

# CIVIL MILITARY FUSION IN INDIA- PROMISING PATHWAYS

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## Abstract

Civil-Military paradigm in India had a rich inheritance since millennia, the pre-independence imperialistic British model was deemed repugnant by the Nehruvian India, leading to progressive institutional detachment of the military and excessive civilian control. In the changed security paradigm of the 21st century, with blurred distinction between the civil and military, whole of the Nation strategies have gained salience. Drawing lessons from the past and incipient civil military fusion through recent pathbreaking reforms, this article evaluates three critical dimensions of the civil military paradigm in India- institutional frameworks, defence planning and capability development, and suggests promising pathways.

Keywords- Civil Military Fusion, defence planning, defence industrial base, India

## The Civil-Military Paradigm

The Civil (Government and People) and the military are *primordial pillars of state power*. The rise and fall of empires and powers since millennia is testimony to the critical *institutional relationship* between the political, economic and military organs of states. Kautilya's invaluable treatise "Arthashastra", written before the 2nd century BCE, postulates Saptanga (7 organs) of a State (King, Ministers, Territory & Population, Forts, Treasury, Army and Allies) using a unique term *Kosha-Danda*<sup>1</sup> to underscore *the symbiotic relationship between economic power (Kosha)*

*and the military might (Danda) of a State. Sound civil military integration or fusion (CMI or CMF), driven by robust civil-military relations (CMR), remains the key to state survival. In recent times, disastrous world wars and the nuclear holocaust led to distaste for the militarism evinced in pre-war Germany and Japan. Several CMR theories, which spawned after Samuel Huntington propounded the “Objective Control Theory” in 1957, emphasise “civilian control” and civil and military “separation”. However, most theories fall short of sufficiently explaining the real world CMR. Unending proxy, post-colonial, civil wars and wars on terror, underscore the need for intense interplay and integration between the civil and military in any effective CMR framework. Moreover, dual-use information technology, digitisation and Fourth industrial revolution (4IR technologies) have revolutionised military affairs and democratised use of violence. The traditional air, sea and land domains of security have expanded to include contestations in non-traditional security domains like information, cyber-space, space, high-end technologies, trade, economic, human, migration, food, water, health, energy, environment and climate-change.*

*Wars of the 21st century have blurred the distinction between war and peace, military and non-military, state and non-state actors, combatants and non-combatants, borders and hinterland. Calibrated hybrid competition and conflicts seek outcomes in the cognitive domain, leveraging economic, diplomatic, information, technology, military and non-traditional instruments of power. This is exemplified by the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, which also presents contrasting CMR paradigms for generation and application of national power. National security is manifestly multi-dimensional, entailing multi-agency and multi-disciplinary collaboration. Effective CMR frameworks must integrate the civil and military constituents, since security policy and military strategy feed and reinforce each other. Development and security have a positive-sum relationship. While civilian oversight must ensure that militaries do not pursue self-serving or wasteful goals, justifiable military needs must be met. Kautilya’s arguments for planning, development, employment, sustenance, management and control of the military, critically aligning military with the growth of the State, are arguably canonical.*

Civil and military integration is manifest in many national security dimensions- defence policy and decision making institutions; internal security; border defence; public and private defence-technological-industrial ecosystems, commonly termed Defence Industrial Base (DIB); critical infrastructure; science and technology (S&T), research and development (R&D), learning and innovation. Ubiquitous dimensions of national security have driven States to institutionalise *Whole of Government (WoG) and Whole of Nation (WoN)* security strategies, to achieve national security *most economically, efficiently and at an accelerated pace. The three pillars of national power - development, security and external influence* are intricately inter-related (Table 1), with critical *civil and military inter-dependencies*.

**Three Pillars of National Security & Multi-Disciplinary CMF**

| Development                   | Security                               | External Influence                  |
|-------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| Economy- Policies & Potential | Secure Territory & Borders             | Diplomacy- Multilateralism          |
| Industry & Services           | Deterrence- Conventional and Strategic | Stability-Defence Relations & Trade |
| Science & Technology          | Internal Stability                     | Strategic Autonomy                  |
| Social Equity                 | Intelligence & Information             | Trade & Investments                 |
| Environment & Climate Change  | Critical Resources & Technology        | Culture & National Values           |

Table No 1 Source: Author

All nations design CMR and *evolve CMI/CMF strategies*, tailored for their nuanced challenges, resources and *politico-military systems*. Shaping appropriate CMR and CMI/CMF frameworks is critical for India, especially since the collusive nexus of her adversaries is growing stronger, triggering border crises episodically, given their proclivity to use multi-domain hybrid threats with a coercive and revisionist intent. India's defence budget has grown to nearly \$75 Bn, and manufacturing in aerospace and defence is proposed to exceed Rs 175000 Cr, including Rs 35000 Cr exports by 2027. *Substantial reforms to break the civil military stasis*, including, but not limited to the creation of a Chief

of Defence Staff (CDS) and Department of Military Affairs (DMA) and corporatisation of Ordnance Factories (OF), have been ushered post 2020. The salience of *CMI and CMF has been flagged by political and military hierarchy* repeatedly-enhancing CMI in infrastructure and R&D<sup>2</sup>; the adopting a WoG and a WoN approach<sup>3</sup> and policies to infuse CMF in logistics<sup>4</sup>; convergence between defence programs and government initiatives like Gati-Shakti<sup>5</sup>. *There is a need to examine the ongoing CMI/CMF endeavours.* This essay examines India's *institutional CMR frameworks, CMR in defence planning and CMI/CMF in defence capability development*, and suggests promising pathways.

