence Supremo”, published in two parts in the Statesman on 27 and 28 May 2016, sourced from <http://www.thestatesman.com/opinion/defence-supremo-i-144800.html> and <http://www.thestatesman.com/opinion/defence-supremo-ii-145007.html>

¹²Air Marshal Vinod Patney, “Jointness in Armed Forces and Institution of Post of Chief of Defence Staff are Mutually Exclusive”, *Journal of Defence Studies* Vol 2 No 1 (Summer 2008), pp 31-39.

¹³James Freeman Clarke, an American theologian associated with the abolition of slavery, had said “The difference between a politician and statesman is that a politician thinks about the next election while the statesman thinks about the next generation”. Sourced from <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/34566-the-difference-between-a-politician-and-a-statesman-is-that>

¹⁴Adapted from Stephen Cohen and Sunil Dasgupta, “The Drag on India’s Military Growth”, published 29 September 2010 by Brookings, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-drag-on-indias-military-growth/>

delve to obtain the requisite understanding.¹⁵

Before the English Civil Wars (1642-1651AD), the Sovereign alone was responsible for defence of the realm and its overseas interests. The size of the Army (or Navy), who led it and what resources were provided to it were purely decisions made by him. The Cromwell period and the subsequent restoration saw jockeying between the Crown and Parliament for control over the national security apparatus. When William of Orange and his wife Mary accepted the invitation to seize the English throne in 1688, they also accepted permanent constraints on royal authority for themselves and their successors¹⁶. Among these constraints was that the power to collect taxes, and therefore to finance the military, passed from the Crown to Parliament.

Consequently, responsibility for national security was split between the King, as the Head of State; and a Head of Government (Prime Minister) who answered to Parliament, which had financial control. Command of the Army (or Navy) and operational matters remained with the professional (military) head who answered to the Crown to ensure that he remained apolitical. To enable administrative and financial control, the Government created multiple independent departments, staffed by both military and civilian personnel (depending on the department's remit). Military staff provided professional expertise and judgement, while civilians ensured continuity; acted as the department's accountants; interpreted laws, rules and regulations with precedents; and provided secretarial support. Parliament desired separate Navy and Army Ministers, designated the First Lord of the Admiralty and the Secretary of State for War (War Secretary henceforth) respectively, to loosely coordinate the departments placed under them and answer to Parliament for their working, believing that a single Defence Minister was too difficult an appointment for any one man to handle¹⁷. There was little thought or need of a General Staff Branch for

¹⁵All aspects pertaining to the evolution of the British Higher Defence Structure sourced and condensed, unless otherwise stated, from General Sir William Jackson and Field Marshal Lord Bramall, "The Chiefs: The Story of the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff", published Brassey's UK, 1992. General Sir William Jackson retired as the QMG of the British Army in 1977, serving thereafter as the military historian in the Cabinet Office in 1977-78 and 1982-87. He was Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Gibraltar 1982-87. Field Marshal Lord Edwin Bramall was the CGS of the British Army 1979-82 and then the Chief of Defence Staff 1982-85.

¹⁶Stephen Quinn, "The Glorious Revolution of 1688", sourced from <https://eh.net/encyclopedia/the-glorious-revolution-of-1688/>

¹⁷Jackson and Bramall, Op Cit, P 20

strategic thinking/planning or inter-service cooperation, nor was there any recognised need for coordination with other concerned ministries, including the Home, Foreign and Colonial offices¹⁸. The system worked because the tempo of war in the days of sail, the horse and visual communication was slow.

Global events such as the Crimean War, the Indian Mutiny, the American Civil War and the emergence of the German General Staff combined to create pressure for reform. The Army was the first to feel the impact. Its command vested in the C-in-C with a military staff in Whitehall, while administrative and financial support was provided by 13 departments under the Secretary of State for War, six of which were under military heads. In 1870, the first phase of the Cardwell Reforms subordinated the C-in-C to the War Secretary¹⁹. In the next phase, the heads of all departments under the War Secretary were brought together in a newly created War Office Council²⁰, with the C-in-C being designated as the Chief of Staff to the War Secretary, quite apart from his command responsibility as the C-in-C. This made him the principal coordinator of all departments under the War Secretary, though his military colleagues such as the Adjutant General, the Quartermaster General, the Director of Artillery and the Inspector General of Fortifications remained directly responsible for their departments to the War Secretary, while the Master General of Ordnance was often a member of the Cabinet in his own right²¹. The title 'Chief of Staff' thus meant Chief of the Minister's staff, and not just of the military staff (which in any case was not yet subordinated to the C-in-C).

The Second Boer War (1899 – 1902) led to the C-in-C being replaced by the Chief of General Staff (CGS), who became the Principal Military Adviser (responsible for all Army Policy) to the War Secretary, effectively bringing all departments under him. In parallel, the First Naval Lord became the Chief of Staff to the First Lord of the Admiralty²². Again, the title "Chief of Staff" merely meant that he was the Prime Coordinator and Principal Adviser to the Minister, whose staff he was now part of. It was only in 1904

¹⁸Ibid, P 11

¹⁹Ibid, P 9.

²⁰Ibid, P 22.

²¹Sourced from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Master-General_of_the_Ordnance

²²Jackson and Bramall, Op Cit, P 93

that an embryo General Staff Branch for the preparation of long term war plans, under the War Secretary, would be approved for the Army. Its naval counterpart would emerge in 1916²³. The Cabinet Secretariat would be established only in 1916, with Maurice Hankey, a young Marine Artillery officer, appointed the first Cabinet Secretary²⁴. The office of the Chief of Air Staff along with a separate Air Ministry would be established in 1918²⁵.

When WW I ended, the Services still functioned independently, now under three different ministries. The Chanak Crisis²⁶ of 1922 raised the possibility of war with Turkey, and saw the Prime Minister seeking strategic advice from his three Chiefs, who presented him three contradictory plans, each centred on his own Service. Lloyd George in effect told them to stop bickering among themselves and come back with one agreed plan. Winston Churchill, as Colonial Secretary responsible for the Middle East, chaired daily ad hoc meetings of the Chiefs (in their capacity of Chiefs of Staff), leading to a cohesive plan eventually emerging. Maurice Hankey (who would remain the Cabinet Secretary from 1916 to 1938), saw this as an opportunity to establish a tri-Service General Staff. His push and influence on successive PMs would eventually result in setting up of the Salisbury Committee with himself as its Secretary. The Salisbury Committee in turn brought the COSC officially and permanently into being; setting a pattern for strategic coordination that would later be followed by USA²⁷ and India.

The British COSC, although deeply divided during the inter-war period, would play a stellar role during WW II due to three unifying factors: an exceptional Churchill leading the war effort as both PM and Defence Minister (the post of Defence Minister was in fact created by Churchill in 1940 only to exercise control over the COSC and coordinate defence matters; the COSC with its attendant Committees and staff was

²³Ibid, pp 21-35

²⁴Maurice Hankey became the Secretary of the War Cabinet in December 1916 and retained the office when the full Cabinet was restored in 1919. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maurice_Hankey,_1st_Baron_Hankey#Lloyd_George.27s_War_Cabinet

²⁵Jackson and Bramall, Op Cit, P 104

²⁶The Chanak Crisis arose when Mustafa Kemal Ataturk and his Turkish Nationalist Movement sought restoration of Turkish rule over the Dardanelles Neutral Zone, then defended by a small number of French and British troops, heralding the possibility of war with Turkey. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chanak_Crisis

²⁷Jackson and Bramall, Op Cit, P 128

deemed part of the Ministry of Defence and not of the independent service ministries, while Service ministers would remain in control of their ministries till 1964²⁸); combining of the responsibility for planning and execution of war policy with a unified war aim in the hands of the Chiefs, and the selection of extra-ordinary men as Chiefs²⁹. These three factors would vanish when war ended, bringing the peacetime failings of the COSC to the fore once again (these were much the same as the oft identified ills that afflict India's COSC), with Montgomery and Mountbatten pushing to bring matters to a head. Montgomery in particular often pointed out that the Defence Minister (Clement Attlee appointed AV Alexander to do the coordination job in 1946) had no authority or power³⁰. Anthony Eden's³¹ compromise solution to give the Defence Minister real authority was to give him a Chief of Staff of his own³², elevating Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Dickson to become the first PCCOSC in 1955, but limiting his mandate to voicing the COSC's corporate view, without an independent voice or staff of his own. In 1957, following the Suez fiasco, Macmillan³³ changed Dickson's title to CDS. Lord Mountbatten would assume this appointment in 1959. In 1964, independent Service Ministries would be subordinated to the Defence Ministry for the first time, with the CDS as the Defence Minister's Chief of Staff. In 1982, the CDS would become the Principal Military adviser to the Government in his own right, drawing single service advice from the COSC, but with operational and military policy staff now responsible to him.

When Nehru asked Lords Mountbatten and Ismay to suggest a Higher Defence Organisation for India³⁴ and proved implacably opposed to a CDS, their compromise suggestion was a three tier mechanism. At the apex was the Defence Committee of the Cabinet (DCC), with the Service Chiefs in attendance. The next tier was a Defence Minister's Committee comprising the Defence Minister, the Chiefs, Defence Secretary and

²⁸Ibid, P 268

²⁹Adapted from Jackson and Bramall, P 257

³⁰Ibid, P 295

³¹UK's Prime Minister at that time

³²Ibid, P 296

³³Harold Macmillan took over from Eden as the Prime Minister following the Suez fiasco. He had earlier been Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Supply, and Secretary of State for Air in 1945.

³⁴Adapted from Admiral Arun Prakash, "India's Higher Defence Organisation: Implications for National Security and Jointness", published Journal of Defence Studies (August 2007), Volume 1, No 1, P 19

Financial Adviser. The third tier was the COSC for professional advice. The Military Wing of the Cabinet Secretariat provided secretarial support³⁵. This organisation, if not tinkered with, would have resulted in professional advice being available to the Cabinet. But the fledgling organisation was gradually modified by vested interests into a completely different shape, effectively hamstringing it.

The beginning came in 1947, when a three man Committee of ICS Secretaries proposed downgrading the military chiefs below Defence Secretary³⁶. They counted on the support of Nehru, who “neither understood nor was interested in politico-military matters”³⁷ and whose “casual approach to key defence issues and military officers was evident to the bureaucrats who surrounded him”³⁸. The proposal was, however, shot down by Mountbatten, then the Governor General of India and the Supreme Commander of India's Armed Forces, who was deeply conscious of his responsibility towards the military, a responsibility successive Supreme Commanders have either not understood or have chosen to ignore. Mountbatten ensured that the Service Chiefs retained a higher status³⁹, but could do little to prevent their isolation once he left India in June 1948. In 1952, the Ministry of Defence designated Armed Forces Headquarters as “Attached Offices”⁴⁰. The Commanders-in-Chief found that all recommendations generated by their military staff had to be routed through the Department of Defence, where they were commented upon and scrutinised⁴¹. This effectively made the Defence Secretary the Minister's Chief of Staff and enabled him to become the guardian of the Defence Minister's Office. In the next step,

³⁵Gen VP Malik, “Complexities of National Decision Making Process”, CLAWS Journal, Summer 2011, P 3

³⁶Lt Gen SK Sinha, “Stop Marginalising the Military”, The Asian Age, 15 June 2016, sourced from <http://www.asianage.com/columnists/stop-marginalising-military-645>

³⁷Lt Gen EA Vas, “Truly, an Extraordinary Fellow”, published 18 May 2014, sourced from <http://www.rediff.com/news/special/special-truly-an-extraordinary-fellow/20140518.htm>

³⁸Ibid

³⁹Nitin A Gokhale, “Higher Defence Management in India: Need for Urgent Reappraisal”, CLAWS Journal, Summer 2013, P 17

⁴⁰Gen VP Malik, Op Cit, P 3.

⁴¹Adm Arun Prakash, “Civil Military Dissonance: A Chink in India's Armour”, Third K Subramanyam Memorial Lecture at India International Centre, 20 January 2014, sourced from [http://www.globalindiafoundation.org/Admiral%20Arun%20Prakash%20Speech\[1\].pdf](http://www.globalindiafoundation.org/Admiral%20Arun%20Prakash%20Speech[1].pdf)

on 01 April 1955, the Commanders-in-Chief were re-designated Chiefs of Staff, i.e., heads of the military staff that had already been subordinated to the Defence Secretary. This change in nomenclature was to have been accompanied by creation of Service Councils, on the same pattern as in UK, which would have ensured they remained the actual (as opposed to merely titular) chiefs of staff, but these councils were never created⁴². Next came removing their access to ministerial level. The DCC metamorphosed into the Emergency Committee of the Cabinet, then into the CCPA and finally into the CCS. Service Chiefs, who attended DCC meetings, found themselves asked to attend only when required⁴³ – with the determination of when they were required left to the Cabinet Secretary. In parallel, the Defence Minister's Committee, with a formal agenda and minutes, was replaced by an informal RM's morning meeting, with no agenda and no records, before being discontinued. Promulgation of the Government of India (Allocation of Business Rules) in 1961, which specifically made the Defence Secretary responsible for business pertaining to, inter alia, "Defence of India and every part thereof including preparation for defence and all such acts as may be conducive in times of war to its prosecution and after its termination to effective demobilization; the Armed Forces of the Union, namely, Army, Navy and Air Force; and Integrated Headquarters of the Ministry of Defence comprising of Army Headquarters, Naval Headquarters, Air Headquarters and Defence Staff Headquarters"⁴⁴, cemented his position as the de facto Chief of Staff to the Defence Minister, i.e. the Chief of Defence Staff. In the final step, the Military Wing of the Cabinet Secretariat was subordinated to the Defence Secretary in 1991, effectively isolating the COSC completely from the Cabinet and forcing it to route its recommendations through the Defence Secretary⁴⁵. India thus became the only country in the world to subordinate what should have been the Defence Minister's military staff to his civilian staff, making the Department of Defence, in the words of an erstwhile Defence Minister "the principal destroyer of the cutting edge of

⁴²Lt Gen SK Sinha, "Stop Marginalising the Military" Op Cit.

