



# BOOK REVIEW

Ready, Relevant and Resurgent: A Blueprint for the Transformation of India's  
Military

Authored by Lt. General Raj Shukla (Retd.)



LT GEN RAJ SHUKLA

**CIVIL-MILITARY  
FUSION AS A METRIC  
OF NATIONAL POWER  
AND  
COMPREHENSIVE  
SECURITY**

Lt. General (Rtd.) Raj Shukla, PVSM YSM SM ADC is a retired General Officer of the Indian Army who served as the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Army Training Command. General Shukla has made noteworthy contributions to the development of India's Strategic - Military Futures, Technological Innovation, Professional Military Education, Capacity Building, Operational Poise and Civil - Military Fusion. He is currently a Member of the Union Public Service Commission. Civil-Military Relations (CMR) is a topic on which General Shukla has long deliberated, including a paper published in 2012 (Civil-Military Relations in India, Manekshaw Paper, February 2012, Centre for Land Warfare Studies). As the global discourse shifted to Civil-Military Fusion (CMF), General Shukla, post a deep study of the concept, has published the book "Civil-Military Fusion as a Metric of National Power and Comprehensive Security", published by Pentagon Press.

To explain the context, Civil-Military Fusion, or CMF, indicates the convergence of military and civilian resources and systems for maximising a nation's ability to express its comprehensive national power both during war and peacetime. While the idea has a long history, in recent times, it is most notably attributed to the Chinese, especially in their dual-use infrastructure, such as ports, as well as in technologies adopted by the PLA forces. It has expanded the ambit to include semiconductors.

### **The Book**

General Shukla starts with the observation that in India, the civil and military spheres have been kept apart and aloof from each other, due to various considerations that stems from the birth of the Republic. He notes that not much has been done to bridge this gap; slow attempts have shifted the discourse to integration (Civil-Military Integration, or CMI). The result, he observes, has been sub-optimal for the military as well as the civil spheres.

China, General Shukla observes, on the other hand, embraced Military - Civil Fusion as its central dogma and doctrine. The result is obvious - a rapid, seemingly unopposable strategic - military ascendancy for China. The Fusion is not only in transfer of technologies between the civilian and military spheres, but spans across ports, supply chains, shipping lines and semiconductors. Given this context, General Shukla asks, what should India do?

The book is his answer to this question. However, it does more than answer this question - in five chapters, General Shukla takes us through the concept and practice of Civil - Military Fusion; its historical and current practice around the world; how and why India must adopt this doctrine; and how to go about it.

The first chapter, titled "The Magic of Civil - Military Fusion", lays out the structure of the book - it brings out the importance of the Civil-Military Relations of a country in determining its destiny; and how Civil-Military Fusion is a turning point in the discourse.

The second chapter, titled “Drivers/Evolving Metrics”, lays out in detail how the CMR/CMF discourse in India evolved and is changing, and how the same changed around the world while India faced some stagnation. He points out the necessity of every domain - be it supply chains, technology, diplomacy, business and commerce, and the military - coming together to reimagine India’s response to its national security challenges.

The third chapter, titled “Global Models/Best Practices”, is most instructive. It lays out, in detail, how China’s embrace of Civil-Military fusion is giving it a sharp edge in its grand strategy; how USA, once a pioneer in fusion, is using the Army Futures Command as a Public Private Partnership with the aim of ‘tomorrow’s readiness, not fighting tonight’; how the strategic environment and technological excellence in Israel led to greater operational successes involving civilians and the military; and how, in the Ukrainian theatre of war, big tech, corporate majors, startups and advanced technologies come together with the last vestiges of trench warfare and cold war era equipments.

**“CMF as the Secret Sauce to Arrest the Growing Strategic-Military Lag With China:  
Possible Roadmap in the Indian Context”**

The fourth chapter can be called the ‘heart and soul’ of the book. It is the largest chapter in the book, spanning about half of the whole book, laying out the structural corrections India should make - such as cross-pollination between the civilian expertise and military expertise, e.g. the induction of more national security professionals and military officers to NITI Aayog; induction of more civilian expertise into the National Security Council Secretariat; shaking up the Indian defence industrial base with more competition and ideas; as well as the importance of Aatmanirbharta in the national security ecosystem, for which it is necessary to infuse civilian talent as well.

Further, General Shukla lays out, exhaustively, how the Indian Defence Forces should deal with the technological accelerations, such as AI, drone warfare, autonomous vehicles, and regarding the challenge of chips and microelectronics, which are the critical components in such areas. Theatre Commands and Air Defence Systems, towards which India is moving fast, also need the magic sauce of Civil-Military Fusion, he points out.

For all of these, perhaps, the availability of Rare Earths is a major chokepoint. China, the major controller of the minerals, has already demonstrated that it has an upper hand and will not hesitate to use it by imposing export controls. General Shukla contends that existing government mechanisms to counter this monopoly are bearing fruit, but India should diversify its supply chain, for e.g. Australia and India have an agreement signed in 2025. Last but not least, he points out that financial support remains a major roadblock in fostering defence innovation, for which corrections are necessary.

The last chapter, “Conclusion”, can be summarised in General Shukla’s own words: “Domain aggregation/optimisation and talent maximisation will in fact be central to our effort to arrest/reduce the lag with China.”

### **Breaking the Siloes**

The book is fundamentally an urgent call for the breaking of existing siloes between the military and the civilian spheres in India, for understanding that in the goal of national transformation, there is no separation between the civilian and military spheres - indeed, there should be no separation. It calls for both military officials and civilian bureaucracy to break the shibboleth of separation and adopt the doctrine of Civil-Military Fusion, in a way that suits the Indian context well, and thus urge India to fasten her greatness.

General Shukla’s experiences as a military leader and a scholar-warrior are evident in the book, and it is strongest in capturing the necessity of CMF for India and in laying out the ways and means it should be deployed to address the various challenges India and the Indian defence ecosystem face. The analysis of the practices of Civil-Military Fusion across the world is exhaustive and current, as are General Shukla’s recommendations.

However, the book, given the subject matter, could benefit from a civilian’s point of view as well. CMF is, as General Shukla lays out, not just a ‘whole of government’ approach, but necessitates a ‘whole of society’ approach. Thus, it would be pertinent to suggest the ways in which the non-military sections of the national security policymakers - such as the academics, think tankers and the media - can proactively adopt and deploy CMF.

In conclusion, General Shukla’s book, despite being only 128 pages, punches far above that in the erudition of the content and the timeliness of the thesis he calls on to be adopted. It is a necessary reading not only for every national security professional, but for civil servants, students and the general citizen alike. The General points out the Chinese success as a wake up call for India in adopting Civil-Military Fusion - and India should respond, not just to counter China, but to establish our own place in the society of nations, which, with the adoption of Civil-Military Fusion, will be that of a benevolent scholar-warrior, a Vishwa Guru.

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