**India's CMR Framework.** Independent India had to contend with formidable security and foreign policy challenges at its birth- partition driven communal violence and war initiated by Pakistan; political uncertainty in newly born neighbours; turbulence and economic aftershocks of the Second World War, compounded by the emerging Cold War. *India's culturally ingrained pacifism was reinforced by a political distaste towards use of military power* for furthering expansionist agendas. India's CMR since independence and its impact on defence policy, institutional evolution, inclusion of the military and crisis/conflict management need reflection and analysis.

- **National Security Strategy and Defence Policy.** India's post-independence foreign and defence policies had *moorings in Nehruvian idealism*, unrelated to the *militarist and revisionist* policies of China and Pakistan. Lack of an institutional approach led to subjective political interpretations of *national interests* and non-articulation of a national security strategy (NSS) to secure them. Though George Tanham's criticism of India's strategic culture<sup>6</sup> triggered appropriate rebuttals<sup>7</sup>, many military analysts have criticised India's reactive strategic responses<sup>8</sup>. Lack of strategic direction<sup>9</sup> and ad-hoc defence modernisation<sup>10</sup> have also drawn criticism. From a *defence policy perspective*, it is worth noting that *KC Pant, a serving defence minister*, had opined in 1989 that *the role of Indian Armed forces is strictly defensive- to safeguard autonomy of decision making, facilitate development and prevent turbulence spreading from neighbourhood*<sup>11</sup>. *Indian strategic thought was reflected in the broad*

*guidelines for India's Defence Policy*, explained in a statement to the Parliament by the Prime Minister in 1995<sup>12</sup>, which encompassed- *defence of territory & trade routes; a secure internal environment to ensure unity and progress; ability to exercise a degree of influence in the immediate neighbourhood for harmonious relations; and the ability to contribute towards regional and global stability with an out of country contingency capability*. This rational policy direction continues to guide the development of India's military capabilities, even as she grows to be the 3rd largest economy in a decade, resolutely addressing the growing collusive threats from revisionist neighbours, in a turbulent regional environment.

### **Civil-Military Institutions for Policy & Decision Making.**

- **From Progressive Separation Towards Incipient Integration.** Post independence CMR exemplify *politico-bureaucratic control and progressive detachment of the military from decision-making institutions*. The three-tier *committee based system (Cabinet, Ministry and Military-Chiefs levels)*, which did allow frequent *politico-military engagements*, soon fell into disuse after 1947-48 War. The first 50 years saw progressive disjunction in CMR, for several reasons, including political aloofness towards a military unjustifiably perceived to be a *colonial vestige*; early antipathy between the civil-military due to *civilian meddling*; and lack of inter-service jointness, despite continued push from Lord Mountbatten, even after 1960<sup>13</sup>. In 1952, the defence forces were designated "attached offices", outside the Ministry of Defence (MoD)<sup>14</sup>. Promulgation of Allocation of Business (AoB) and Transaction of Business (ToB) Rules in 1961, under Article 77(3) of the Constitution, mandated the defence of India to the Defence Minister, and the administration of business rules to the 'Secretary', cementing the separation. The Kargil conflict (1999) broke the stasis, and recommendations of the the Group of Ministers Report<sup>15</sup> (GoM) in 2001 led to creation of *Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff (HQ IDS)* in 2001, and designation of *Service Headquarters as "integrated" offices* in the AoB rules<sup>16</sup>. The evolution and frailties are tabulated below (Table 2).

**CMR- Institutional Framework Evolution & Reforms**

| Civil-Military Institutional Frameworks  | Frailties and Concerns  |
|--|---|
| <b>1947</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Separate C-in-C for each Service</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of Jointness; Service Autonomy</li> </ul>   |
| <b>1952</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services became of 'Attached' offices</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Separation of Civil and Military in decision making</li> <li>• Defence Committee of Cabinet and Defence Minister's Committee- diminished relevance</li> </ul>  |
| <b>1961</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AoB and ToB Rules (Under Article 77 (3) of Constitution)</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defence of the Union mandated to the Defence Minister</li> <li>• Administrative responsibility with Defence Secretary, heading 'Defence Department'</li> </ul>   |
| <b>1967-1990s (Aborted Reforms)</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrative Reforms Commission recommended CDS</li> <li>• 1990- Arun Singh Committee, recommended JCS</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendations stonewalled</li> <li>• Arun Singh Committee Report not made public</li> </ul>  |
| <b>1991</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Military Wing</i> (Military Officer), under Cabinet Secretariat since 1947, providing secretarial support to Apex and all inter-Services Committees, shifted to MoD, merged with IDS in 2001</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The political/ ministerial oversight through an institutional interface was lost.</i></li> <li>• Reflects the distancing and perceived <i>irrelevance of military inputs</i></li> </ul>                         |
| <b>2001-2002</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GoM Report. Creation of HQ IDS</li> <li>• Designation of Service HQs as 'Integrated'</li> <li>• DIA and cross-teaming with civil committees/ boards</li> <li>• Nuclear Command Authority (NCA) - Chairman COSC member of Executive Council</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partial implementation of GoM report – No CDS Created.</li> <li>• Service HQ still lacked policy making role</li> </ul>  |
| <b>2011-12</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Naresh Chandra Task Force Report (2011-12), recommended Permanent Chairman COSC</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report was not made public. Permanent Chairman COSC not appointed.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>2020</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CDS also Secretary, DMA &amp; Permanent Chairman COSC</li> <li>• Resource optimisation though Jointness, integration, indigenization, long term capability development plans</li> <li>• Revenue expenditure is the charge of CDS.</li> <li>• Controls tri-service commands and institutions</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CDS is <i>Principal Military Advisor</i> to Defence Minister on Tri-Service matters.</li> <li>• Defence Secretary remains '<i>Principal Defence Advisor</i>', with DoD responsible for defence of India</li> </ul> |

