

BOOK REVIEW

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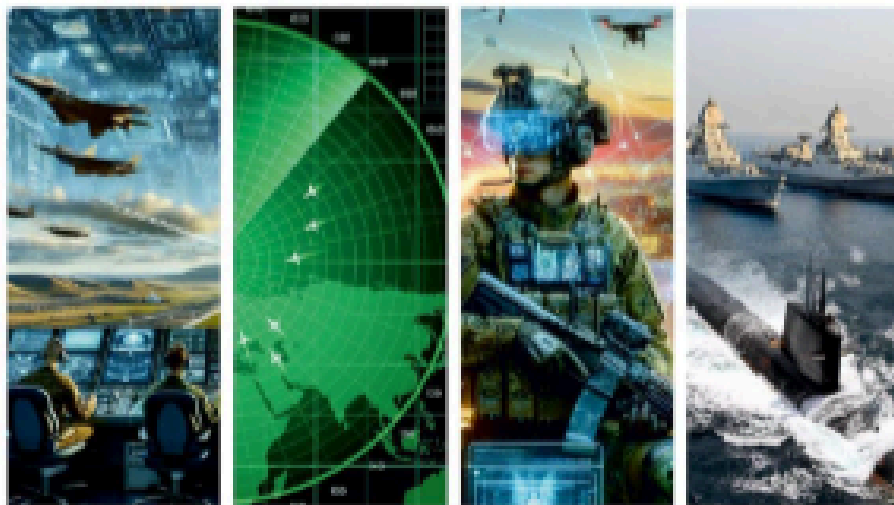
Ready, Relevant and Resurgent
Authored by General Anil Chauhan

GEN ANIL CHAUHAN

READY, RELEVANT AND RESURGENT

A Blueprint for the transformation of India's Military

FOREWORD BY
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General Anil Chauhan, Chief of Defence Staff, Ready, Relevant and Resurgent: A Blueprint for the transformation of India's Military.**Foreword by Rajnath Singh, Defence Minister of India****Sections: 4 | Chapters: 19****New Delhi: Pentagon Press LLP, 2025. ISBN: 978-81-984458-6-5****Introduction**

Ready, Relevant and Resurgent by General Anil Chauhan, India's Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), offers a timely and thought-provoking perspective on the transformation of the Indian Armed Forces. The book reflects the evolving security challenges facing India in the 21st century, while also outlining a strategic roadmap for the Indian military to emerge as a modern, joint, and future-ready force. Written with the authority of a practitioner and the depth of a strategist, this book is both a doctrinal statement and a visionary blueprint. Across its four well-structured sections, General Chauhan discusses military geography, ancient Indian strategic thought, changing modes of warfare, the necessity of reforms, and India's aspirations for strategic autonomy and global leadership.

I. Strategic Foundations and Civilisational Wisdom

The first section of the book establishes the conceptual framework of India's military and strategic thinking. General Chauhan roots contemporary military doctrine in geography, history, and India's ancient intellectual traditions. By doing so, he not only asserts the importance of understanding the physical terrain in which wars are fought but also draws attention to the civilisational memory of strategic thought in India. The emphasis on military geography reflects a clear understanding that warfare is not merely a function of technology or tactics, but also of space, time, and human activity. He points out that the operating environment is shaped by both natural terrain and the socio-political landscape, and that commanders must be trained to engage with both.

In a striking reflection, the author recalls how the concept of "Bharatvarsh", as an integrated political and cultural entity, emerged during the Mauryan Empire, and how this spatial imagination still informs the strategic vision of India today. India is described as a "rimland state," bound by the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, and projecting deep into the Indian Ocean. The author argues that this unique geographic positioning bestows both advantages and vulnerabilities, thereby placing geography at the heart of grand strategy formulation.

A particularly engaging chapter in this section is the one on ancient Indian strategic wisdom. Drawing from Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, the *Mahabharata*, and other classical sources, the book makes the case that Indian civilisation has long

cultivated an understanding of statecraft, military organisation, intelligence, and diplomacy. In these ancient texts, we find references to psychological warfare, balance of power, and espionage, all concepts relevant to modern strategic practice. General Chauhan's interpretation is not a subtle return to the past but an effort to integrate India's historical experiences into a contemporary defence framework. This section also includes a critical discussion on national security, arguing that while India may not have a formal National Security Strategy (NSS) document, it does possess the institutions, practices, and doctrines that reflect a coherent security outlook.