⁴³Gen VP Malik, Op Cit, p 3

⁴⁴Extract from Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules 1961, under section 'Department of Defence', SIs 1-3

⁴⁵Vinod Anand, "Management of Defence: Towards an Integrated and Joint Vision", sourced from <https://www.idsa-india.org/an-feb-2-01.html>

⁴⁶Shri Jaswant Singh, in "Defending India, published Macmillan India (1999), p 109.

the military's morale; ironic considering that the very reverse of it is their responsibility"⁴⁶. It is this status that would get stuck in a time warp, despite politico-military failures and continued financial crises, destroying the institutionalised structure of professional military advice to the Government.

It is evident from the foregoing that the posts of Chiefs of Army, Navy and Air Force Staff were created in UK to be the Chiefs of specialised military staff to Service Ministers, and the posts of PCCOSC/CDS were created to head the Defence Minister's staff. India's Higher Defence Structure in 1947 assumed much the same role from them, but in the absence of clarity, left the job of Chief of the Defence Minister's staff a vacuum. Unlike in UK, where a Defence Minister with full authority over Service Departments would emerge only in 1964, India started with a single Defence Minister, totally unfamiliar with politico-military matters. Bureaucratic machination and turf considerations thereafter resulted in subordination of the Defence Minister's military staff to the civilian staff, instead of to the minister and through him to Parliament. This is the root cause of "this dysfunctional and inefficient business model that we have, wherein professional competence, domain expertise, accountability, responsibility and authority reside in separate silos"⁴⁷. The late K Subrahmanyam, considered the doyen of Indian strategic thought, pithily summed up the situation when he said, "Politicians enjoy power without responsibility, bureaucrats wield power without accountability, and the military assumes responsibility without direction"⁴⁸."

"In no democracy does a civil servant act as an intermediary between the armed services and political executive, and what's more has the last word. This happens only in India"⁴⁹. In India, however, terminological inexactitude⁵⁰, coupled with the bureaucracy's role as interpreter of rules and regulations and continued disinterest of the people's representatives

⁴⁷Admiral DK Joshi, quoted by Cmde C Uday Bhaskar, "Reforming India's Higher Defence Management: Will Modi Bite the Bullet", The Economic times, 16 October 2014, sourced from <http://economic-times.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/reforming-indias-higher-defence-management-will-mo-di-bite-the-bullet/articleshow/44832905.cms>

⁴⁸Ibid

⁴⁹Lt Gen SK Sinha, "Stop Marginalising the Military", The Asian Age, 15 June 2016, sourced from <http://www.asianage.com/columnists/stop-marginalising-military-645>

⁵⁰A term first coined by Winston Churchill in 1906

in politico-military affairs have combined to make the Defence Secretary the de facto Chief of Defence Staff. Unless the institution of military advice to the Cabinet, without bureaucratic interpretation and interference, is restored, the appointment of a PCCOSC or a CDS will merely be cosmetic, applying a temporary salve till the next crisis hits the nation. One can only pray that the nation continues being able to afford the continued cost in lives and wealth.

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The views expressed are personal views of the author.

CDS AND NEED FOR INTEGRATED THEATRE COMMANDS

Cdr G Jagannath*

“It takes all our services together plus the industrial effort of our nation to win any major war.”¹

Gen Omar Bradley

INTRODUCTION

Do We Need to be Joint ?

Since its fledgling days Indian Armed Forces has been grappling with the questions of Joint Structures at the highest levels of India's Politico-Military hierarchy. The initial structure envisaged under Lord Ismay made provisions for Jointmanship at the highest levels². The most obvious reason for the same could be the experience of the allied powers during World War II, which made it clear that any operations in a complex battle field requires Jointmanship at the highest levels. That was in 1947. As we look into the future, joint operations in a networked environment would be a fundamental requirement. There is a broad understanding amongst all the major armed forces of the world that no single service by itself can win a war.

One of most common refrains with regards to creating an established Joint Structure at the Higher Defence Organisation (HDO) level is that this is required primarily for expeditionary capability. Therefore, as India does

¹“Major Joint/combined Operations” by Vego, Milan N. - Joint Force Quarterly, Issue 48, January 2008| Online Research Library: Questia. (2017). Questia.com. Retrieved 3 January 2017, from <https://www.questia.com/magazine/1G1-183044416/major-joint-combined-operations>

²Wing Commander R Venkataraman. India's Higher Defence Organisation and Management. New Delhi: KW Publishers Pvt Ltd, 2011, p.xii.

not profess any territorial ambitions or global aspirations, it does not require such a structure. Whilst it maybe argued that India, without expansionist ambitions does not require expeditionary capability, it would be naïve of us to assume that it does not face any challenges with mandate joint structures at HDO level.

Region Scan

India's Myraid Interests and Challenges

(a) Indian Ocean Region (IOR). India's interests cover a wide range and scope. Primarily a peninsular nation which juts out prominently into the Indian Ocean, it straddles major International Shipping Lanes (ISL) which crisscross the region. These ISLs are critical for trade, commerce and energy security not only to the nations in the littorals but also to the South East Asian nations which rely on its safety.

(b) Island Territories. Andaman and Nicobar as well as Lakshadweep group of islands form a critical part of our nation's territory. Safeguarding of these islands require a robust amphibious capability. Amphibious capability requires jointmanship at the highest level.

(c) Amphibious Operations. Without established and working joint structures at the highest level, no armed force in the world can mount an amphibious operation at a short notice. While its not impossible to undertake an amphibious operation without such structures, experience from previous wars fought, makes it amply clear that ad-hoc structures are no replacement for permanent structures.

(d) Special Operations. One of the key triggers for United States setting up joint structure was the experience they gained during Operation Eagle Claw. Special operations are best undertaken jointly. In order to undertake an operation like Eagle Claw in future, we need to setup structures which facilitate its planning and execution.

Rising China. China's increasingly assertive stance and muscle flexing makes it imperative for us to be alert and agile. As its economic might expands, China wants to assume greater stakes in international arena. The increased defence expenditure, unresolved border disputes, economic rivalry and oil interests in South China Sea are some of the issues in

considering any future confrontation scenario. While our core area of interest lies in the IOR, we should also be prepared to defend our interests in areas beyond IOR. Such a capability, while purely defensive in nature, cannot be achieved by a single service.

Af- Pak Region. The Af-Pak region is of key interest to India. The China-Pak nexus and the operationalisation of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) makes the certain regions of Afghanistan and Baluchistan areas of primary interest to us. The recent past saw India upping the ante in these two regions. However, any future operation in these regions can only be feasible if we jointly plan and prepare for it .

Resource Crunch. In a nation which faces severe socio-economic challenges, it will be impractical for us to expect unlimited defence budget. Resource sharing and complementing each other's capabilities in order to overcome individual limitations is the only way out. If we do not have an apex body to oversee defence acquisition, we will continue to be victims of turf-war and parochial attitudes as hitherto.

An Increasingly VUCA World. Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity (VUCA) characterises the present world order. Our ability to deal with VUCA will be subject to our ability to think and act together.

Out of Area Contingencies (OOAC). One of the key benefits of joint structures is harnessing of complementary capabilities, accrue ment of greater flexibility and thus availability of options towards identifying and exploitation of enemy vulnerability over a wide spectrum not only by each service, but across all dimensions. A joint force structure deployed over a Joint Theatre Command allows a force commander to pose multidimensional threats to the enemy by using one's strengths against the enemy's weaknesses.

Joint Operations. Joint forces would synergise the individual components of the armed forces. However, among the various challenges faced by joint forces are the differences in ways of warfare, decision making, planning process and doctrine leading to lack of inter-operability. Another impediment is the lack of common logistic support and sustainment. The basic operating procedures and working culture of the services differ from each other from the lowest to the highest level. Lessons learnt by USA during Operation Eagle Claw is a stark example of the perils of undertaking a joint operation without equipping, training and planning for it.

WHAT OTHERS HAVE DONE? ENVIRONMENT SCAN

The role of CDS in the HDO has been mired in controversy. There is a difference of opinion between CDS and a permanent Chairman COSC. To an extent many view that the present structure of COSC has served India well and thus “if something is not broken – it doesn’t require fixing”. Various Committees and Boards have recommended different models, thus obfuscating an already contentious issue. Incidentally, the GoM report of 2001 recommended the CDS model, the Naresh Chandra Committee in 2012 favored a Chairman COSC model. The government has held the issue in abeyance until a consensus is achieved within politico-bureaucratic-military trinity³. With such an ongoing raging controversy, it would be beneficial for us to cast a look at the existing structure in other nations.

In order to understand what others have done to address these issues, let’s have a look at two nations which are relevant to us, China and USA. While joint structures exist in many other nations, the decision to take a look at only these two nations is deliberate. The choice to analyse China is because of the fact that it’s our largest and most powerful neighbour. Also China’s is latest entrant to the ‘Jointmanship’ model and thus it would benefit us to take a look as to how it chose to implement it. USA on the other hand has been in the game for long and its joint structures have matured over a period of time. Thus an analysis of its model would be highly beneficial to us. Also the contrast between both the nations in terms of their political structures is apparent.

China’s Military Modernisation

The People’s Liberation Army (PLA) comprises China’s main armed forces and is exclusively under the authority of the Central Military Commission (CMC). Although it is called the People’s Liberation Army, the PLA consists of four services—the PLA Army (PLAA), the PLA Navy (PLAN), PLA Air Force (PLAAF)—and as of December 31, 2015, the PLA Rocket Force (PLARF). Additionally, China uses paramilitary forces, in particular, the Coast Guard, to patrol the waters within the nine- dash line. Starting in late 2015, China began to implement plans for structural military reorganisation that had been announced at the Third Plenum of the 18th Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in November 2013, with the goal of fully

³Ibid.

implementing the reforms shown in Figure 3 by 2020⁴. China had concluded that the pre-reform PLA command structure was top heavy, which hindered joint operations in a local wars context, and China's 2015 White Paper had focused on continuing to build a military capable of fighting "informationised local wars". The future battlefield is projected to be more dynamic and more fast paced, requiring lower echelon leaders to take the initiative and make battlefield decisions without having to wait for orders from higher up the command chain⁵. The joint operations that the PLA envisions conducting in the future require faster decision-making loops and shortened time gaps between sensors and shooters, both of which could be gained by giving lower level officers more authority to command⁶.

Reforming the Middle More than the Top. There are important, and sometimes questionable, limits to such reforms. While the reforms are considerable, particularly within the midlevel bureaucracy, the top levels of the command structure will not be restructured. As depicted in Fig 3, the Central Military Commission (CMC) remains the dominant stakeholder in leadership of China's military. Additionally, the role of the Politburo, State Council, and Ministry of National Defence appear not to have been meaningfully altered. The continued power of the CMC and the military's permanent connection to the Communist Party of China (CCP) makes it clear that the reforms will not fully remake the PLA as a Western military. Indeed, many of the characteristics of the PLA are still unique to the Chinese system.⁷

United States of America

Goldwater-Nichols DoD Reorganisation Act. The Goldwater-Nichols DoD Reorganisation Act of 1986 streamlined the chain of command in wartime military operations, beginning with the President down through the Secretary of Defence and then on directly to unified combat commanders bypassing the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This act also specified that no officer could be promoted to the rank of Brigadier or equivalent unless he has

⁴Csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com. Retrieved 5 January 2017, from https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/160801_chinese_military_reform.pdf

⁵Kevin McCauley, "System of Systems Operational Capability: Operational Units and Elements," The Jamestown Foundation, China Brief 13, no. 6 (March 15, 2013).

⁶Ibid.

⁷Csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com. Op cit.

served in a joint duty assignment and/or met requirements for joint staff education⁸.

Structure of Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). The collective body of the JCS is headed by the Chairman (or the Vice Chairman in the Chairman's absence), who sets the agenda and presides over JCS meetings. Responsibilities as members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff take precedence over duties as the Chiefs of Military Services. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is the principal military adviser to the President, Secretary of Defense, and the National Security Council (NSC), however, all JCS members are by law military advisers, and they may respond to a request or voluntarily submit, through the Chairman, advice or opinions to the President, the Secretary of Defense, or NSC.

Structure and Role of Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). The Joint Chiefs of Staff have no executive authority to command combatant forces. The issue of executive authority was clearly resolved by the Goldwater-Nichols DOD Reorganization Act of 1986: "The Secretaries of the Military Departments shall assign all forces under their jurisdiction to unified and specified combatant commands to perform missions assigned to those commands..."; the chain of command "runs from the President to the Secretary of Defense; and from the Secretary of Defence to the commander of the combatant command."⁹

Combatant Commands. The Secretaries of the Military Departments assign all forces to combatant commands except those forces meant to organise, train, administer and maintain their respective forces. The CJCS may transmit communications to the Combatant Commands from the President and Secretary of Defence but does not exercise military command over any combatant forces.¹⁰

Military Service Chiefs. The military Service Chiefs are often said to "wear two hats." As members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, they offer advice to the President, the Secretary of Defense, and the NSC. As the chiefs of

⁸Wills, Steven. "THE EFFECT OF THE GOLDWATER-NICHOLS ACT OF 1986 ON NAVAL STRATEGY, 1987-1994." *Naval War College Review* 69.2 (2016).

⁹ibid.

¹⁰U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE > Military Services > Unified Combatant Commands . (2017). Defense.gov. Retrieved 5 January 2017, from <https://www.defense.gov/Military-Services/Unified-Combatant-Commands>

the Military Services, they are responsible to the Secretaries of their Military Departments for management of the Services. The Service Chiefs serve for 4 years. By custom, the Vice Chiefs of the Services act for their chiefs in most matters having to do with day-to-day operation of the Services. The duties of the Service Chiefs as members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff take precedence over all their other duties.¹¹

Lessons and Analysis of Jointness Models

The analysis of CDS models reveals that each of them offers some lessons, from which we can draw upon. In the US model all operational forces are organised into truly Unified Combatant Commands which would be directly under the Secretary of Defence but separate from the military departments. The Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (JCSC), in USA is the Principal Military Adviser to the President and assists the Secretary of Defence in exercising direction over the Unified Commands. He holds no operational authority over the Combatant Commanders who function directly under Secretary of Defence. On the other hand, China's military modernisation effort, whilst addressing the mid-level military structures, does not attempt to alter the political control in form of primacy of CMC over its military. The key highlights of the CDS models are as follows:-

- (a) The CDS provides a single point military advice to the government.
- (b) All three Service Chiefs function under the CDS.
- (c) CDS is the de-facto head of all Armed Forces of the country.
- (d) The Defence Secretary is the administrative head of the Department of Defence, while the Secretary of Defence is the principal defence policy advisor to the President in the US.
- (e) Lack of synergy and jointness among the forces was cited as the main reason necessitating reforms.
- (f) "Integrated Decision Making" was another objective of the reforms.