Table No 2. Source: Author

**CDS & DMA- A Pathbreaking Reform.** It took over 70 years to demonstrate *political will to overcome the entrenched politico-bureaucratic reservations*, and notably also *resistance from the Services, fiercely guarding single-service autonomy*. The creation of DMA, under CDS as Secretary, and its inclusion in the AoB Rules as a Department<sup>17</sup> on 01 Jan 2020, was a truly transformative step. CDS is the *principal military advisor to the Defence Minister on tri-Service matters*<sup>18</sup>, and the *Permanent Chairman, COSC. Charge of the Armed Forces of India, Service HQ, HQ IDS and the Territorial Army is vested with the DMA*<sup>19</sup>. His major responsibilities and role clarity concerns are tabulated below (Table 3).

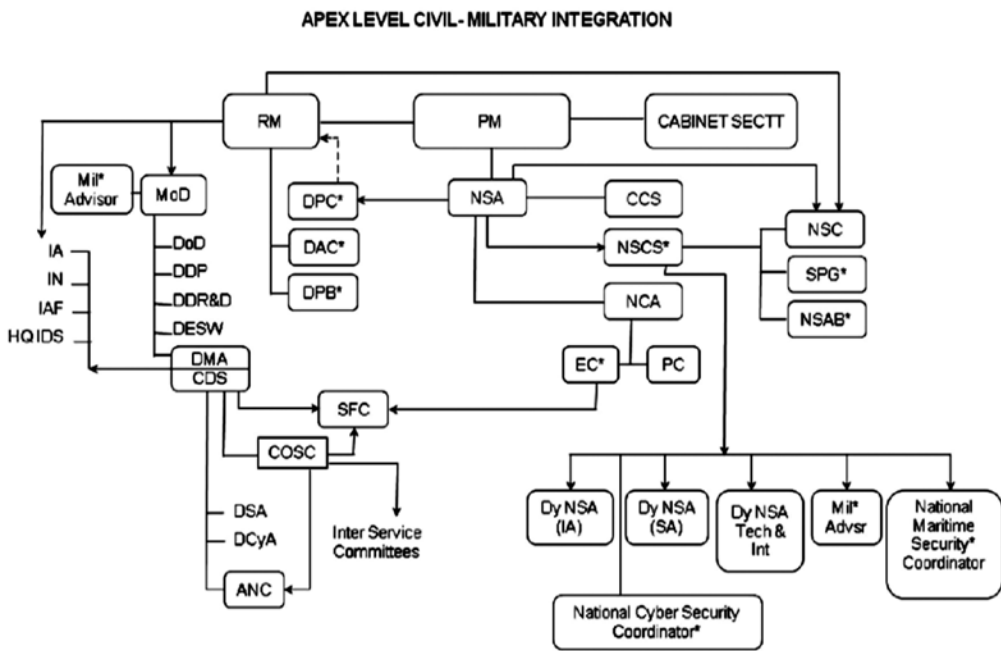
**CDS- Charter and Role Clarity**

| Major Responsibilities   | Role Clarity  |
|--|---|
| <b>Policy Making/ Advice</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal Advisor to RM on Tri-Service Matters</li> <li>• Member DPC</li> <li>• Mil Advisor to NCA</li> <li>• Impartial Advice to CCS</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service Chiefs Access to the Defence Minister on Single Service matters</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Jointness in Organisations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administer Tri-Service Entities- ANC, SFC, Tri-Service Institutions, Defence Space &amp; Cyber Agencies</li> <li>• Restructure Mil Commands to Joint or Theatre Commands Jointness in force structure to infuse efficiency</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cyber &amp; Space Agencies Cross Domain, Multi-Agency. Need greater CMF</li> <li>• Chain of Command for Future Joint Forces/ Theatre Commands</li> </ul> |
| <b>Capability Development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint Priorities in Procurements</li> <li>• Draft and Implement ICDP, DCAP &amp; AAP</li> <li>• Promote Indigenisation</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICADS process be made inter-departmental, inter-ministerial.</li> </ul>  |

Table No 3. Source: Author

**Military Inclusion in Apex National Security Institutions.** The CCS is the apex constitutional body for national security decision making, where attendance of CDS/ Service Chiefs is by invitation only. The National Security Council (NSC), was resurrected in 1999 after the nuclear blasts in 1998, *with a role to advise the Cabinet on a wide range of security areas*<sup>20</sup>. The *National Security Advisor (NSA-elevated to*

*Cabinet Minister rank in 2019), is the member secretary. It also includes Vice-Chairperson Niti Ayog and CDS/Chiefs may be invited. A Strategic Policy Group (SPG) chaired by the NSA (by the Cabinet Secretary till 2018) provides policy inputs to the NSC. SPG has over 20 members from select ministries/departments/financial institutions, besides the CDS and the Service Chiefs. The National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) of non-governmental domain experts, which advises the NSC on specific issues, has a variable tenure based membership, including senior retired military officers. The NSC Secretariat (NSCS), which provides secretarial support to these bodies, has been included in the AoB rules in 2019<sup>21</sup> giving it the authority to make and enforce policies, underscoring its eminence. Growing institutional inclusion of the military in national security is analysed below (Chart and Table 4).*



Source: Author

\*Military Members/ Representative (s)