II. Changing Character of Warfare

The second section of the book delves into the evolving nature of war and conflict. As General Chauhan outlines, traditional threats to national security, such as land invasion or maritime blockade, are now accompanied by a complex web of challenges including cyber warfare, space-based threats and misinformation campaigns. The author stresses that modern warfare operates in a continuum, defined as the "5Cs": competition, crisis, confrontation, conflict, and combat. This layered understanding of conflict is particularly relevant in an age where states and non-state actors engage each other not just on battlefields, but in cyberspace and television screens.

Importantly, the book argues that modern conflicts are increasingly "hybrid", blurring the lines between war and peace, state and non-state, kinetic and non-kinetic operations. Drawing on global examples such as the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the author discusses how new modes of fighting, like drone warfare, social media manipulation, and economic disruption, are reshaping traditional doctrines. General Chauhan also highlights the growing complexity of the battlefield architecture, noting that today's wars are fought in multi-domain environments, land, sea, air, cyber, space, and the electromagnetic spectrum. This complexity demands high levels of interoperability and synergy between different branches of the armed forces. He observes that the coming age of warfare will not be defined by numbers alone, but by speed, adaptability, and integrated responses.

The chapter on tactics-led force modernisation is particularly insightful. Rather than blindly adopting foreign technologies or models, General Chauhan argues that India's military must adopt a model rooted in indigenous tactics and geographical realities. This requires a shift from technology led to 'tactics-informed' modernisation, ensuring that new systems and weapons are aligned with India's strategic objectives and unique threats.

III. Military Reform and Structural Transformation

In the third section, the focus shifts to military reforms, organisational

restructuring, and the need for an integrated approach. At the heart of this section is the concept of jointness and integration, which the author describes as both a goal and a process. The creation of theatre commands, the appointment of the CDS, and the restructuring of the Department of Military Affairs are highlighted as landmark steps in India's journey toward a more unified defence architecture.

General Chauhan advocates for Jointness 2.0, which he defines not just in terms of operational synergy but also cultural transformation. This involves breaking down institutional silos, encouraging lateral learning, and promoting a "joint culture" based on innovation, imagination, and indigenous thinking. The author rightly notes that structural changes will only succeed if there is a coordination from middle-level officers, who often act as the carriers of organisational change.

The book places significant emphasis on Atmanirbhar Bharat as a strategic necessity. Defence indigenisation is not merely about saving costs or reducing imports, but about asserting technological sovereignty and creating a robust defence-industrial ecosystem. General Chauhan calls for greater collaboration between the armed forces, DRDO, start-ups, and private industry to build a self-sustaining R&D framework.

IV. Vision 2035 and India's Strategic Horizon

The final section of the book looks ahead, offering a strategic forecast of the global and regional security environment. General Chauhan paints a picture of Global Future 2035, a world where artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and deep surveillance will redefine the nature of power and conflict. He calls for Indian armed forces to adopt a multi-domain operational mindset, capable of rapid and integrated responses across kinetic and non-kinetic domains.

In the chapter on India and the Indo-Pacific, General Chauhan highlights the region's centrality to India's geopolitical future. With maritime trade routes, undersea cables, and strategic chokepoints at stake, the Indian Navy is expected to play a pivotal role in ensuring security and connectivity in the region. The Indo-Pacific, in his analysis, is both an opportunity and a challenge, requiring strategic partnerships, forward presence, and maritime capability enhancement.

The concluding chapters explore the transformative role of Artificial Intelligence in warfare, and the importance of preparing India's youth to contribute meaningfully to national defence. General Chauhan views young Indians not just as future soldiers, but as innovators, strategists, and informed citizens who must carry the baton of national security in an era of rapid change.

Conclusion

Ready, Relevant and Resurgent is a comprehensive, reflective, and forward-looking treatise on the future of India's military and strategic posture. General Anil Chauhan combines historical insight with strategic foresight to present a compelling case for transformation. The book succeeds in weaving together concepts of geography, ancient wisdom, modern warfare, institutional reform, and technological innovation into a cohesive narrative.

For scholars of defence studies, policymakers, and military professionals, this book offers both depth and direction. More than a memoir or military manual, it is a manifesto for strategic transformation, rooted in Indian realities, yet global in its outlook. It is a timely contribution to India's strategic literature and a must-read for those interested in understanding the past, present, and future of Indian military thought.

A must have book for all Indians. It is available on Amazon, Flipkart and with Pentagon Press. The price is marginally kept at Rs 895/- despite being a hardbound book.

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