¹¹About the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Op Cit.

Integrated Theatre Command Model. The concept of Integrated Theatre Command (ITC) is applicable to both USA and China. In both cases, the meaning of “Theatres” though relating to large contiguous masses, differs from each other significantly. Key aspects of Theatre Command as in force in both these nations are summarised in succeeding paragraphs:-

USA

(a) **Combatant Command.** A Unified Combatant Command (UCC) is a United States Department of Defence command that is composed of forces from at least two Military Departments and has a broad and continuing mission. These commands are established to provide effective command and control of U.S. military forces, regardless of branch of service, in peace and war. They are organised either on a geographical basis (known as “Area of Responsibility”, AOR) or on a functional basis, such as special operations, power projection, or transport. UCCs are “joint” commands with specific badges denoting their affiliation.

(b) **Combatant Commander.** Each unified command is led by a Combatant Commander (CCDR), who is a four-star general or admiral. CCDRs exercise combatant command (COCOM), a specific type of non-transferable command authority over assigned forces, regardless of branch of service, which is vested only in the CCDRs by federal law. The Chain of Command for operational purposes (as per the Goldwater–Nichols Act) goes from the President through the Secretary of Defense to the Combatant Commanders.

(c) **Prerequisites for CCDR.** The Goldwater-Nichols Act and its subsequent implementation legislation also resulted in specific Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) requirements for officers before they could attain flag or general officer rank thereby preparing them for duty in Joint assignments such as UCC staff or Joint Chiefs of Staff assignments, which are strictly controlled tour length rotations of duty.

(d) **Chain of Command in a Theatre Command.** The operational chain of command runs from the President to the Secretary of Defence to the Combatant Commanders of the combatant commands. Under Goldwater-Nichols, the service chiefs (also four stars in rank) are charged with the responsibility of the “strategic direction, unified operation of combatant commands, and the integration of all land, naval, and air forces in an efficient “unified combatant command” force. Furthermore, the Secretaries of the

Military Departments (i.e. Secretary of the Army, Secretary of the Navy, and the Secretary of the Air Force) are legally responsible to “organize, train and equip” combatant forces and, as directed by the Secretary of Defence, assign their forces for use by the combatant commands. The Secretaries of the Military Departments also do not exercise any operational control over their forces

China

(e) **Broad Structure.** PLA ground forces at the command level below the CMC structure have been reorganised from seven military regions (MRs) to five Theatre Commands (Eastern, Southern, Western, Northern, Central) that cover all of China’s territory.¹²

(f) The Theatre Commands are will have their headquarters in Nanjing, Guangzhou, Chengdu, Shenyang, and Beijing. These commands now represent more functional blocks of forces, tied better to China’s main defence and operational needs, with a better focus on the Northern, Eastern, and Southern theatres – the key areas where China needs coherent military contingency plans and operational control.

(g) **Rationale behind Restructuring.** A February 2016 Xinhua article following the theatre reorganisation offers further insight into the goals of reform and the CMC and Xi Jinping’s thought process¹³:-

(i) The principle of a newly implemented structure, in which the CMC takes charge of the overall military administration, theatre commands focus on combat and the different military branches pursue their own development.

(ii) The five theatre commands are responsible for dealing with security threats in their respective strategic scopes, maintaining peace, containing wars and winning wars, noting their pivotal role in safeguarding the country’s overall national security and military strategies.

¹²Csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com. Op cit.

¹³“China’s military regrouped into five PLA theater commands”, Xinhua, February 1, 2016, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-02/01/c_135065429.htm

Comparison of USA and China Model. The fundamental differences between the theatre command structure of both the nations is summarised below:-

- (a) **Geography.** One of primary difference between both the models is that while the US model covers almost the entire globe, the Chinese model only covers the territory of the country. This is a clear reflection on the strategic culture of both the nations.
- (b) **Command and Control.** The Command and Control (C2) structures are also reflective of the existing politico-military structure of both the nations. While the US structure allows for civilian authority over the CCDRs, it also allows them to exercise a great degree of freedom of action. On the other hand, the Chinese system reinforces the absolute authority of the CPC through CMC over PLA.
- (c) **Rationale behind Implementation.** The current system of unified commands in the US military emerged during World War II with the establishment of geographic theatres of operation composed of forces from multiple service branches that reported to a single commander who was supported by a joint staff.¹⁴ In the case China, post the reforms, the theatre commands will handle command operations, while the services will be in control of force management—essentially the equipping and organizing of military units. The goal of these changes was to rectify past confusions regarding what roles fall under which organisation's purview.¹⁵

RECOMMENDED CDS MODEL

After having a look at the existing CDS and Integrated Theatre Command structures in other nations, the recommended HDO and Integrated Theatre Command structure for India is enunciated in the following paragraphs.

National Level Security Organisation. The existing apex body for handling security challenges of the nation is the National Security Council (NSC). The NSC is a three-tiered organization that oversees political, economic, energy and security issues of strategic concern. It operates within the executive office of the prime minister of India, liaising between the government's executive branch and the intelligence services, advising leadership on

¹⁴http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp1.pdf. Op Cit.

¹⁵http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-02/01/c_135065429.htm. Op Cit.

intelligence and security issues. The National Security Council comprises the Strategic Policy Group (SPG), the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) and a secretariat from the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC). The National Security Advisor (NSA) presides over the NSC, and is also the primary advisor to the prime minister.¹⁶

Components of NSC. The SPG is responsible for inter-ministerial coordination is a bureaucratic body comprising the Cabinet Secretary, three Service Chiefs and secretaries of core ministries like foreign affairs, defence, interior, finance, atomic energy and space beside the heads of the Intelligence agencies and the Governor of Reserve Bank. The NSAB comprises basically of retired officials – four foreign secretaries, three Service Chiefs, one retired major general, former heads of Atomic and space agency, besides three heads of central police organisations connected with internal security. Four strategic analysts and two economic analysts also find place in the 32 members NSAB.

Role of Military in the National Level Organisation. The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) is apex political body on security. In the current structure, the only place where Service Chiefs of Indian Armed Forces are represented on a permanent basis is in SPG, which in itself is a bureaucratic body and does not play an operational role. Further absence of any military representative at the highest level of strategic decision making in the country prevents is in itself a cause for worry. It is therefore imperative that we remove the single most important obstacle which prevents permanent representation for Armed Forces in CCS and that is the absence of a single point military advisor to the government.

Recommendations

The absence of a single point military advisor to the Government of India is the single greatest lacunae in the HDO setup of the country. Despite numerous attempts to rectify this glaring anomaly and contrary to the recommendations of various Committees and Boards, the issue remains unresolved. The reason for the same, depending on the point of view, varies from bureaucratic conspiracy to turf war between individual services.

¹⁶“India - Departments”. 2017. Allgov.Com. Accessed January 6 2017. <http://www.allgov.com/india/departments/ministry-of-youth-affairs-and-sports/national-security-council?agencyid=7599>.

Despite the myriad reasons one cannot escape the reality of modern day realities of complexities in terms of threats and challenges which makes such a structure no longer a luxury but a necessity. The preceding paragraphs have listed various nations which have walked down the path of Jointness in the Armed Forces with various degrees of success. The succeeding paragraphs will list out recommendations with regards to how the concept of CDS and Integrated Theatre Command can be implemented in the Indian context.

Recommended Roles for the Indian Chief of Defence Staff. The ideal role for India's CDS should ab-initio incorporate: -

- (a) Principal Advisor to the Prime Minister and the Government of India through the Defence Minister on all matters pertaining to national security in the spheres of strategy and strategic planning, both conventional and nuclear. His status should be on par with the National Security Adviser in terms of protocol and access to the Prime Minister.
- (b) Provide 'strategic vision' and be responsible for all strategic perspective planning, operational planning and contingency planning. The day-to-day administrative running of the services must be handled by the Service Chiefs.
- (c) The CDS has to be viewed as the 'Head' of the Indian Armed Forces in terms of providing strategic control, strategic direction and strategic vision, even though each Service Chief continues to head his respective service as has been in past.
- (d) Primary role in ensuring jointness at all levels, especially in the defence policies.

Selection of Chief of Defence Staff.

- (a) This issue represents the greatest roadblock towards evolving a consensus between the three services, on appointment of CDS.
- (b) Whilst the CDS would be the 'Head' of the the Armed Forces of India, it should be made clear that there would be no dilution in the status and role of individual Services Chiefs. Apprehensions of each service that they may become victims of possible parochialism should be assuaged. Whilst, seniority may not be the criteria for

selection, it would definitely help if the CDS is the senior most officer among the three service chiefs.

(c) Selection of the CDS should be from three panels of three names each. One panel should be made by a Group of Ministers, the other panel should be called for from the incumbent CDS and the third from the Chiefs of Staff Committee comprising of all three Service Chiefs. This will ensure that each stake holder has a say in the selection process. Whilst the final choice may not be a consensus, any of these panels may be allowed to veto a particular candidate.

Organisation Set-up. A functional CDS system with an efficient organisational set-up cannot be expected right at the beginning. It is an evolution which with experience of obstacles and hurdles initially faced would eventually come up with right answers. However, few important principles should be borne in mind in the initial stages as mentioned below:-

(a) The post of CDS should not be a source of intrigue and conspiracy within the services. Care should be taken to ensure that CDS should not emerge as another military bureaucrat. He should be vested with enough freedom to envision and plan for the future. His access to the highest level of Political leadership should be inviolable.

(b) His role as the single-point Principal Military Adviser to the Prime Minister through the Defence Minister, should be constitutionally mandated and made free from bureaucratic or political interference.

(c) The CDS should be part of CCS in advisory role and should provide advice on the military aspect of strategic matters.

(d) The CDS should have a compact tri-service Secretariat, independent of the Defence Ministry and Service HQs.

REORGANISATION INTO INTEGRATED THEATRE COMMANDS

In the preceding paragraphs, the Integrated Theatre Command (ITC) structure as existing in two countries was discussed, including the rationale for its formation. Formation of integrated commands, where joint planning and execution can be efficiently carried out is required for successful joint operations. Integrated commands can be either bi-service or tri-service and must have a headquarters manned by joint staff. The C-in-C could be a

four-star gen/ equivalent who would report directly to the Defence Minister through CDS and not the Service Chiefs. The Theatre C-in-Cs would be lower in protocol to the Service Chiefs in the overall hierarchy. The unity of command, thus achieved, would give thrust in areas of strategic and operational concerns and also joint operational planning. The nuclear command could also be under the CDS.

Role of Service Head Quarters (SHQ). The role of SHQs should undergo a change once ITC become responsible for conduct of war. SHQ may do away with operations, intelligence and operational logistics and delegate it to ITC. They should concern themselves with manpower, equipment and training. The Service Chiefs would be independent advisors to the Defence Minister through the existing COSC structure, which will be independent of CDS. SHQs may entirely concentrate on training the human resource, project management, contract management and equipment.¹⁷

Operational and Functional Commands. Commands may be designated as either an Operational or a Functional Command. However, in the current structure, based on geographical zones of responsibilities of various operational Commands of the three Services have no perceptible commonality. In most cases, the Command of one service overlaps or is linked with two or three Commands of the other two Services. None of the Commands are co-located, leading to lack of coordination in intelligence sharing, planning and conduct of operations.

In the hypothetical scenario of a conflict in the Western Theatre for example, the Army Commander will be in Pune, the Naval Commander in Mumbai and Air Force Commander in Ahmedabad. The establishment of a tri-service command, in form of Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC) should ideally have generated a debate on the requirement of Integrated Theatre Commands and Integrated Functional Commands. All single Service Commands should gradually evolve into either Integrated Theatre Commands on the lines of ANC or Integrated Functional Commands on the lines of the Special Forces Command (SFC).

Present Structure of Operational Commands

Army Commands. The Indian Army is divided into six operational commands viz. Northern Command (NC) at Udhampur, Western Command

¹⁷Chaudhary. Loc cit.

(WC) at Chandimandir, South Western Command (SWC) at Jaipur, Eastern Command (EC) at Kolkata, Southern Command (SC) at Pune and Central Command at Lucknow.

IAF Commands. IAF has five operational commands, namely Western Air Command (WAC) at Delhi, South Western Air Command (SWAC) at Gandhinagar, Southern Air Command (SAC) at Trivandrum, Central Air Command (CAC) at Allahabad and Eastern Air Command (EAC) at Shillong.

Indian Navy Commands. The Indian Navy is organized into three commands viz. Western Naval Command (WNC) at Mumbai, Southern Naval Command (SNC) at Kochi and the Eastern Naval Command (ENC) at Vishakhapatnam.

Proposed Structure of Integrated Theatre Commands

India's unique peninsular geography and the preponderance of continental threats, makes it difficult to design an ITC structure based on any other nation's template. Considering that efficient battle management is the main theme of the joint theatre concept, we would be required to come up with a unique solution which will address all of our threats whilst ensuring effective utilisation of our combined resources. Thus, we would require in some places restructuring of the present Command structures and in other cases re-organisation which mandates creation of a completely new structures. A look at the geographic features of USA's Combatant Commands and China's Theatre Commands would reveal that almost all of these commands have coastline and thus are tri-service in nature. However, due to the unique geographical features of a peninsular India, there may be a requirement for us have both bi-service as well as tri-service theatre commands.

Proposed Bi-Service Commands.

- (a) Integrated Northern Command (Bi-Service). Army NC (Udhampur), WC (Chandimandir) be integrated with IAF WAC (Delhi) to form Integrated Northern Command.
- (b) Integrated Central Command (Bi-Service). IAF CAC (Allahabad) and Army CC (Lucknow) be integrated to form the Integrated Central Command. The Command could also be tasked to tackle internal asymmetric threats.