**Military Inclusion in Apex National Security Institutions/Domains**

| <b>Military Inclusion</b>  | <b>Impact on CMF</b>  |
|--|---|
| <b>CCS &amp; NSC</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CDS/ Service Chiefs on invitation</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infrequent but highest level political interface</li> </ul>  |
| <b>SPG</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CDS and Service Chiefs</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wide Inter-ministerial/ departmental consultations promote WoG approach</li> </ul>   |
| <b>NSCS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 star (Retired) Military Advisor since 2011</li> <li>• 2 Star National Maritime Security Coordinator since 2022</li> <li>• Serving officers from the 3 Services</li> <li>• National Cyber Security Coordinator.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross-flow of critical inputs at the functional level</li> <li>• Military perspective expertise and rigour to CMF</li> </ul>   |
| <b>NSAB</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 or 2 Star (Retired) Military domain experts invariably included</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outside the Government, distilled inputs</li> </ul>  |
| <b>MoD</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 Star (Retired) Military Advisor since 2021</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective advice &amp; distilled experience.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Maritime Security</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2008- Coastal Security coordination mandated to Navy</li> <li>• National Maritime Domain Awareness (NMDA) Centre</li> <li>• IFC-IOR</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plugged security gaps</li> <li>• WoG maritime security coordination</li> <li>• International outreach for maritime security</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Civil Aviation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Airspace coordination with IAF</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better crisis response capability.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Internal Security &amp; Disaster Management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MHA (LWE Wing) has a Security Advisor from the Military</li> <li>• States of NE and J&amp;K have a Unified HQ model</li> <li>• MAC and SMAC connectivity with Military establishments</li> <li>• NSG- manning by Officers and soldiers from Military</li> <li>• NDMA – Military functionaries</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helps leverage years of military expertise</li> <li>• Inter-agency coordination</li> <li>• Better crisis response</li> <li>• Joint Intelligence network</li> <li>• Joint Training, best practices</li> </ul> |

Table No 4. Source: Author

**CMR in Crises and Conflicts.** The litmus test of CMR is the response to crises, conflicts and instances of use of force. Historical evidence substantiates dysfunctional CMR in the 1962 war and IPKF operations (1987-90)<sup>22</sup>, as well as robust CMR in 1971 war, Operation Meghdoot (Siachen 1984), Operation Vijay (Kargil 1999), Uri Strikes (2016) and Balakot air strike (2019). Even against China, politico-diplomatic-military responses were robust at Nathula (1967), Sumdorong Chu (1986-95), Doklam (2017) and Eastern Ladakh (2020- ongoing). The following table flags CMF during conflicts and post crises/conflict negotiations. The essence is that the apex crises/conflict handling capabilities have matured through the years, demonstrating a sophisticated understanding of use of the instrument of force for protecting and promoting national interests, including escalation management. CMF facets during and post conflicts are analysed below (Table 5).

**CMF During Crises/ Conflict Management**

| <b>CMF During Crisis/ Conflict</b>   | <b>CMF Post Conflict/ Crisis Negotiations</b>  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>1947-48 J&amp;K</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Military operations not expanded beyond J&amp;K nor offensive employment of air (Not used in Ladakh)</li> <li>• Trust in Military capability</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political quest for early conflict termination (UN intervention)</li> <li>• Misplaced faith in diplomacy, peace and stability.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>1950-61 Tensions with China</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tibet Occupation- Political acquiescence.</li> <li>• Aksai Chin Road Construction by China- Muted political and no military response emboldened China</li> <li>• Forward Posture (1959-1961) - disregard of military advice.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disregard of territorial integrity (Aksai Chin).</li> <li>• Delusional belief in non-expansionism by a socialist China</li> <li>• Misplaced faith in diplomacy to resolve tensions</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>1962 War</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disastrous politico-bureaucratic meddling. No use of offensive Air Power.</li> </ul>   |  |

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| <b>CMF During Crisis/ Conflict</b>  | <b>CMF Post Conflict/ Crisis Negotiations</b>  |
|---|--|
| <b>1965 War</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanded beyond J&amp;K, but opportunities lost against exhausted Pakistan forces</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UN resolution in Kutch (April 1965) emboldened Pakistan</li> <li>• Soviet Union arbitration- squandering hard fought military advantages to diplomacy</li> </ul>                      |
| <b>1967 Nathula &amp; 1986-95 Sumdorong Chu</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robust and resolute response</li> <li>• Trust in military capabilities.</li> </ul>                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diplomacy in tune with military sensitivities and concerns</li> </ul>   |
| <b>1971 War</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flawless planning and execution of operations exemplified robust CMR.</li> <li>• Total faith in military leaders and capabilities</li> </ul>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political objectives in the East held primacy over military gains in the West</li> <li>• Simla Agreement- Diplomacy could not deliver lasting peace</li> </ul>                        |
| <b>1984 Operation Meghdoot (Siachen)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust in the unparalleled military valour.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Politico-diplomatic approach in sync with military concerns</li> </ul>  |
| <b>1987-90 IPKF</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questionable mandate and Muddled operations- deep fissures in CMR</li> <li>• No synergy – Military, foreign ministry, int agencies.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lessons in tri-Service jointness.</li> <li>• Lessons in use of force abroad.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>1999 Kargil Conflict &amp; Operation Parakram (2001)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Military honoured the political concerns in Nuclear overhang.</li> </ul>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Politico-diplomatic – military harmony.</li> <li>• Lessons in Military Coercion under Nuclear overhang.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Surgical Strikes- Uri (2016) and Balakot (2019)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Military forces given autonomy to conduct operations</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent example of politico-diplomatic-military fusion in Escalation Control.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Doklam (2017) &amp; Easter Ladakh (2020-Ongoing)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political endorsement of the military strategy in grey situations.</li> </ul>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint military-diplomatic talks (first time).</li> <li>• Excellent example of politico-diplomatic-military harmony – No normalisation till peace and stability on borders.</li> </ul> |

