CENTRE FOR JOINT WARFARE STUDIES

GL/08/26

MOSAIC WARFARE ACROSS DOMAINS: IMPERATIVES FOR FUTURE CONFLICT

BY
MAJ GEN ASHOK KUMAR SRIVASTAVA, VSM (RETD)

ORGANISED BY CENJOWS
19 FEB 2026

MOSAIC WARFARE ACROSS DOMAINS

BY MAJ GEN AK SRIVASTAVA, VSM, (RETD)

ORGANISED BY CENJOWS ON 19 FEB 2026

Major General Ashok Kumar Srivastava, a veteran signals officer with 36 years of distinguished service including command of an Information Warfare Brigade and oversight of pan-India communication projects, delivered a compelling address on the concept of Mosaic Warfare and its imperatives for India's future military posture.

The General opened by situating Mosaic Warfare within the broader evolution of military doctrine. He traced the journey from Network-Centric Warfare, which focused on linking large, expensive platforms to create a common operational picture, through Multi-Domain Operations, which sought cross-domain synergy across land, air, sea, space, and cyber, to the current paradigm of Decision-Centric Warfare. The central insight he conveyed was that future conflicts will be won not by the side with the most powerful individual platform, but by the side that can make better decisions faster operating inside the adversary's OODA loop.

Mosaic Warfare, conceived by DARPA between 2017 and 2019, proposes disaggregating military capabilities from large, monolithic platforms into many smaller, cheaper, and specialized systems the "tiles" of the mosaic. These tiles, when networked through AI and resilient communications, generate far greater operational complexity for an adversary than any single high-value asset could. The General vividly illustrated this contrast: a $13 billion aircraft carrier represents a single point of failure, whereas a distributed network of lower-cost systems offers resilience, scalability, and collective combat power.

He elaborated on three foundational pillars of Mosaic Warfare. Heterogeneity involves deploying diverse platforms manned and unmanned, exquisite and attritable across all domains to confuse enemy targeting. Connectivity requires resilient, redundant networks so that the loss of any single node does not degrade the overall mission. Adaptability, enabled through human-machine teaming, allows commanders to define intent while AI rapidly composes mission-tailored force packages and executes at machine speed, compressing the decision cycle while preserving human authority.

The address also highlighted enabling tools such as the STITCHES software toolchain for seamless system integration, Geospatial Cloud Analytics for real-time targeting intelligence, and the concept of Automatic Chain of Custody that links detection, identification, targeting, and strike across distributed platforms.

Turning to the Indian context, the General was direct about the urgency of transformation. India faces adversaries, particularly China, with increasingly integrated command architectures and sophisticated Anti-Access/Area Denial capabilities. He argued that India must urgently shift from platform-centric thinking to a data-centric, decentralized command structure. Key priorities he identified include investing in AI and software-defined radios, accelerating indigenous development in cyber and hypersonic technologies, leveraging space-based assets for the kill web concept,

ensuring true interoperability across the Army, Navy, and Air Force beyond current gateway-based connections, and building strategic technology partnerships with nations like the US, France, and Israel.

He concluded with the sobering observation that Mosaic Warfare's success depends less on technological breakthroughs than on doctrinal adaptation, organizational reform, and a fundamental shift in command philosophy from hierarchical control to decentralized, mission-command principles. The imperative for India, he urged, is to assess this concept rigorously in its own strategic context and initiate implementation in an orchestrated, time-bound manner before adversaries widen the capability gap beyond recovery.