Proposed Tri-Service Commands.

- (a) Integrated Western Command (Tri-Service). Army SWC (Jaipur), IAF SWAC (Gandhinagar) and Navy WNC (Mumbai) be integrated to form Integrated Western Command.
- (b) Integrated Southern Command (Tri-Service). Navy SNC (Kochi), IAF SAC (Thiruvananthapuram) and Army SC (Pune) be integrated to form Integrated Southern Command.
- (c) Integrated Eastern Command (Tri-Service). Army EC (Kolkata), IAF EAC (Shillong) and Navy ENC (Vizag) be integrated to form the Integrated Eastern Command.
- (d) ANC. The Andaman Nicobar Command would continue to be the sixth Integrated Command.

Integrated Command Structure. Once the Integrated Theatre Commands are formed up, there will be a requirement to setup Joint Structures to administer them. These would depend on various factors such as the location of the Commands, its primary role, the threats which it envisages and the type of operations envisaged for that command.

Further Steps to Enhance Jointmanship. Once we initially start off with the concept of Integrated Theatre Commands, we would also be required to ensure that other joint structures are mandated. These should include but not be limited to the following:-

- (a) Joint Training. While we already have tri-services training institutions such as NDA, DSSC, NDC and CDM, we may enhance this ensuring mandating that an officer is required to attend atleast one of these prior qualifying for a posting in an ITC in a certain rank.
- (b) Joint Postings. In order to ensure that officers are given adequate exposure to other services prior assuming Command and Staff roles in an ITC, career path of officers should be designed in a way that they tenant certain number of years in ITC prior assuming increasingly more responsible posts.
- (c) Personnel Policy. As of today each service follows its own personnel policy based on its unique requirements. However, if we intend to graduate to an ITC system we would be required to ensure that we develop an Integrated Personnel Policy based a unique set of requirements which will ensure that tri-service appointments

attract officers of high calibre and each service is mandated to ensure equitable distribution of talent.

(d) Joint Appraisal System. An Integrated Personnel Policy will also mandate a common appraisal system for officers serving in joint Services organisations.

(e) Joint Doctrine. The release of India's first joint doctrine marks a major milestone towards military integration and interoperability among the three services. However, the same should be followed up with a roadmap for an integration at strategic-operational-tactical levels between the three services.

(f) Integrated Logistics. An area where there exists a great potential for integration is Logistics. Substantial amount of ground has been covered in this area by achieving integration in medical, postal, works services, movement control, quality assurance, defence land, military farms and CSD. An integrated joint logistics system would help each service to complement each other.

CONCLUSION

The Indian Armed Forces have proved in ample measure their ethos and worth since independence. They have time and again risen to the occasion during national emergencies without fail. They have won wars, have kept the insurgency at bay and have undeterred lived up to their motto "Service Before Self". However, the processes and policies within have not kept pace with time. For example, all three forces are almost ten years behind in their modernisation plans. However, "It is at the higher levels of political, civil and military interactions that the deficiencies are excruciatingly evident"¹⁸.

Corrective measures have long been overdue and would require large scale structural changes. The acceptance of the requirement of a CDS, despite bureaucratic opposition was a bold and innovative step taken by the Government in 2001. However, it has not seen the light of the day over last 15 yrs. However, the proposal for a CDS must be viewed in its totality viz. active NSC, restructured MoD, Joint Armed Force structure and creation of Integrated Theatre Commands.

¹⁸Admiral VS Shekhawat. "Restructuring of Defence Forces including the Ministry of Defence", USI Journal. July – September 1999, p.326.

The threats which India faces are extremely complex and evolving. India's continuing economic prowess would attract greater number of enemies. We continue to spend a large amount of money on our defence (with the current defence budget of around 3 percent of GDP). This mammoth task needs a joint effort and a well-coordinated structure to deliver an optimum punch. Here is where the CDS has an important and a well-defined role to play. Defending the country's sovereignty and integrity even under nuclear back drop and in limited war scenarios requires the employment of multiple forces including the Strategic Forces in a joint way. In such a scenario, there is a need for a professional institution with to assess the intelligence inputs, prioritise military actions, conceive joint operation plans, allocate war efforts and get the plan executed in accordance with a time plan.

The creation of a CDS and Integrated Theatre Commands would ensure enhanced jointness amongst the services and would usher in a combined approach. It would allow a single point focused military advice to the government and ensure that the Armed Forces train, plan and fight together. The CDS would ensure a joint approach of all the capabilities to counter any threat and the ITC would ensure maximum defence preparedness to meet the nation's vital interests.

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CDS AND INTEGRATED THEATRE COMMANDS; A FELT NEED

Brig Navjot Singh*

General

Since time immemorial, the prerequisite for a monarch was that he should be adept in the art of war-fighting, should be an excellent warrior and should invariably lead his troops into battle from the front. The kings of yore were better than the best of their warriors, commanded the respect of their peers and were held in awe by their subjects/ subordinates. Monarchs were also imparted education in the subjects of diplomacy and statecraft and general administration. Though while a king could rely on others to administer his kingdom, yet he could never be complacent about outsourcing or delegating the responsibility as regards the safety and security of his kingdom. Even though kings did appoint a Senapati, or a Commander-in-Chief, yet the king never abdicated his responsibility to take up arms in defence of his kingdom. That was because he realised that in those times, "Power flowed from the barrel of the gun or rather from the blade of the sword".

In the earlier times there was thus an "integrated command" as all power was centralised with the king. In the Era, prior to the British Raj, all Kings and Crown Princes were the de-facto C-in-C's of their respective armies. Subsequently, following the Kitchener Reforms of 1903 during the British Raj, the Commander-in-Chief, India enjoyed control of the Army of India and answered to the civilian Viceroy of India. The Commander-in-Chief's staff was overseen by the Chief of the General Staff.^[1] GHQ India was based in Calcutta and Simla (the winter capital of the Raj) until the seat of power moved to New Delhi in 1931. The Commander-in-Chief, India ^[2] had some 2,000 officers and 2.5 million troops under his command in 1945.^[3] GHQ India was re-designated Army HQ in 1947 when India was partitioned.^[2]

Thus in both these Era's, the ruler (ie Indian Kings or later the British Crown) was directly seized of the state of the armed forces at his disposal. However in democracies, the power is vested with the democratically elected Chief Executive (ie the PM). While all major nations have joint structure fully integrated with national security apparatus and policy, with a single point advisor from the armed forces, yet the Indian PM is devoid of the benefit of the same!

The felt need to appoint a Chief of Defence Staff (**CDS**) has been long debated and acknowledged. The Kargil Review Committee enumerated the need for a thorough review of the national security system and recommended instituting the post of CDS. After the report of the Group of Ministers was submitted, substantial reforms did take place in the armed forces. The Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (**CISC**) to the Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) was appointed on 01 Oct 2001 and HQ Integrated Defence Staff (IDS) was created by a Govt. of India letter dated 23 Nov 2001. However the creation of a CDS and Theatre Commands was still "*A Bridge too Far*". Interestingly, the fact that military functions in India with MoD sans military officers, had also been noted by US members of the Indo-US Defence Planning Group that first met in New Delhi post 9/11 and they had wondered at how this was even possible !

This article dwells upon the need for the creation of a CDS and establishing Unified Theatre Commands (**TCs**) in India to enhance integration and jointness at the strategic and operational levels. In doing so, it examines the existing setup and dwells upon various available models for implementation in the Indian context. Finally, it suggests a viable model for unified commands for India, keeping in mind the geo-political realm and the external and internal threats to its security. ^[4]

REQUIREMENT OF A CDS

The Modern day wars will be fought with simultaneity in a non-linear pattern across the spectrum of land, sea and air. The execution of operations would entail well-coordinated offensive- defensive manoeuvres, net-centric operations, information warfare, cyber-attacks, possibly under the backdrop of a nuclear threat. To achieve success in such a battle field milieu, demands synergistic application of military power, under a Combined arms Concept.^[5] Inadequate joint planning is one of the major lessons of the 1965 and the Kargil War. The reasons cited for this inadequacy were lack

of joint structures necessary for operational planning and lack of unity of command in operational and intelligence activities at the national level. Most contingencies to achieve the stated national objectives would require a focussed approach by all elements of the state. Thus, there is a need to institute unified structures, under an empowered CDS, to evolve an integrated approach.

An interface between the political establishment, bureaucracy and the armed forces is required for the strategic decision, the determination of clear military and political end state and the planning for strategic and joint operational art needs. The Chairman, COSC neither has the institutional backing nor the time to conduct this vital function as he wears two hats, one as Chairman, COSC and the other as the Chief of his own service. This function can only be carried out by a Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) who is not inhibited by his own service tasks or loyalties and is assisted by an integrated operational institutionalised structure.^[6]

Like the previous such reviews ordered by the government, notably the Naresh Chandra Committee, the Shekatkar Committee too has said a 4-star Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), or a Permanent Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee, be appointed as a 'chief coordinator' between the military and the Ministry of Defence. It has however stressed on retaining the primacy of the three service chiefs in operational and administrative roles even while suggesting establishment of three or four integrated commands in medium to long term. The Indian working ethos is however essentially hierarchical^[7]; unless there is a hierarchical structure that facilitates forcible joint planning, it is difficult to achieve it by co-operation alone. The hierarchical orientation highlights the need for a **five star CDS** and not a three or a four star one, as is popularly discussed and which would be more acceptable to the bureaucracy.

REQUIREMENT OF THEATRE COMMANDS

General S Padmanabhan had said, *"There is no escaping the military logic of creating suitably constituted Integrated Theatre Commands and functional commands for the Armed Forces as a whole"*. The erstwhile Air Chief Marshal SP Tyagi had also indicated that joint war fighting is not about fighting the war with equal opportunity but about recognising the unique competencies and capabilities of each arm and service, to make each entity interoperable and utilise the strong points of each service for the

combined operational benefit to achieve military objectives^[8]. This is where the crux of operational planning lies. The ranges of the weapon systems acquired by the services is long and there is an inherent overlap with the operations of platforms and systems belonging to the other two services. This entails the requirement of an integrated environment to manage them efficiently and optimally thereby, reiterating the need for a unified structure to create an interoperable integrated environment.

Presently, our organisational structures are focussed towards fighting third generation wars. However in times to come fourth generation or asymmetric wars, focussing on collapsing the enemy internally^[9] will be fought. These asymmetric threats need a different force structure and an integrated response that links paramilitary elements, police forces and other arms of political power with the armed forces.

Due to India's rapid economic growth the world has taken notice of our emerging capabilities and the area of interest for us today extends from the Eastern coast of Africa in the West, Sumatra to the East and the entire Indian Ocean to the South. The Indian armed forces now need to re-organise, re-equip and train themselves for contingencies stretching much beyond our frontiers. Dr Shashi Tharoor had stated that before the UK colonised India, we used to control 32% of the world trade; which had dropped to less than 2% post colonisation. With our economy growing; can we again afford to neglect the safety and security of our nation.

India's growing economic and military and aspirations for role as a regional power, may also require our armed forces to be employed in Out of Area Contingencies (OOAC). There is thus a need to institutionalise those structures that prepare us to undertake our rightful future responsibilities. The lack of CDS and a unified operational structure stands out sorely in performing this vital function.

PRESENT STRUCTURE OF OPERATIONAL COMMANDS

The Indian Army is divided into seven commands of which six are operational commands ie the Northern Command (NC) at Udhampur, Western Command (WC) at Chandimandir, South Western Command (SWC) at Jaipur, Eastern Command (EC) at Kolkata, Southern Command (SC) at Pune and Central Command at Lucknow. The Army Training Command (ARTRAC) is located at Shimla. IAF currently has five operational commands, namely Western Air Command (WAC) at Delhi, South Western Air Command

(SWAC) at Gandhinagar, Southern Air Command (SAC) at Trivandrum, Central Air Command (CAC) at Allahbad and Eastern Air Command (EAC) at Shillong. The AF Training Command is located at Bangalore and the IAF Maintenance Command is located at Nagpur. The Indian Navy is deployed under three area commands; Western Naval Command (WNC) at Mumbai, Southern Naval Command (SNC) at Kochi and the Eastern Naval Command (ENC) at Vishakhapatnam¹⁰.

In addition, there are two Tri-Service Commands in Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC) and Strategic Forces Command (SFC). The geographical zones of responsibilities of various Commands of the three Services have little commonality. In most cases, the command of one Service overlaps or is linked with two or more Commands of sister Services, for eg the area of responsibility (AOR) covered by Western Air Command equates to the combined AOR's of NC, WC and SWC of the Indian Army. None of the Commands are co-located, thus compounding the challenges in coordination in intelligence sharing, planning and execution.

Single Service Commands violate the basic principle of operational art which stipulates single-point command of military resources to attain the desired objectives. The existing 17 single service Commands need to be reorganised into Theatre Commands (TCs) and three Task Oriented Commands (TOCs).

UNIFIED COMMANDS IN OTHER COUNTRIES: CASE STUDY OF US, CHINA, AUSTRALIA, CANADA, UK AND RUSSIA

US Commands

The term theatre of operations is defined in the American field manuals as land and sea masses to be invaded or defended including areas necessary for administrative activities incident to the military operations.¹¹ Hence, the inherent meaning of Theatre of Operations relates to large contiguous land or sea areas where synergised operations take place. A Unified Command is a command with a broad continuing mission. It operates under a single commander and is composed of two or more services¹².

The US Regional Combatant Commands have geographical areas of responsibility. They conduct the strategic direction of all US military operations within their designated AOR. The five regional unified commands are US Atlantic Command, Central Command, European Command, Pacific

Command and Southern Command. In addition, they have functional commands such as US Space Command, Special Operations Command, and the Strategic Command. For Special Operations, a Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF) is formed to plan, rehearse and execute operations regardless of their geographical location. In 1986, the US Govt brought the Goldwater Nichols amendment to ensure complete jointness despite Joint Chiefs of Staff being in place since 1947.