Table No 5. Source: Author

## **CMI/CMF in Defence Capability Development (CD)**

- **Defence Planning and CD.** Defence planning is an extremely complex and specialised process which encompasses capability-gap assessment, plugging the gaps through cost-informed and prioritised long term plans, underpinned by budgetary assurance. It calls for collaborative team work by military and R&D professionals and financial experts. In India, the initial planning was influenced by the Blackett Report (1948)<sup>23</sup>. Post the 1962 debacle, fledgeling efforts were made to infuse institutional rigour in defence planning—a Defence Planning Cell under the MoD in 1965<sup>24</sup>; a Committee for Defence Planning (CDP) under the Cabinet Secretary in 1977, the Defence Coordination and Implementation Committee (DCIC) under the MoD<sup>25</sup>; and an ambitious inter-ministerial Defence Planning Staff (DPS) formed under the COSC in 1986<sup>26</sup>, which was resisted by the bureaucrats,<sup>27</sup> being headed by the COSC, and marginalised by the military since it sought jointness.<sup>28</sup> Analysts have criticised the failure to link threats and defence acquisitions<sup>29</sup> driven by *service-specific modernisation plans, without exploring cost-effective joint force structures*<sup>30</sup>. Post Kargil conflict, a Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) was created under the Defence Minister, with CDS/Service Chiefs and Secretaries of other MoD departments as members. *The GoM recommendation for an indication of financial support for the plan period*<sup>31</sup>, has been ignored. A Defence Planning Committee (DPC) has been constituted under the chairmanship of NSA in 2018 for *facilitating integrated defence planning, strategic planning, CD, defence diplomacy and indigenisation*<sup>32</sup>, with Chairman COSC/CDS, the Service Chiefs and Secretaries of Defence, Foreign Affairs and Finance as members. Its charter includes preparation of several *draft documents* including NSS, SDR and prioritised CD plans for the Armed Forces, *factoring the likely resource flows*<sup>33</sup>. After discontinuation of National Five Year Plans since 2017, the CDS has been mandated for implementation of ten year ICDP (Integrated Capability Development Plan), two five year DCAPs (Defence Capability Acquisition Plan), and a two year roll-on AAP (Annual Acquisition Plan), drawn from ICDP<sup>34</sup>. These are being evolved by HQ IDS, through an Integrated

Capability Development System (ICADS). *Approval for 5/10 years plans rests with the DAC (Defence Minister) and for the AAP with DPB (Defence Secretary)*<sup>35</sup>. *The cabinet last approved defence plan 2002-07 in its final year. There is no budgetary assurance beyond the current FY and defence plans, prepared by the military, are ignored by the Ministry of Finance (MoF). Capital procurements are practically driven by two year AAPs.* To guide and inform the industry, a Technology Perspective and Capability Roadmap (TPCR)<sup>36</sup> is issued by HQ IDS<sup>37</sup>. Evolution of CMF in defence planning is analysed below (Table 6).

**CMF in Defence Planning**

| <b>Civil-Military Integration</b>   | <b>Financial/ Cabinet Oversight</b>  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>1947 to 1962</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on Blackett Report of 1948</li> <li>• Service Plans- No Jointness.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Below 2% of GDP- Defence Policy adjunct to Foreign Policy (Non-Alignment).</li> <li>• Non-Plan (beyond Plg Commission)</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>1962-1999</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Defence Plan-1964-69 (Service Plans)</li> <li>• 1965-Defence Planning Cell in MoD.</li> <li>• 1969-74 &amp; 1970-75 (Roll-on). Disrupted by 1971 War</li> <li>• 1974-79 Plan (Deputy Chairman Planning Commission led Apex Committees)</li> <li>• 1977- Cabinet Secretary led CDP.</li> <li>• 1979- Defence Secretary led DCIC. Military excluded.</li> <li>• 1980-85 Plan. (Co-terminus with National Plans).</li> <li>• COSC led DGDPS 1986 to 2001. Marginalised by both MoD and Services.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial commitment for 1964-69 plan</li> <li>• 1974-79 Plan questioned MoF, despite approval of Cabinet</li> <li>• 1977 – CDP curbed Pol-Mil interface.</li> <li>• Cabinet approved 6th Plan, 7th Plan in 4th year, 8th Plan not approved, 9th Plan approved, but financial support disrupted.</li> <li>• 1980s- Defence allocations peaked to 4% of GDP</li> <li>• Adhoc Committees - No joint planning.</li> <li>• Joint Plan 2020 by DGDPS presented to the Cabinet, but no financial commitment.</li> </ul> |

| Civil-Military Integration  | Financial/ Cabinet Oversight  |
|---|---|
| <p><b>2000-2017</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DAC formed under the Defence Minister.</li> <li>• DPB, DRDB and Acquisition Wing - in the MoD, headed by Secretary(s), with members from the Services.</li> <li>• 2002-2017 Long Term Integrated Plan.</li> <li>• 10th Plan(2002-07). Cabinet approval in 2007</li> <li>• 11th Plan (2007-12)-Not approved by CCS</li> <li>• 12th Plan (2012-17). Last National Five Year Plan.</li> <li>• 2012-27- Second Long Term Plan.</li> <li>• 13th Defence Plan (2017-2022)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Cabinet oversight since 2007.</li> <li>• MoF is informed after approval of DAC.</li> <li>• MoD/DMA still evolving Joint ICDP (10 Years) and DCAP (5 Years)</li> <li>• Budgetary commitment only for the current FY</li> <li>• Defence allocations less than 2% of GDP (excluding pensions), and 13-15% of Central Government expenditure</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>2018-Till Date</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2018-DPC Formed - Draft NSS, SDR, Defence Plans, Indigenisation</li> <li>• 2020-CDS. Preparation and implementation of ICDP, DCAP, AAP</li> <li>• AAP (2 Year roll on) approved by DPB (Defence Secretary).</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DPC provides PMO oversight through NSA.</li> <li>• No budgetary assurance beyond the ensuing FY.</li> <li>• No CCS oversight of 5/10 yr defence plans.</li> </ul>  |