China

The Chinese Armed Forces have introduced major restructuring of their command and control structures to meet modern joint warfare requirement, with the major evolution in strategy and operations having involved a shift from 'Joint Operations (JO)' to 'Integrated Joint Operations (IJO)'^[13]. The JO places emphasis on individual services divisions and command chain are vertical, where as IJO legislates that service divisions do not matter when command chains can be 'flat' due to the levelling power of digital command, control and sensor system. The major restructuring includes transition from military regions to battle zones towards developments of joint operations capability. The joint commands would be created in Jinan, Nanjing and Guangzhou Military Region over a five-year period, followed by consolidation of the remaining four MRs into two joint commands. At the forefront of the reforms is the replacement of four general departments of the CMC with 15 new departments, signaling not only a change in name but also a complete transfer of functions. It also represents a demotion for the four general departments.

The General Staff Department (GSD), for instance, used to be known as the number one organ in the People's Liberation Army (PLA), partly because it was in charge of operations and intelligence, including human, electronics and internet intelligence, and partly because it was in command of the army, which, in turn, controlled the seven military regions across the country. The GSD has now become the Central Military Commission (CMC) Joint General Staff Department, with its original intelligence units and functions integrated into the new Strategic Support Forces (SSF). It no longer exercises operational control of the army, which now has its own headquarters. The new Joint General Staff Department will function purely as a staff organization, similar to the Joint Chiefs Of Staff system of the U.S. PLA has also decided to make the commanders of the Navy, Air Force and the Second Artillery permanent members of the Central Military Commission's high command.

The Second Artillery Corps has been renamed as Rocket Force. The Rocket Force currently controls all of the country's intercontinental, medium and short range ballistic missiles. China has however assigned aerospace development to the SSF and not to the Rocket Force, possibly to enable the air force to take the lead in aerospace development, a move toward the realization of the much-stressed "integrated air and space" strategy.

The control over the military legal system has been shifted from General Political Department (**GDP**) to the new Politics and Law Commission. It signifies a breaking up of the discipline, security, and personnel functions that GDP used to monopolize. The Politics and Law Commission, together with the Discipline Inspection Commission, can stop personnel functions from being controlled by a single agency while contributing to the goal of rooting out corruption in the military

Australian Theatre Command.

Command HQ Australian Theatre (HQ AST) was established in June 1997 under a Chief of Defence Staff. The aim was to separate the Australian political strategic level from war fighting, discontinue the adhoc approach towards coordination and control of operations, institute unity of command at the operational level and provide a standing capability for planning campaigns, operations and specific activities. HQ AST does not have any forces permanently assigned to it. Appropriate forces are allocated to the Commander Australian Theatre (COMAST) by the Chief of Defence Force (CDF) for specific operations¹⁴.

The CDF maintains full command over the Australian Defence Forces (ADF). However, the service chiefs command their respective services and are responsible to raise, train and sustain them. When the CDF orders the conduct of an operation or a campaign, he directs the service chiefs to assign appropriate forces at a specified level of capability to COMAST. The AST has component commanders from the individual services. They provide expert advice concerning the operational employment of the assigned forces. This arrangement ensures appropriate theatre focus with emphasis on initiation, sequencing and manoeuvring series of joint operations. HQ AST houses component commanders' alongwith adequate number of permanent staff. This organisation is permanently available under the Theatre Command.

The HQ AST is also supported by the Australian Joint Intelligence Centre (ASTJIC) and the 1st Joint Movement Group that is responsible to

secure civil strategic lift assets. The ASTJIC provides fused intelligence picture of the theatre. The Joint Operations Command reports directly to the CDF, thus bringing under his command, Strategic Operations Division, HQ AST, HQ Northern Command (NORCOM) and Deployable Joint Forces HQ. NORCOM is a permanent joint HQ and during operations is tasked with vital asset protection, surveillance and covering operations.

Canada

In Canada, integration of the Canadian Defence Forces was achieved during 1964-67 by former Defence Minister Paul Hellyer, who brought together the political will, legislative backing, institutional wherewithal and cooperation of the armed forces to usher lasting reforms^[15]. The Department of National Defence exists to aid the minister in carrying out his responsibilities within the Defence Portfolio, and provides a civilian support system for the Canadian Armed Forces.^[16] The Department is headed by the Deputy Minister of National Defence, who is the Department's senior civil servant, and reports directly to the Minister of National Defence.^[17] Under the National Defence Act, the Canadian Armed Forces is a completely separate and distinct organization from, and is not part of the Department of National Defence.

[18][19][20]

Both the Canadian Armed Forces (military) and the Department of National Defence (civilian civil servants) are, although two separate organizations, yet are known collectively as The Defence Team as both institutions work closely together in the defence of Canada. The Minister of National Defence, as the member of cabinet is responsible to Parliament for National Defence, heads the Defence Team. The Department of National Defence is headed by the Deputy Minister of National Defence. Under the Deputy Minister are a variety of associate deputy and assistant deputy ministers who are responsible for various aspects of the department (human resources, policy, etc.). The Deputy Minister is appointed by the Governor General on behalf of the Queen of Canada (Queen-in-Council) on the advice of the Prime Minister.^{[21][22]} The Canadian Armed Forces, is a separate and distinct organization, headed by the Chief of the Defence Staff and reporting to him are the Royal Canadian Navy, Canadian Army, Royal Canadian Air Force, and a variety of other commands. There are also a variety of offices and support organizations which report to both the Chief of Defence Staff and the Deputy Minister.

United Kingdom

United Kingdom (UK) was the first country to have a Chiefs of Staff Committee dating back to 1923 and its model was emulated by the US during World War II. Subsequently, realising its pitfalls, the British commenced restructuring of its armed forces in 1964 to achieve jointness. Unified MoD was created in which the three service ministries were regrouped under a single Secretary of State for Defence.²³ In 1985, under the Heseltine Reforms, the CDS and Permanent Under-Secretary (PUS) were instituted. In the new setup, the CDS and PUS were the principal advisors to the Secretary of Defence. The respective service chiefs have very little role in policy formulation. However, they have the privilege of direct access to the Prime Minister. In the British model of Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ) established in 1996, there is a very high level of integration within the MoD, between the people in uniform and their civilian counterparts. It commands joint and combined military operations and provides politically aware advice to MoD. Following the Strategic Defence Review of 1998, a Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) was designated as the professional head of the armed forces and the Principal Adviser to the government.

The Defence Reform Review led by Lord Levene, in a report published in June 2011, recommended further reforms. It recommended creation of Joint Forces Command (**JFC**) to manage and deliver specific capabilities and to take the lead on joint warfare development, drawing on lessons and experimentation to advice on how the armed forces should conduct joint operations in the future.²⁴ Currently, the Chief of Joint Operations (**CJO**) and the **PJHQ** command forces deployed on joint operations overseas. The single services remain responsible for specific maritime operations (including the deterrent), security of the UK's airspace and UK resilience. The PJHQ, commanded by the CJO, is the national operational level command. The CJO is responsible for the planning and execution of joint or potentially joint, national and UK-led multinational operations conducted outside the UK. He reports direct to the CDS for contingency planning and advice on the conduct and resourcing of current operations or standing commitments, other than for routine running of the Permanent Joint Operating Bases, which is the responsibility of Commander JFC.²⁵

Russia

In Russia, four Strategic Commands were created in 2010, by a Presidential

decree, with appropriate allocation of resources from the three Services and independent arms directly under the Centre viz. missile, space and airborne forces.²⁶

Analysis of Theatre Command Models in Various Nations.

Analysis of the command structures of USA and Australia highlights some commonalities. Both are structured for joint application of force generally for OOAC's and in support of the multinational forces rather than for homeland defence.²⁷ The aim is to provide a unified command for operational employment of joint forces. Though the appointments and staff for planning and conduct of operations is permanent in the Australian model, the forces are allotted by the individual service HQ based on a joint appreciation of the impending threat. Whilst Americans have global aspirations, the ADF is employed more in support of multinational forces. In both cases, the meaning of theatres relates to large contiguous masses that translate itself to the size of continents.

In the UK, the CDS is the professional head of the armed forces and the Principal Adviser to the government, which is generally in line with US and Australia. In the Canadian model, the Canadian Armed Forces (military), headed by the CDS and the Department of National Defence (civilian civil servants) are two separate organizations, which are known collectively as **The Defence Team**, which is headed by the Minister of National Defence.

The China model has stark resemblance to that followed in Russia where Strategic Commands were created with appropriate allocation of resources from the three Services and certain independent arms function directly under the Centre .

A SUITABLE MODEL OF THEATRE COMMANDS BEST SUITED IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT

In our context, our war on terror is fought generally within our country and our most immediate concerns relate more to internal security & defence. At the same time the threat of conventional war being fought in the backdrop of a nuclear environment can't be ruled out. Hence, we need to look at structures that take care of threats ranging from asymmetric to conventional wars fought in a nuclear environment and focussed more to our subcontinent.

*To evaluate a suitable model which is better suited in the Indian context, it would be in order to take a closer look at the US and Australian approach to Theatre Commands, which have endured and evolved with time, having undertaken operations at home and overseas. At the same time the Canadian model in which both the Canadian Armed Forces (military) and the Department of National Defence (civilian civil servants) are two separate organizations but work collectively as **The Defence Team** merits consideration as it leaves matters military to be dealt with by the military.*

The Indian sub-continent requires identification of geographical theatres that are of military security concern. Such a theatre should include within its geographical boundary the entire geographically contiguous territory of a competing entity or an adversary including geographically contiguous territories of those entities or states which, in the event of hostilities, may collaborate either with the adversary or with own country. It must also include adjoining seas and space above that may be essential for manoeuvre of own forces to address the threatening entity/adversary and its geographically contiguous collaborator(s). Indian strategists and military planners need to identify such theatres and arrive at a common politico-military-economic strategy for managing geo-strategic concerns of the country. A suggested identification of geographical theatres, that are of military security concern and Options For Unified Theatre Command (**TC**) Structures have been listed in subsequent paragraphs below.

Options For Unified Theatre Command (TC) Structures

The options for unified command structure which have been discussed in professional circles include developing **Joint Theatre Commands at the Army Command HQ level** or developing **geographically based Theatre Command structures** or evolving a **Theatre Command at the national level**, that provides a unified command structure that integrates the operational employment of the three services as part of a National Command Theatre. Ideally, the chosen structure should be such that it requires bringing about minimal changes to the existing organisations and yet achieves the desired integration to actualize joint strategic planning at the operational level. The various options for developing the unified command structure as discussed in subsequent paragraphs.^{[28][29]}

Option One. Developing TC's at the Army Command HQ level would entail the theatre, for example, NC/WC/SWC (Army) to be restricted

to an AOR of 150-200 Km by 150-200 Km on both sides of the border. This implies that the airpower assets would be distributed in penny packets within these Commands on three to four airfields located within their AOR, which would limit the decentralisation down from the existing IAF Command Area of Responsibility to the Army Command AOR's. Further, during the initial stages of the war, the primary air campaign is Counter Air Campaign. This campaign ensures that land and naval operations are carried out unhindered. These operations are executed centrally at the present IAF Command level to optimise employment of limited resources. Distributing scarce air assets at several TCs would result in significantly degrading the overall combat potential of the IAF³⁰. This option could also cause substantial Air Space Management problems as several missions of this theatre would over fly other theatres due to location of targets or for tactical routing purposes. During the course of the war, the focus may change from one theatre to the other and there may thus be a need to employ higher quantum of air effort centrally towards tackling emergent situations there. Hence this option for developing *TCs is not considered ideally suitable*.

Option Two. This option visualises the formation of seven geographically based Theatre Commands, by combining assets of the commands of Army,AF and Navy. For eg the Army's NC, along with a part of Army's WC and IAF's WAC could form the Theatre Command (**TC**) North, which would address the general area of J&K, HP, Punjab, Haryana, NCT, Uttarakhand (UK). TC West could look at the general area of Rajasthan, Gujrat, Maharashtra, Goa + Arabian Sea and could be comprised of IA SWC , MG&G Area), a Part of IA WC , SWAC and WNC. TC East could be entrusted with the responsibility of WB and all North East states and could comprise of IA EC , EAC and a fleet ex ENC. Similarly to develop the TC South, Army's Southern Command could co-joins HQ SC with IAF's SAC and IN's ENC .

A&N Command and the Eastern theatre command would have appropriate integration of Air and Naval Commands. To cater to internal Maoist and Naxal problems, there may be a need to additionally form a Central Theatre that links HQ Central Command of the Army with HQ CAC of the IAF. The linkages with the police and paramilitary forces to tackle asymmetric threats should be established at these TCs. Appropriate representatives of these forces too should be available here. In addition, there would be three specific Task Oriented Commands (TOCs) such as Aerospace Command, Cyber Command and Strategic Forces Command.

However, this TC option would still need a unified structure above it to evolve strategic art and to establish strategic focus. Though airpower employment could be coordinated more effectively in this arrangement, the strategic assets and the tri-service OOACs would need to be co-ordinated at a level higher, hence the requirement of a CDS who would be a five star general.

Option Three. The third option is to create a unified command structure at the national level and like the Australian model, it would need to consider the entire Indian subcontinent as a theatre and could be named as India Strategic Theatre (IST). It would be based at HQ IDS and would have a standing capability of the three components (land, air and sea) with their planning staff under the CDS. The forces would not be permanently attached but could be allocated to this Joint HQ based on the requirement originated from jointly appreciating an imminent threat. This arrangement would thus provide flexibility to tackle threats that encompass the entire conflict spectrum from asymmetric to NBC.

The service chiefs though continuing to raise, train and build their individual services would still provide expert advice on operational matters to the CDS. Whilst the nitty gritty of planning campaigns would lie with the component commanders at HQ IST, the service chiefs would remain part of the joint appreciation and planning process to formulate strategic art. Hence, they would not be isolated from the operational decision making process and would know what focus to give towards training own forces in peace time to achieve the desired operational capability. Under the CDS, would lie the Standing Committee formed by the three component commanders of Lt Gen or equivalent rank and their staff from the three services.