Table No 6. Source: Author

- **Elusive Self Reliance in Defence Systems.** Though heavily de-industrialised at independence, India *aimed to be self-reliant in low end capabilities in defence*, as suggested by Wansborough Jones<sup>38</sup> and Blackett. The Defence Science Organisation, established in 1948, became the nucleus for the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) in 1958. Pioneering research was undertaken, however, prestigious indigenous design and development projects like supersonic fighter HF-24 (Marut), initiated in 1950s, *floundered for want of financial support for co-development of a jet engine*<sup>39</sup>. Some analysts hold that India's *prestigious driven R&D projects have been wasteful*.<sup>40</sup> Licensed production in Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSU) and Ordnance Factories (OF), became the default option, since *indigenous private sector alternatives proved sub-optimal*. Self-reliance in defence systems has remained elusive.

Between 2017-21, the percentage of foreign procurement for defence stores and equipment, both capital and revenue, varied from 34% to 42%<sup>41</sup>. Glaring reasons behind this failure are the *inability to make engines* for aircraft, ships and tanks, besides *near complete import dependence in semiconductors and critical materials*- areas which are heavily resource, capital and time intensive.

- **CMF in Defence Manufacturing and Indigenisation.** India's DIB is beset with entrenched DPSU interests obstructing fair play; unrealistic user requirements; glacial procurement processes and fragile supply chains. The public sector centered *defence manufacturing strategy* has drawn criticism for low capacity utilisation, high unit costs and poor quality<sup>42</sup>. Corporatisation of 41 OFs into 7 DPSUs in 2021<sup>43</sup>, despite entrenched resistance, will likely induce the desired course correction. Having opened up to the private sector only in 2001, India's DIB presently comprises of 16 DPSUs, over 100 private companies and over 12000 MSMEs, but makes up a minuscule fraction of India's *manufacturing sector*, which itself contributes a meagre 17.5% of India's GDP<sup>44</sup>. The total value of *indigenous defence production* in FY 2021-22 was Rs 94846 Cr (1.8% of India's manufacturing sector), in which *the private sector contribution was 19920 Cr*<sup>45</sup> (less than 0.4% of India's manufacturing sector). India's *defence imports* from foreign sources, which used to be 46% of capital expenditure, have fallen to 36% between 2018 to 2022<sup>46</sup>. *Domestic procurement* has grown from about Rs 55000 Cr in 2017-18 to Rs 86,078 Cr 2021-22<sup>47</sup>, largely an outcome of a resolute *Make in India (MII) policy*. Correspondingly, as a policy, the proportion of capital outlay earmarked for domestic procurement has been progressively enhanced from 64% (2021-22) to 75% (2023-24). Over 450 MoUs, ToT agreements, product launches and orders worth over Rs1.5 lakh Cr<sup>48</sup> to domestic industry during 2022 *testify growing CMF*. Ease of doing business, India's membership in arms transfer regimes between 2016-18 and grant of STA-1 status from USA, has incentivised foreign investments and collaboration. However, achieving 50-60% indigenous content (IC) is daunting, since global OEMs face challenges in breaking the existing supply chains to relocate production in India<sup>49</sup>. *The solution lies in spelling out long term requirements and realistic budgetary*

*assurance for defence plans.* A slew of policy reforms to incentivise investments, indigenisation, innovation & R&D, and exports, which are having a visible impact, are summarised below<sup>50</sup> (Table 7).

**CMF in Defence Industrial Ecosystem**

| Investments   | Indigenisation  | R&D & Innovation   | MRO & Spares   | Exports  |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since 2020, 74% Automatic FDI; (100% Govt route)</li> <li>• Licensing Liberalisation- 595 licenses to 366 Companies</li> <li>• License period - from 3 to 15 years</li> <li>• Two Defence Industrial Corridors- MoUs worth Rs 24000 Cr &amp; invested over Rs 6000 Cr</li> <li>• Tax Incentives</li> <li>• FDI-Grown from Rs 1,382 crore between 2001-2014, to Rs 3,378 crore between 2014-22</li> <li>• Rs 10,000 Cr 'Fund of Funds' for MSMEs</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Procurement Order 2017- 46 items be bought domestically.</li> <li>• PILS - Services (411) &amp; DPSUs 278 items indigenised, and 85 at trial stage).</li> <li>• Buy (IDDM)- 86 proposals worth 93,727 Cr categorised</li> <li>• SP Model</li> <li>• SRIJAN Portal for Import Substitution.</li> <li>• Target - 5000 components between 2020-2025</li> <li>• Make-1, Make-2 and Make-3 Procedures</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Testing Infrastructure- Rs 400 Cr</li> <li>• Offset Reforms- Incentivise ToT</li> <li>• TDF Schemes- 163 technologies being indigenized.</li> <li>• 108 Systems to be developed by Industry only</li> <li>• DcPP Model- Private partner of DRDO.</li> <li>• 25% of DRDO R&amp;D Funds for Private Sector/Academia.</li> <li>• iDEX - Over 200 contracts awarded</li> <li>• MSMEs/ Start-ups may offer 'Make-II 'Suo Moto'</li> <li>• Over 1500 IPRs granted.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IGA with Russia on "Mutual Cooperation in Joint Manufacturing of Spares, Components" in 2019- 550 items</li> <li>• Tax incentives in MRO sector</li> <li>• Buy (Global-Manufacture in India) introduced to enable indigenisation of spares</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target Rs 35,000 Crore by 2025</li> <li>• Outreach through DefExpo &amp; Aero India (In 2023- 254 partnerships, 9 product launches and three ToT, worth around Rs 80,000 crore inked)</li> <li>• OGEL and eased.</li> <li>• Over 75 exporters (70-90% from private sector) to over 75 countries</li> <li>• Grown from less than Rs 1000 Cr in 2014 to over Rs 14000 Cr in 2022</li> <li>• DPSUs to earn 25% from exports by 2025, assigned specific regions.</li> </ul> |

Table No 7. Source: Author



## CMF-Promising Pathways

- **Apex Level CMR.**
  - **NSS.** Non-escalatory and resolute *politico-military-diplomatic sophistication* was manifest in Kargil, Doklam, Balakot and Ladakh. India's principled stance in the Ukrainian conflict is also NSS *in action*. A documented NSS is only one logical step away, which must be *collaboratively put together by SPG and DPC*. This document will infuse internal coherence towards a WoN approach to defence policy, strategy and defence planning.
  - **Politico-Military Engagement.** Historical creation of DMA and appointment of the CDS has demonstrated unprecedented political will. Annual engagement of the Prime Minister with the military commanders, besides frequent informal interactions during events, has strengthened mutuality and understanding. Reservation of jobs by the Centre and state governments for the Agniveers in future<sup>51</sup>, and the Services giving up network for spectrum (NFS), demonstrate robust CMF in action. Sanctity of the line of control with Pakistan and disengagement along the line of actual control with China, *must continue to reflect resolute politico-military commitment to safeguard sovereignty and territorial integrity*. Robust CMR *must uphold the time honoured and long established apolitical nature* of Indian armed forces. Military character should not be sacrificed<sup>52</sup>.
  - **Grey Zone Crises, Hybrid Conflicts and Responsive CMF.** Grey zone, hybrid and multi-domain challenges call for *reciprocal grey zone responses, which* are inherently multi-agency and multidisciplinary. Effective deterrence pre-supposes politico-diplomatic responses to be underpinned by calibrated *cross-domain military responses at the speed of relevance*. It is axiomatic that greater CMF be infused in the inherently dual use space<sup>53</sup> and cyber domains<sup>54</sup>. *A fine balance is needed between centralisation at the apex level and the need for specificity, speciality and delegation for deft and responsive crisis management, with escalation control mechanisms*. An example is the creation of the

*Multi-Agency Maritime Security Group under the newly appointed NMSC in 2022, perhaps superseding a similar committee created under the Cabinet Secretary in 2009. Issue focused civil-military groups must be formed under domain experts to deal with specific security challenges. Organisational faultlines and vulnerabilities are targeted, and for this reason, operational control of border guarding forces along disputed borders must rest with one agency, the MoD, while the administrative control remains with the MHA. The Union War Book advocates transition to a state of war, if decided by the cabinet. Sub-threshold grey zone provocations deliberately preclude such an invocation. Constructs for leveraging and protecting critical resources and infrastructure, without invocation of the War Book are needed.*

- **Infusing Bureaucratic Civil-Military Harmony.** Creation of DMA has provided *constitutional inclusion of the military in defence policy making, with inclusion of DMA in the AoB Rules.* However, the *defence of India, defence policy and prosecution of war remain the charge of DoD<sup>55</sup>. Defence matters (DoD) and military matters (DMA), are inherently intertwined and any attempt to compartmentalise the two is self-defeating.* Authority, responsibility and accountability go together. In the hierarchically stratified layers of Minister-Secretary-COSC, Secretary DMA is a co-equal at the second layer. This new equation calls for a *new modus vivendi, one of dialogue and accommodation, between the civil and military bureaucracies, to forge trust and concordance. The bureaucracy, civil and military, need to function as joint and equal stakeholders. Joint manning at the additional and joint Secretary levels in all departments of MoD, exactly the way in DMA, must be enforced.* Though the DoD presently has military manning at and below the Joint Secretary level in the Acquisition Wing, cross-staffing within the verticals is necessary.
- **Jointness & Integration within the Services.** Rifts and inter-service rivalries weaken the very edifice of CMF, since a divided military will continue to guard service autonomy and turf, nullifying all efforts to leverage jointness in force structures. True jointness

goes beyond the optics of joint exercises and training, and entails finding the best tri-service solution for all missions, tasks and force structures. The COSC needs to demonstrate more unity of purpose and effort, especially as regards joint and theatre commands on the anvil.

- **CMF in Defence Planning, CD and Expenditure.** Disjunct between the civil and military in defence planning and CD remains *the single most important fault line in CMF*. The lament is that the military decides the force structures and equipment profiles, the bureaucrats lack the understanding to suggest alternatives for ensuring resource informed deterrence, and the *MoF ham handedly delays or scales down the requirements, as was the case for the Mountain Strike Corps*. The 5/10 year plans prepared by DMA, *will be approved by the Defence Minister, not the Cabinet/parliament, implying no budgetary assurance beyond a linear projection of the Service-wise capital requirements*. Between 2021-26, the MoD had made a capital head projection of Rs 17.46 lakh crore, but visualised an allocation of Rs 9.01 lakh Cr only<sup>56</sup>. Between 2018-23, the shortfall on capital head has annually exceeded Rs 60000Cr<sup>57</sup>. *The MoD had sought a non-lapsable modernisation fund of Rs 55000Cr per year<sup>58</sup>*, which is still under discussion with the MoF<sup>59</sup>. *This disjunct with the MoF must be removed by mandating the approval of ICDP/ DCAP by the Cabinet, correcting an irregularity existing since 2007*. HQ IDS provides the secretarial support for the DPC<sup>60</sup>. Thus with NSA led DPC ensuring the PMO's oversight, bureaucratic coherence in defence planning will be ensured. *The ICADS process must institutionally include inter-departmental stakeholders (like the erstwhile DPS)*. *Most importantly, the financial advisor, must be involved from the inception stage itself, obviating the after-the-fact infructuous scrutiny.*
- **Restructuring Defence Acquisition.** Consolidating the experience gained over the last two decades since creation of the Acquisition Wing, the acquisition functions could be *brought under one entity (Secretary level)*, with separate verticals for Policy, R&D, Planning/ Programme Initiation, Trials, Programme Managers (three Services), DIB, International Cooperation/