The CDS should be one rank higher ie a five star general, on rotation from the Army, the Navy or the Air Force and should be one of the erstwhile service chiefs after completing his tenure. The points of dispute between the service chiefs or those that arise in the Standing Committee would be resolved by the CDS. This necessarily entails that CDS should shed his earlier service uniform and he and his staff should wear a different uniform (possibly steel grey in colour to convey the steely resolve), that personifies the joint image that they are projecting. This model ensures that there is a standing capability available during peace time that plans and conducts joint operations as well as tackles emergent situations even humanitarian that need inter services co-operation. Yet, the model does not diminish the authority of the service chief 's. They are involved in the

planning and conduct of a joint campaign or an emergent situation as an intellectual participant and a decision maker.

In this model, though the identification of strategic focus would be easier and the OOACs and emergent threats could be tackled better, yet it would be a major challenge to co-ordinate joint operational art in the different operational commands of the three services. Also it would be a challenge to provide an integrated environment that houses weapon systems and equipment of the three services that have their own inherent overlaps and uses with the other two services.

RECOMMENDED OPTION

Given the geopolitical surroundings of India and associated complex geography, we should have Theatre Commands by direction, as proposed in Option Two ie North, West, East, South, Central, ANC & Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Each command should be equipped to handle any threat from that general direction on their own, especially with the help of neighbouring theatre commands. For example TC East should be able to face threats from China with the help of TC North, TC ANC & TC South, while Pakistani threat is covered by TC North, TC West & TC IOR. Each such Unified TC to be commanded by a 'Theatre Commander' (a four star general), who controls all military assets commanded by his sub-ordinate tri-service commands. TC A&N & TC IOR to concentrate exclusively on overseas deployment and operations, leaving other commands to concentrate on India and its immediate neighbourhood. Assets to be allocated to the expeditionary commands, as and when required.

Thus Option Two is the recommended option best suited to India's requirements and the suggested demarcation of the AsOR and composition of the seven TCs is tabulated as given in Table 1 below. 31 The only drawback of this model is the dedication of one theatre to handling threats from Pakistan or China in J&K.

Table 1: Recommended Option for TCs with suggested AsOR and Composition

CDS AND INTEGRATED THEATRE COMMANDS; A FELT NEED

	Theatre Com-mands	AoR	Composition
1	TC North	J&K, HP, Punjab, Haryana, NCT, Uttarakhand (UK)	IA NC(+ UK Sub Area, Delhi Area) + Part of IA WC + WAC
2	TC West	Raj, Guj, Mah, Goa + Arabian Sea	IA SWC(+M,G&G Area) + Part of IA +WC SWAC + Fleet ex WNC
3	TC East	WB and all North East states	IA EC + EAC + Fleet ex ENC
4	TC South	All southern states + Bay of Bengal	IA SC (-M,G&G Area +Odisha & Chattisgarh Sub Area)+ SAC + ENC
5	TC Central	UP, MP, Chattisgarh (CHT), Bihar, Jharkhand	IA CC (-UK Sub Area) + CAC
6	TC A&N	A&N islands and all deployments east of A&N.	ANC
7	TC Indian Ocean Region (IOR) & Strategic Reserve Command	Lakshadweep Islands, Indian Ocean and all deployments outside India west of A&N including peace-keeping and anti-piracy operations	IA Expeditionary Command(controls all peacekeeping forces) + IN SNC+ IAF Expeditionary Command

In addition to the TCs, there is also a need for Joint Logistics and Training Command, which could be discussed separately.

Permanent allocation of forces, as has been proposed above, is required to train together for fighting jointly, to ensure security of military theatres because joint-ness in operations flows from sound joint training. The ANC set up is one example where the operations are still looked after by the Eastern Naval Command (ENC) due to lack of adequate resource allocation by the Navy. Creation of the Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC) and the Strategic Forces Command (SFC) undoubtedly are significant milestones in joint-manship, though the former has little teeth and is largely dependent upon the Navy.

Command and control over these TCs can be best achieved by reverting to concept of C-in-C as existed in 1947, or through creation of a CDS, with proviso that he will be subordinate to the Cabinet through Defence Minister. Service Chiefs be made responsible for Training and Administration. Operational Logistics will be the responsibility of Theatre Commanders. Civil Wing of MoD should be responsible for Inter-ministerial Coordination. Defence PSUs and Ordnance Factories be hived off to Ministry of Industries. DGDE and MES be subsumed in QMG Branch of the Army Headquarters. CDA be answerable to Defence Minister and Service Chiefs for Capital and Revenue parts of budget.³²

IMPEDIMENTS IN IMPLEMENTATION OF CDS AND THEATRE COMMANDS

As per news reports, the recommendation of the Naresh Chandra Committee for appointing a Permanent Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) itself faced bureaucratic opposition from within the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the then Defence Minister had stated that the issue is yet to be discussed by the Cabinet Committee of Security (CCS). Incidentally, Mr Pranab Mukherjee, the then Defence Minister had remarked during a presentation at HQ IDS in 2005 that the government had even decided who the CDS would be but then there was no political consensus, adding in the same breath “but then there is no political consensus on so many things but they do come through”.³³

Lack of strategic forethought in the politico-bureaucratic dispensation in India and the higher defence set up sans participation by the Services in national defence decision-making has had direct bearing on integration and jointness of the military. Additionally, the latent political fear amongst the bureaucrats of military supremacy egged on by bureaucrats-turned-politicians, the police lobby, IPS turned politicians and the craving to maintain primacy by playing on Inter-Service rivalry and exercising overt control over financial expenditures, equipment acquisitions and appointments have not permitted institution of a CDS. But this is in the long term interest of the nation?

Earlier Service Chiefs, due to exigencies of their service, have seldom been united in telling the government that the appointment of a CDS is necessary for the good of the military and the of the country. The Service Chiefs want to retain ‘operational’ control of their respective services

despite their designation being Chief of Army/Navy/Air “Staff”.

Fear of dilution of command authority and loss of promotional avenues due to right sizing, is possibly another reason coming in way of this transformation. However the fears are unwarranted since none of these 17 Commands need be disbanded though re-alignment of operational geographical boundaries will obviously need to be undertaken. In fact higher ranks should ideally get increased. Command and staffing of all TCs and Task Oriented Commands (**TOCs**), should be Tri-Service, taking into account existing rank structures, so that promotional avenues of any Service are not affected. The CDS should exercise full operational control on the Commands. Reorganisation of the 17 single service Commands can be on the lines of six TCs based on defined geographical theatres, in addition to the ANC. There should be the TOCs consisting of an Aero-Space Command, Cyber Command, Special Forces Command, Training Command(s) and Integrated Logistics & Maintenance Commands, in addition to the SFC.

Relationship of CDS with Service Chiefs. The CDS or Permanent Chairman COSC would be senior to the Service Chiefs in protocol and functional terms. His position is envisaged to be of a single-point advisor on military matters to the political leadership. However, the CDS would not be responsible for routine, day-to-day administration of the Services. The Service Chiefs would continue to remain responsible to administer, train and develop their respective Services, and employ them for regular operations. However, they would provide expert advice on all important matters concerning their Service to the CDS or Permanent (Pmt) Chairman COSC, when called for. This arrangement would thus provide flexibility to tackle threats that encompass the entire conflict spectrum from asymmetric to nuclear. It merits consideration that though the proposed model is considered the least disruptive to the existing arrangements, evolution of structures to achieve to integration would not be an easy, natural process. It would need a ‘top-down’ approach by the political leadership with legislative backing and sufficient mandate provided to the CDS or Pmt Chairman COSC.³⁴

Implementation

The restructuring would have to be carried in a phased manner within specified timelines. An appropriate time frame can be worked out after the

proposal is approved. What merits consideration is that even US and UK took four-five decades to evolve into their respective present systems and are still undergoing transformation; the Chinese began the process in the 1990s while Australia and Canada have also taken around three to four decades. With the benefit of knowledge and hindsight of other countries, India could achieve the same in a comparatively lesser timeframe. The recommended model ie Option Two as discussed above, may be implemented as explained in subsequent paragraphs.

Phase I. The first phase would include the appointment of CDS and raising TOCs or functional commands under the CDS.

Phase II. In the next phase, Western and Southern Theatre Commands could be established. The argument for selection of these particular theatres is that the Army is involved in fighting terrorism/ insurgency in other theatres, whereas the Western and Southern Theatres would have a more conventional role. Hence, the transition would be the least turbulent.

Phase III. In the third phase, TC Central and the Eastern Theatre Command could be established by recommended re-organization.

Phase IV. In the last phase, the Northern Theatre Command could be established. The second command could be TC IOR or Reserve Command, which would function as the strategic reserves. Given the scarcity of air resources, the CDS with the advice of the Chief of Air Staff would have the option of allocating resources from the dormant theatre/ functional command, in keeping with the strategic mobility available to the air resources. In the envisaged restructuring, the chiefs would be responsible for training, equipping and administration of their service and would predominantly play the role of Chiefs of Staff, while the Theatre Commanders would be operational commanders. The Theatre Commanders would be directly responsible to the Prime Minister/ Defence Minister/Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) through the CDS, who would be the Principal Military Advisor and coordinator.

The issue of rank structuring and individual aspirations could get negated by having a five star CDS, four-star Theatre Commanders with three-star Component Commanders (equivalent to the present Cs-in-C). The specific Task Oriented Commands (TOCs) would be commanded by three-star ranking officers (equivalent to present Cs-in-C). The issue

of who should head these commands can be resolved by basing the appointment on merit and professional competence or on a rotational basis. However, service specific Cs-in-C, based on predominant service, could also be considered with the IOR Theatre and ANC could be headed by a naval officer, the Northern theatre by an army officer and the Eastern and Western Theatres by Army/Air Force C-in-C. The comparative analysis of rank structuring based on existing and proposed model is listed in Table 2. Overall, there would be a major reduction in the staff since 19 commands would be restructured into seven theatre commands and five task oriented commands. The staff authorized to the component commanders will be much lesser due to availability of staff at the theatre

Table 2: Rank Structuring in Proposed Reorganization for the Indian Armed Forces³⁵

S.No	Rank Structure	Existing Organization	Proposed Organization		Remarks
			Functional Com- mands	Theatre Com- mands	
1.	5 Star	-	-	01 (CDS)	Increase by 01
2.	4 Star	3		11 (7 Theatre Commanders, 3 Chiefs of Staff of three services, VCDS)	Increase by 8
3.	3 Star (C-in-C equivalent)	23 (17 C-in-C Army, Navy and IAF Commands; 3 Vice Chiefs, CIDS, SFC and ANC C-in-C)	5	15 (7 COS Theatre Commands, 3 Vice Chiefs of Services, 9 Component Commanders based on service component)	Increase by 01 (Other component-commanders could be 3 Star ranks)

Conclusion

Jointness and integration of the Military is an inevitable requirement for the modern day battlefield. The biggest challenge to jointness is to bring about an attitudinal shift by turning the sense of insecurity and mutual suspicion into a sense of belongingness amongst the Services as well as the politico-bureaucratic establishment. The change will need to be implemented top down for it to take root and be effective. While there is urgent need to appoint a CDS, we should get on with initiating the process of establishing ITCs and IFCs in the larger interest of achieving jointness and integration. Consensus and determination of the Military would ensure overcoming diplomatic hurdles. If we are to be determined to emerge winners in future conflict situations, we need to begin now. 36

The decision by the various agencies to turn down the concept of Integrated Theatre Commands under a five star general rank CDS, despite various joint studies highlighting the tremendous operational and administrative benefits that would accrue with such reorganisation, is possibly motivated because of individual turfs and due to unfounded apprehensions of the bureaucracy. The same is however not in the interests of the nation.

Going by media reports, a permanent chairman COSC (PC COSC) is in the offing, that too without operational powers. No military can have adequate capacity building and synergy, if overseen by a 'committee'. The Kargil Review Committee and the follow up GoM reports had strongly recommended appointing a CDS. Latter report had categorically stated, "The functioning of COSC has, to date, revealed serious weaknesses in its ability to provide single point military advice to the government".

The hitherto unheard of Permanent Chairman COSC (PC COSC) was recommended by the Naresh Chandra Committee after Sh Naresh Chandra was reportedly briefed by then NSA, to pointedly make such recommendation. Manoj Joshi, also member of the Naresh Chandra Committee, later disclosed that Ministry of Defence did not want CDS because they thought that the Defence Secretary and his IAS colleagues will be "somehow diminished". Surely a reason like 'loss of turf' should not be adequate for not appointing a CDS? 37

While establishing HQ IDS, bureaucracy also put on paper, "As and when a CDS is appointed, he will have equal voting rights as Service Chiefs

and in case of disagreement by two Service Chiefs, arbitration will be done by MoD". In this manner, the CDS can never be a 'single point' adviser to the political authority? Within the military, there are no dissent notes by army commanders and equivalents, and respective chiefs are the single voice for their service. Hence this provision in case of CDS was possibly inserted with the intent to facilitate the 'divide and rule' policy of the bureaucracy. Whether we continue with rotational Chairman COSC or have a two-year Pmt Chairman COSC, both lack requisite mandate; hence the need for a CDS who is a five star general. At present, the respective Chiefs draw their powers from the law of the land, mainly the Army, Air Force and Navy Acts, which gives them administrative and operational powers. A change in their charter will mean changing the law. That will have to be the start point for any lasting change. Without legislative backing no organisational reform will stand the legal test.

If, one accepts the premise that India's "tryst with destiny" is to be a world superpower in a 25-30 year time frame, then to spend huge time and effort to make incremental changes which will not meet our needs beyond the medium-term, may be sub-optimal.

The creation of TCs under a five-star CDS would allow the Prime Minister Sh Narendra Modi to credibly lay claim to genuine military reform. Addressing the military's top commanders on December 15, Mr Modi had declared:³⁸ "We have been slow to reform the structures of our armed forces. We should promote 'jointness' across every level of our armed forces. We wear different colours, but we serve the same cause and bear the same flag. Jointness at the top is a need that is long overdue. We also need reforms in senior defence management. It is sad that many defence reform measures proposed in the past have not been implemented. This is an area of priority for me." Mr Modi is right, promises of reform have never been implemented, particularly the move towards tri-service command structures. He should now implement this priority and be remembered for posterity.