Exports and Contract Management. The staffing should be a mix from the Services, *Specialised Civil Cadre*, Finance staff, DRDO, and Quality Assurance.

- **Audit and Oversight of Defence Expenditure.** Checks and balances remain critical in a parliamentary system. Objective scrutiny by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence, Public Accounts Committee, Comptroller & Auditor General and the Defence Accounts Department, must be strengthened through cross-pollination of civil and military experts.
  - **Specialised Civil Cadre for National Security and Defence Procurements.** This was recommended by the task force in 2000<sup>61</sup>, and accepted by the GoM, and also reportedly endorsed by the NCTF in 2012<sup>62</sup>. Specialisation is needed in contracts, budgeting and trade legalities. A specialised cadre needs to be created and enlarged.
  - **Academia Military Integration.** CMF must be institutionalised and reinforced through joint education and learning at all levels. Indian Defence University (IDU), a long pending recommendation of the GoM Report, must be created through an act of Parliament, for which a draft bill had been prepared<sup>63</sup>.
- **Enhancing CMF in the Indian DIB**
    - **Long Term military Requirements & Technology Forecasts.** Long term defence indigenisation plans and updated TPCR must be shared with the industry. *Since 75% of capital procurements will be domestically sourced, timelines for revenue (ammunition) and other capital needs must be shared with the industry.* DPSUs must cease to get the buyer nominated benefit, where the private sector offers alternatives.
    - **Indigenisation & Make in India.** Public-private collaboration can bridge critical supply-chain voids. A McKinsey report<sup>64</sup> of 2020 considers the A&D supply chains underweight due to lack of technological sophistication, and likely to add only \$8bn to

manufacturing between 2020-2027. For creating a DIC to match India's needs, industry experts hold that India's spend on defence should be over 2.5% of GDP<sup>65</sup>, which presently is 1.51%<sup>66</sup> (FY 2023-24, excluding pensions). However, facts on the ground show potential and promise. Private sector is partnering with DRDO and DPSUs to make critical components for platforms; and with foreign OEMs for making aircrafts, armoured vehicles and small arms. Private sector must accelerate indigenisation of semiconductors and strategic materials with production linked incentives. However, cost-competitiveness must be facilitated through assured orders at scale. Financial and other policy incentives must be provided to MSMEs to secure critical global supply chains. Cross-flow of talent across the industry, academia and DPSUs, will boost CMF. Talent retention through appropriate HR policies merits a serious thought by the military. Creation of two DICs acknowledges the role of MSMEs as lead integrators and competitors to the DPSUs. SEZs could be contemplated in future. *There is a need to upscale from reform to restructuring of the DIB.*

- **Maintenance Repairs and Overhaul (MRO) Chains.** Severe disruption of supply chains and MRO chains, especially of Russian/CIS origin equipment, was triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic, followed by the Ukraine war. The industry has responded to the government initiatives (tabulated above). India has the potential to become a global MRO hub for both Russian and western equipment, *if OEM certification is made feasible.* Drawing lessons from the pandemic, a *balanced approach may be needed by retaining limited captive capacity in Base Repair Depots and Service Workshops for critical needs and spares.* The Government Owned Company Operated (GOCO) model for repair workshops could be reviewed.
- **Incentivising Defence R&D.** Guidelines for research spelt out in 1952<sup>67</sup> - user need, within available resources and timelines-remain valid today. India spends meagre 1.7% of the defence budget on R&D<sup>68</sup>, which pales in comparison to allocations by

China and the US. The private sector share in defence R&D is negligible, therefore, 25% DRDO budget was earmarked for the private sector/academia. Based on facts revealed by a CAG report on Mission Mode projects of DRDO, creation of an autonomous Defence R&D Council, with scientists and military officers as members, together with a tri-service division in the DMA to fund the Council and evaluate progress of projects, as suggested by a former Defence Secretary, merits examination<sup>69</sup>. The Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO) and innovation/ design verticals in the three Services, are delivering accelerated outcomes through iDEX, with DISC, Prime and Open Challenges having led to over 200 contracts in four years. The Services have also earmarked part of the capital budget for prototype development in FY 2023-24, which needs to grow. Joint technology research centres to meet specific needs and MoUs between Services and IITs/ universities must gather pace and show meaningful outcomes in projects and learning.

## Conclusion

The arguments set forth above amply underscore the fact that the civil military paradigm in India has matured substantially since independence, especially since the turn of the century, addressing faultlines, silos and fissures, gradually adopting a WoN approach in defence strategies, understanding and use of the instrument of power. Integrated planning and capability development and effective CMF strategies for accelerated defence indigenisation and modernization have been forged. The DIB in India, though relatively small, has tremendous potential with the pragmatic pathways suggested. Future research must analyse the efficacy of reforms enshrined in DAP 2020, as the impact grows in scale.

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