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IS A CDS (CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF) REALLY NECESSARY

Col Gautam Das (Retd)*

The Kargil Review Committee (1999)'s appointed Task Force on the Management of Defence recommended to the Group of Ministers (GoM) that a Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) was needed for the effective functioning of India's higher defence organization. The GoM in turn accepted that a CDS was indeed necessary, which was included in their recommendations of February 2001, titled: 'Reforming the National Security System'. An Implementation Cell was set up to monitor the implementation of the GoM's recommendations, but the appointment of a CDS, supported by a Vice CDS (VCDS), was never implemented. Why was this so?

The answer, in the words of Admiral Arun Prakash (Retd.), who was a member of the Task Force on Defence headed by Mr. Arun Singh, was Chief of Naval Staff, and had also been Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC), is given below:

But high drama was enacted alongside low farce, as our unfortunate historical-cultural traits emerged once again, and narrow parochial ends were allowed to prevail over the larger national interests, in an extremely short-sighted manner.

Behind the scenes political lobbying by senior retired service officers, accompanied by dire predictions emanating from the Services themselves, confirmed the worst fears of the political establishment. The appointment of a CDS was scuttled at the last moment, and this ripped the heart out of the GoM recommendations for "Reforming the National Security System".

Many articles have been written on the subject of the CDS since Adm. Arun Prakash wrote his seminal article on the subject, published in 2007 in the Journal of Defence Studies of the Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses, from which the above quote had been taken. Most of these

have been written by retired officers of the armed forces, primarily from the Indian Army, and all have given cogent reasons for the necessity of India's having a CDS. By contrast, retired senior officers of the Indian Air Force (IAF), which has steadfastly been against the concept as well as the appointment of a CDS, have written little on the subject that is available in the public domain. This writer does not propose to re-iterate the same arguments yet again, but in order to suggest a contrary point of view, will use Adm. Arun Prakash's article as the basis from which to develop an alternate view-point.

This writer is of the considered opinion that the CDS is NOT necessary for the most effective AND most efficient higher defence management for India, which could also be termed the external element of the national security system. However, the reasons which have been given by the GoM's Report (2001) still remain to be addressed, so what is being suggested is not a continuance of the status quo ante, as the IAF and the bureaucracy, and a large proportion of the political class, would all seem to prefer, but an alternate method of achieving the desired ends.

Before going into the suggested alternative let us take a quick look at what was recommended inter alia:

- Since the COSC has not been effective in fulfilling its mandate, it be strengthened by the addition of a CDS and a Vice Chief of Defence Staff (VCDS).
- The CDS is required to be established to fulfill the following functions:-

To provide single point military advice to the Government.

To administer the Strategic Forces.

To enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning process through intra and inter-Service prioritization.

To ensure the required "Jointness" in the armed forces.

The CDS may be a four-star officer from one of the three Services in rotation, and will function as the permanent Chairman of the COSC.

The details relating to the precise role and function of the CDS

and his relationship with the other key actors in the defence setup, particularly the Service Chiefs would need to be worked out.

Why did this not suit the Government of India (GoI), even though its own GoM had recommended it? The answer has been in the given quote from Adm. Arun Prakash's article. What next, if the higher defence management system has to be reformed, and Theatre Commands to be established, as many senior officers of two of the three Services, barring the IAF, now deem necessary?

The Government of India's answer to this question was to set up the Naresh Chander Task Force, which committee has since submitted its own recommendations. Acknowledging that there was dissension amongst the three Services on the subject of whether a CDS was necessary or not, this august body recommended as its major recommendation that the post of a Permanent Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (PCCoSC) be created. This appointment would, it was felt, remove the pertinent criticisms of why the rotationary nature of the existing system did not work, as clearly explained by Adm. Arun Prakash in the same article. This system is in vogue in certain other countries, including in neighbouring Pakistan, and since perhaps no system can be perfect, has its own pluses and minuses. This writer is of the belief that this recommendation is only a diplomatic solution to the greater problem, and will have no beneficial effect whatsoever, other than adding another layer of military bureaucracy to the already existing and unnecessary duplication that stifles and delays functioning between the Service Headquarters (SHQ) and the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

To find another solution, we can refer to Adm. Arun Prakash's concluding remarks and recommendations, which are also echoed in the CENJOWS concept note that sought various views on the subject and the related one of the setting up of Theatre Commands. He states, in his own words, that the impediments are:

- Jointmanship in our context is currently skin deep and cosmetic. When it comes to what they perceived as their "core interests", the three Services will compete with each other fiercely, often making external mediation necessary.
- Like their counterparts everywhere, our armed forces, are inherently conservative and "status-quoist", by nature, and will not be able to bring about any change in the higher defence

organization on their own. Any changes that are considered necessary in the larger interest will have to be imposed by political diktat.

- However, the Indian polity, for the foreseeable future is going to be completely preoccupied with issues of social, regional and electoral significance. It is therefore unlikely that the political establishment will be able to devote the time and attention that is essential, to national security issues.

He recommended, again in his own words, that:

- For this reason, it is necessary in the national interest, for the GoI to constitute a bi-partisan (or multi-party) Parliamentary Committee, assisted by experts, for a wide ranging and comprehensive review and re-examination of national security issues (including reorganization of the higher defence organization).

The findings and recommendations of this Committee should be tabled in Parliament, and if we are really serious about the nation's security, any reforms or changes contemplated in the national security framework and structures, or in the defence organization must be eventually incorporated and enforced as an Act of Parliament.

CENJOWS has itself suggested the same while adding for good measure that the Allocation of Business Rules be amended, in suggesting that a CDS be the 'Principal Military Advisor to the Defence Minister'. What CENJOWS did not state in this connection is that as it presently stands, as per the Allocation of Business Rules, it is the Defence Secretary who is responsible for the defence of India, and this is really what needs to be changed. Can a CDS or PCCoSC be made responsible for the 'defence of India'? This writer believes that neither the bureaucracy nor the political class wants this to happen, and while the bureaucracy would oppose this tooth and nail, the political class would prefer to dither and delay, while deliberately not allowing such legislation to be passed. 'Why not?' one may ask. In the search for a solution, let us examine the envisaged role of the CDS, as per the CENJOWS Concept Note (highlighting by CENJOWS):

- (a) CDS should have the primary role of being the Principal Advisor to the Prime Minister and the Government, through the

Defence **Minister**, on all matters pertaining to India's national security.

(b) CDS should provide 'strategic vision' and be responsible for all strategic perspective planning, operational planning and contingency planning.

(c) In peacetime, the primary role of CDS should focus exclusively on war preparedness having a bearing on strategic operations.

(d) In terms of war preparedness, the CDS should have a major role in refinement and integration of operational plans, creation of logistic means to sustain operational plans and ensuring build-up of strategic reserves of arms, ammunition, military hardware, supplies and fuel requirements. In effect, he will be responsible for Financial Planning, Budgetary allocations and force structures of the three services.

(e) The CDS should prepare the annual Defence Intelligence Estimate and the requirements of Defence Intelligence to meet the existent threats, overall.

(f) The CDS will exercise operational command over Strategic Forces Command and the Andaman and Nicobar Command and any other bi-service or tri-service commands that may evolve in the future, like Cyber, Space and Special Operations Command, till the formation of integrated theatre commands.

(g) The CDS has to be viewed as the 'Voice' of the Indian Armed Forces in terms of providing strategic control, strategic direction and strategic vision.

(h) CDS should have the primary role in formulation of defence policies.

The above set of functions and authority is of such a nature that it arouses the fears of the political class of the creation of almost a 'Commander-in-Chief' with far too much power vested in one person, particularly since that person would be a serving uniformed officer of the armed forces. The politicians of a democracy such as India's fears of the 'man on horseback' or military dictator would be revived by the suggested role and status. The Indian media would also no doubt sense an opportunity to add fuel to a fire, and exaggerate these fears for all the sensationalism it might be worth.

Is there no solution, and are we therefore, as Indians, doomed to be saddled with 'a defence management system which is clearly outdated and largely dysfunctional', and 'hazarding India's security and vital interests', in Adm. Arun Prakash's words? This writer firmly believes there IS, but the answer is not a CDS as suggested by the GoM or by CENJOWS, or even a modestly-empowered PCCoSC.

CENJOWS has suggested that the possibility of a National Defence Board as a statutory advisory body could be examined. In fact, the post-First World War reforms recommended by the Esher Committee of 1920 included a Military Council. Lord Ismay's recommendations, made at a later stage when British India was to be divided into India and Pakistan did away with this, though his various other practical recommendations were not followed up in the letter and spirit in which they were intended. The largest organisations in India are two of the GoI's organs, the Railways and Ministry of Defence and its subordinate organs, and the Railways has a professional body, the Railway Board, as the mandatory advisory body for the Railway Minister, an elected politician. Could such a system work for the Defence Ministry? Most likely not, since the nature of the Defence Ministry, with its three armed Services and a para-military force, the Coast Guard, in addition to other departments of a staff nature, would require the creation of an unwieldy and large Council or Board, and possibly the simultaneous dismantling of various existing staff and command systems. Also, the advice from one professional advisor can be much more precise and accurate in its prescriptions, as opposed to the compromise nature of a 'designed-by-a-committee' solution.

What is strongly recommended, by way of an Act of Parliament, is the creation of a STATUTORY Deputy Defence Minister from a professional armed forces background, chosen by the Cabinet Committee on Appointments from among suitably qualified RETIRED former Lieutenant Generals, Air Marshals, Vice-Admirals, and former Chiefs of Staffs of any of the three Services. This statutory appointment would be a POLITICAL APPOINTMENT, but distinctly different from the present system of appointment of politicians as Deputy Defence Ministers or Ministers of State for Defence which is presently in vogue. The Act will have to mandate clearly in its wording that the Deputy Defence Minister would be the 'the Principal Advisor to the Prime Minister and the Government, through the Defence Minister, on all matters pertaining to India's national security'. In other words, that the Defence Minister, an elected politician, would be required

to statutorily consider the Deputy Defence Minister's advice on matters relating to the external dimensions of national security and matters military, in addition to many of the other functions envisaged for the CDS. This would allow the GoI to select from among highly-competent professionals from any of the three Services a respected person who perhaps had not become a Chief of his own Service due to the current seniority-plus-residual service method of selection, which sometimes makes this selection a date-of-birth related lottery.

As a retired officer, he would not be in direct command of any of the three Services, nor is it envisaged that he would function as a de facto Commander-in-Chief. Passing such an Act and making it law is easier when there is one political party with a clear majority in the Lok Sabha which is running the Government, so there is a case for seriously examining this recommendation as quickly as possible, while a window of opportunity exists.

The CoSC can continue to function as presently, and the 'Voice of the Armed Forces' role would have to continue to be performed by the Chairman. Also, not addressed by the creation of such an appointment would remain the question of who would exercise operational command over Strategic Forces Command and the Andaman and Nicobar Command and any other bi-service or tri-service commands that may evolve in the future, like Cyber, Space and Special Operations Command. Thus the functions, duties and authority of such a person would need to be carefully worked out. In a similar vein, the GoM Report had earlier stated, in the case of the recommended CDS, that:

The details relating to the precise role and function of the CDS and his relationship with the other key actors in the defence setup, particularly the Service Chiefs would need to be worked out.

To this we may add that the relationship with not only the Service Chiefs, but also with the Chairman CoSC, and equally importantly also that with the Defence Secretary, and the Allocation of Business Rules would also need to be changed in view of the changes engendered.

If this change is to be incorporated into the existing higher defence organization, it would be necessary to take a fresh look also at the headless and toothless Integrated Defence Staff (IDS) that presently exists. The role of the senior staff officer with the convoluted title "Chief of Integrated

Defence Staff to the Chiefs of Staff Committee” (CISC) would also need to be re-examined in the fresh approach to higher defence organization that is being suggested. Since this staff office was envisaged to provide staff support to the recommended CDS and VCDS, it is possible that it could be made to perform a similar supporting staff role for the Deputy Defence Minister instead.

It is not being suggested that this recommendation is a completely worked-out solution for the country's requirements, but it provides the structural basis for breaking the deadlock that exists in SHQ-MoD relations as well as reassures the political class that appropriate as well as effective political control is being exercised over the armed forces. It also ensures that there is institutionalized professional military opinion mandated in defence and military-related decision-making, including future force structure planning and implementation.

Should such a mandated political but professional appointment be made into law, the downstream questions posed by CENJOWS regarding Theatre Commands can readily be dealt with. Much has been written in military journals and even in the popular glossy military magazines on the need for Theatre Commands, a Special Operations Command, Space and Cyber Commands, mostly eminently sensible. Most of these recommendations need to be taken cognizance of and suitably implemented, but are being stymied in both thought and action by the lack of a CDS. The suggestion for a professional Deputy Defence Minister as a statutory political appointment offers one way out of the grid-locked situation, with the possibility of breaking the existing logjams of thought and emotion. It is one possible way ahead, without the appointment of a CDS. It should be examined as such.

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CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF (CDS) TRANSFORMING INDIA'S MILITARY FORCE TO MILITARY POWER

Lt Gen Vinod Bhatia*

“The armed forces should review and carry out a strategic rebalance to optimise the combat power and synergise the assets to transform the armed forces from a ‘MILITARY FORCE to a MILITARY POWER’ capable of securing the nation, the people and assets across the full spectrum of conflict. “

Lt Gen Shekatkar Committee Report- Dec 2016

The national aim is to “TRANSFORM INDIA TO A MODERN, PROSPEROUS AND SECURE NATION”. As security is a precursor to long term peace, stability and development, securing India is a national imperative. India's size, strategic location, trade interests and security concerns extend from Persian Gulf in the West, to the straits of Malacca in the East and from the CAR in the North to near the equator in the South and underpin India's security response. In view of the strategic spread, it is essential to maintain a credible land, air and maritime force to safeguard own security interests. India's security concerns are also impacted by a dynamic global and regional security environment. As India transforms from an emerging and rising power to a risen, responsible power and a net security provider in the region, India will need credible military capabilities to meet emerging security challenges, ensure peace, project military power to safeguard national interests and assets including the domination of IOR, assist friendly foreign countries in times of crisis from unconventional threats and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR).

While addressing the Combined Commanders Conference in December 2015 onboard INS Vikramaditya, Prime Minister Modi challenged senior military commanders to reform their “beliefs, doctrines, objectives and strategies.”

Prime Minister Modi spelt out six broad areas for military reforms—in defence planning, enhancing jointness (the ability of the army, navy and air force to operate together), *urging manpower rationalization (tooth to tail ratio)*, emphasizing professional military education, restructuring higher defence management and streamlining defence procurement process. The analysis of problems in each of these sectors challenged the assumptions, and worldview, of India's senior military commanders. This article attempts to address one of the six core concerns of envisaged military reforms—enhancing jointness.

The Indian military is among the least 'joint' major militaries in the world and its system of professional military education emphasizes training over education. Conventional wisdom would have the government announcing reform measures and leaving it to the military and the defence ministry to implement them. Doing so will likely subvert the reforms, as has happened in the past. In 1986, Arun Singh was instrumental in creating a tri-services and joint civil-military institution called the Defence Planning Staff (DPS) in an attempt to rationalise defence planning. It quickly lost its relevance as the services opposed this initiative. The military needs change, it is time for reform to ensure a more effective, efficient, present relevant and future ready force to meet multiple security challenges across the full spectrum of conflict. Any significant and meaningful change is a journey from an unsatisfactory present towards a desirable but uncertain future. The success of the journey will depend on a strategy to illuminate the way and to identify the destination.

In the West, the end of the Cold War brought hopes of a peace dividend.

However, there has been little change in India's neighbourhood. The old national security threats have persisted in the 21st Century and new ones continue to proliferate. Terrorism, piracy at sea, proliferation, failing states, water stress, the environment and climate change are among the newer threats. Meanwhile, existing border disputes have continued unabated for seven decades. At the same time, rapid advances in military technology and the forces of globalization have created a dynamic situation. Crises develop quickly and solution are often complex. Such challenges can be met successfully only by combining all the elements of national power. Diplomacy, military, intelligence, law enforcement, and the economy are some elements of such a response.

Despite the best efforts of countless devoted people, resources allocated for national security are not used to their full potential. Departments and organisations, for the most part, accomplish their core missions. However, they are ill equipped to integrate their efforts and to deliver an efficient response on a sustained basis. Good people may sometimes rise above an inefficient system, but over time the limitations of the system make the task ever more difficult. As large resources are involved in national security, there is little scope for inefficiency in managing the nation's defence. Today, the nation faces a mounting backlog of defence purchases, with finite resources and competing priorities. Under the circumstances, a constant push towards higher levels of efficiency is essential for safeguarding national interests. This is best achieved by aligning authority and accountability by appointing a single authority to ensure Operational Preparedness in the form of the much deliberated and delayed Chief of Defence Staff (CDS). For the present the Service chiefs will continue to be responsible for operational readiness.

Wars in today's context cannot be fought with outdated organisations and structures, wherein the army, the navy and the air force conduct operations in stand alone mode, with coordination and cooperation only being achieved based on personalities. War is a joint endeavour, wherein all elements of national power and all resources of the union are synergised for fighting it. This truism is even more relevant in today's context, as war today is a complex phenomenon. This complexity is likely to increase in the future. The reasons include high technology, the nature of modern war, new threats and challenges and the reality of nuclear weapons in the arsenal of our potential adversaries. Consequently, a joint force, which acts in an integrated manner, is not just desirable but an imperative. The complexities of the future security environment demand that India be prepared to face a wide range of threats of varying levels of intensity. Success in countering these threats will require skillful integration of the core competencies of the three Services into an integrated force structure. However, reorganisation by itself will not succeed in achieving such integration. What is also required is a change in mindset, a change that makes every soldier, sailor and air warrior feel that he is a member of the Indian Armed Forces, and not just the Indian Army, the Indian Navy or the Indian Air Force.

Necessity for Integration

Jointmanship and Integration. These two are very often used

interchangeably, but they are two different concepts. While jointmanship would help achieve the desired end state, integration would invariably result in synergy and thus transcend the desired end state. Jointmanship can be enforced physically while integration commences in the mind. This lack of integrated thinking was obvious in the 1962 and 1965 conflicts; the former was left purely to the Army to conduct, and the later saw each service fighting very much their own individual wars. During the 1971 war the armed forces demonstrated an unparalleled jointness in planning and conduct of operations, more due to the personalities involved rather than formal structures. Another example of effective joint operations is Operation Cactus - Maldives again the success is owed to personalities rather than formal structures.

Integration of Service Headquarter (HQ) and MoD. Integration of service and service HQs cannot and should not be limited to the Department of Defence of the MoD. There is undoubtedly an imperative to integrate service HQs and MoD from the functional to the apex levels. The integration should be set in motion in the immediate term with identification of certain slots for military personnel at the Director, Principal Director and Joint Secretary level posted to the Department of Defence and similarly certain slots in the General Staff and logistics branch of the services be tented by officers of the civil cadre including IAS. It is also an imperative to ensure effective and optimum functioning of other organised structures of the Ministry of Defence to be conjointly manned and managed by the services and civil cadre. The major weaknesses are in the functioning and understanding of the services requirement by OFB and DRDO. At present service officers posted to OFB and DRDO at the level of Lt Col/ Col are mainly employed for non core activities of these organisations. The Indian Navy over the years has a major stake and say in the functioning of Dockyards and Shipyards as also the DRDO labs. The positive outcomes are evident as naval operational , maintenance and modernisation plans are better managed and met by these organisations vis-a-vis Army and Air Force. It is a functional necessity that high calibre service officers at the level of Brig and Major General Equivalent be posted on tenure basis at the managerial and executive level of ordnance factories and defence public sector undertakings(DPSUs) as also executive directors in the OFB/ HAL. A similar model be followed for DRDO, where in service officers at the rank of Brigadier and Major General are mandated to be an integral part of DRDO to ensure that the user requirements are factored in at every

stage, this will not only reduce the cost and time over-runs but also ensure that the ownership of the design and development of combat equipment, arms and other wherewithal is with the respective Services. It is pertinent to mention here that 80 to 85% of the military equipment is low to medium technology. The need is integration and not interfaces. India as a risen and responsible power needs to attain 'Strategic autonomy' and this can only be achieved by an effective R&D and indigenous production by both private and government owned organisations.

Strategic Planning. This is an imperative to optimise all resources to effectively counter security threats and challenges. Strategic planning with a single point of contact will also facilitate synergising all elements of national power, diplomatic, informational, military economic and political.

Operational Planning. Once a strategy has been agreed upon, it needs to be translated into a specific operational plan by identifying National Military Objectives and working out Military Strategy. The operational plan should cover the whole theatre of operations. For example, if Pakistan is considered a potential adversary, there must be a basic operational plan which should cover the entire Western front from the Siachen to the Rann of Kutch extending up to the Arabian Sea. It is only when such a comprehensive plan is made, a judicious distribution of existing resources and their shortfall can be worked out among the various subsectors of the theatre of operations.

Force Structuring. The three Services need to adopt a single military strategy and synergise operational plans. Once the strategy and structures are accepted the services deduce desired military capabilities and work on a common platform with a fifteen year vision, a seven year strategy and a three year action plan. The vision, strategy and the plan has to be approved by the government and supported with a committed budget. The capital budget should be a roll on budget to cater for slippages given the tardy procurement procedures. 4

Integrated Advice. There is a pressing need to integrate the Service Headquarters with the Ministry of Defence. However, if the Service officers posted to the Ministry of Defence are to represent only their particular service interests, the discord will be transferred to the precincts of the Ministry with no real gain to anyone. Similarly, if the National Security Council is to obtain any worthwhile military advice, the purpose would hardly be solved, with the

three Chiefs of Staff giving their respective service centric perspective. The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) should bank on a well reasoned, single point military advice. This can only be obtained if the three Services agree on the strategy to be followed, the operational plans which flow from the strategy and the force structure required to meet national security challenges.

Integrated Resources. An integrated approach by the three services to equipment selection, procurement, stocking policy and training can lead to considerable financial savings.

Personnel Policies. As the Services move to greater sophistication of equipment, they will increasingly be competing with the civil sector for trained and trainable manpower. The retention of such manpower will also become increasingly difficult given the better financial prospects in the civil sector. Unless the services can work out clearcut common personnel policies, they will increasingly lose out to the civil sector and find themselves competing with each other for shrinking quality manpower.

This can be avoided when the three Services begin to address such problems, including the Tri Services Act, in an integrated manner.

The felt need and an imperative to appoint a Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) has been long debated and acknowledged. All mega nations have joint structures fully integrated with national security apparatus and policy with a single point adviser from the armed forces. The Group of ministers (GOM) set up by the Prime Minister in year 2000 in their report categorically stated at Para 6.5 “The functioning of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) has to date revealed serious weaknesses in its ability to provide single point military advice to the government, and resolve substantive inter service doctrine, planning, policy and operational issues adequately. This institution needs to be appropriately revamped to discharge its responsibilities efficiently and effectively, including the facilitation of “Jointness” and synergy among the defence services”.

The GOM vide Para 6.18 amplified the reasons and justified the need for the CDS. To reiterate and quote from the GOM the reasons enumerated which are even more relevant today are:-

- To Provide Single-Point Military Advice to the Government. Under the existing system, each of the Service Chiefs renders

military advice to the civil political executive independent of one another. This is unsatisfactory. Creation of a CDS would ensure provision of single point military advice to the civil political executive. Before presenting his advice, the CDS will consult the Service Chiefs and will inform Government of the range of military advice and opinion with respect to the subject in hand. Individual Service Chiefs will have their right to present their own view where that is at variance with the CDS's views.

- To administer the Strategic Forces. As India is now a state with nuclear weapons, the highest importance must be attached to the creation of appropriate structures for the management and control of our nuclear weapons and strategic forces. The CDS should exercise administrative control, as distinct from operational military control over these strategic forces.
- To Enhance the Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Planning Process Through Intra and Inter-Service Prioritisation. Under the existing system, each Service tends to advance its own capability without regard for Inter-Service and even intra-Service prioritization. Accordingly, one of the most vital tasks that the CDS would be expected to perform is to facilitate efficiently and effectiveness in the planning/budgeting process to ensure the optimal and efficient use of available resources. This could be carried out through intra-Service and inter-Service prioritization of acquisitions and projects.
- To Ensure the Required "Jointness" in the Armed Forces. The capabilities of the Armed Forces can be enhanced significantly, if rather than operating as three individual units, they operate with a high degree of "Jointness" and in close tandem with one another in the conduct of various tasks, including training. Modern warfare demands a much higher degree of coordination in operations by all the three Services than ever before. Creation of a CDS would promote greater "Jointness" in the Armed Forces.

- Further amplifying the GOM recommend that the “CDS” may be a four star officer drawn from the three services. Accordingly, he should rank primus inter pares in the COSC and function as the “Principal Military Advisor” to the Defence Minister.

It is a national security imperative to appoint a CDS with the requisite authority and mandate. Envisaged role of the CDS should be:-

- CDS should have the primary role of being the Principal Advisor to the Prime Minister and the Government, through the Defence Minister, on all matters pertaining to India’s national security.
- CDS should provide ‘strategic vision’ and be responsible for all strategic perspective planning, operational planning and contingency planning.
- In peacetime, the primary role of CDS should focus exclusively on war preparedness having a bearing on strategic operations.
- In terms of war preparedness, the CDS should have a major role in

refinement and integration of operational plans, creation of logistic means to sustain operational plans and ensuring build-up of strategic reserves of arms, ammunition, military hardware, supplies and fuel requirements. In effect, he will be responsible for Financial Planning, Budgetary allocations and force structures of the three services.
- The CDS should prepare the annual Defence Intelligence Estimate and the requirements of Defence intelligence to meet the existent threats, overall.
- The CDS should exercise operational command over Strategic Forces Command and the Andaman and Nicobar Command and other bi-service or tri-service commands

that may evolve in the future, like Cyber, Space and Special Operations Command, till the formation of integrated theatre commands.

- The CDS has to be viewed as the 'Head' of the Indian Armed Forces in terms of providing strategic control, strategic direction and strategic vision.
- CDS should have the primary role in formulation of defence policies.

India boasts of the second largest Army, the fourth largest Air Force and a blue water capability for the Navy to ensure our territorial integrity against external threats and internal security. What the nation lacks is a credible and single authority to synergise all elements of military power to include DRDO , Indian Ordnance Factories and other structures in addition to the three services, to meet emerging security challenges in the regional and global context. It is an imperative for the government to appoint a CDS with the requisite mandate to effectively meet future security challenges. The Indian armed forces are one of the most professional, battle hardened and combat rich military in the world, however we continue to be a military force due to lack of certain suboptimal support structure and integration both intra and inter. As a risen responsible regional power India needs to transform from the Indian Armed Forces from a MILITARY FORCE to a MILITARY POWER.

***Lt Gen Vinod Bhatia is a former DGMO and is Director CENJOWS now**





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CENTRE FOR JOINT WARFARE STUDIES

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APPLICATION FOR LIFE/ ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

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Dear Sir,

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2. I undertake to abide by the Rules and Bye Laws of the Institution.
3. My particulars are given below:-

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Pin Code Phone No

(ii) Permanent/Residential

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Pin Code..... Phone No Mobile No(Optional).....

(iii) Email

Optional Fields

- (c) Parent Service Army/Navy/Air Force/Civil Services
- (d) Rank/ Designation..... (e) Decorations
- (f) Appointment (g) Personal Number
- (h) Date of Commission (j) Serving/Retired.....

4. Areas of expertise or interest:-

- (a)
- (b)
- (c)

5. Any other information that may be of interest to the CENJOWS (including important exposures):-

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6. Proof of my identity (Copy of passport/ voters ID Card/ Aadhar Card) will be produced after approval of membership.

7. The following are enclosed:-

- (a) Demand Draft/Cheque in favour of CENJOWS payable at New Delhi:-
- (i) DD/Cheque No.....dated.....
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Yours faithfully,

Date :

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

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New Delhi

Date

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Director CENJOWS

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