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# HQ Integrated Defence Staff in the National Security Structure

*Satish Dua\**

*The Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff (HQ IDS) was one of the major structures raised after the Kargil conflict of 1999, representing, for the first time since independence, a step towards integration of the three armed forces with other relevant elements of power. This article situates and examines the functions of HQ IDS in the broader context of India's national security architecture. It begins by giving a historical overview of the higher defence organisation in India, the issues pertaining to its security architecture, and the far-reaching impact of Kargil on these. It then moves on to a detailed discussion of HQ IDS, its current status and possible future trajectory. It suggests the way forward for HQ IDS and argues for the alignment of defence planning and capability development along with the wider national security paradigm.*

*So long as there are men, there will be wars.*

—Albert Einstein

Twenty years is a long time; long enough to review any venture critically. India made big changes in its national security structure after the Kargil War in 1999. HQ IDS was one of the major structures that was raised then, inter alia. Its size might not complement the role it plays in the

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national security architecture, which, again, is far less than its possible potential. Despite this, it represents, for the first time after independence, an even bigger mindset change, a step towards integration between the three armed forces and other relevant elements of power.

Since World War II, over 65 countries have made changes to their military structures and higher defence organisations (HDOs). The Indian Armed Forces are a late entrant into the paradigm of jointness. It took five decades and five wars, notably the Kargil War, for the country to seriously take note of the shortcomings in its military structures. Individually professional army, navy and air force leave room for improvement in synergy and jointmanship. Ironically, India was the first country to start a tri-services training academy, the National Defence Academy (NDA), and amongst the early ones to start a tri-services staff college and a combined National Defence College. These institutions have created a robust 'network' of interpersonal equations and understanding, which has also shown evident result in battles and operations. Tri-services synergy, however, requires much more than that. It has to be more structured and process driven than personal equation based.

This article attempts to situate HQ IDS in the broader context of India's national security architecture. It begins by examining HDO in India, the issues pertaining India's security architecture, the impact of Kargil, and then moves on to a detailed discussion of HQ IDS, its trajectory till the present and in the future. However, before discussing the evolution of HDO in India, a brief look at what changes were affected by major militaries after the two World Wars is relevant here.

The United Kingdom (UK) was the first country to institute a Chiefs of Staff Committee after World War I in 1923. After World War II, the British Armed Forces were restructured in 1964 and the three service HQs were regrouped under a single Secretary of State for Defence. The Heseltine Reforms in 1985 created the posts of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) and Permanent Under Secretary (PUS), both of whom are principal advisers to the Secretary of Defence (equivalent of Defence Minister).<sup>1</sup> In 1996, the Permanent Joint HQ was established; and this is manned by a mix of military and civil officers. Defence reforms continued and in 2011, on Lord Levine's recommendation, Joint Forces Command (JFC) was created to take lead on joint warfare development and prepare policies on how armed forces should conduct joint operations anywhere in the world.

The United States (US) has led the world in integrated warfighting and tri-services structures since World War II. Presently, the Secretary of Defense heads the Department of Defense and has under him/her, the Joint Chief of Staff (JCS), the combatant commands, the military departments, defence agencies and several other relevant agencies. The Goldwater–Nichols Act of 1986 brought about a tectonic shift in command and control structure of the US Higher Defence Organisation (HDO).<sup>2</sup> While the JCS and the military departments, each of which is headed by its own secretary, are responsible to raise–train–sustain the respective services, in addition to providing comprehensive military advice on present and future military matters, the combatant commands are directly responsible to the Secretary of Defense and the President for operations.

China too conducted wide-ranging brainstorming for a couple of years at various levels to reform its military structures to bring them in line with changing times and requirements. The execution phase began in 2015, wherein seven military regions have yielded to five theatre commands. These theatre commands are integrated as they draw forces or units from all three services and are aligned to geographical regions. Central Military Commission (CMC) has been reorganised and a new Joint Staff Department (JSD) has been added. Quite akin to the US model, the CMC has established a direct linkage with the theatre commands and service Chiefs are responsible only to ‘organise, train and equip the respective forces’.

#### **HDO IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT**

The Indian defence and military structures were originally inherited from the British Raj. However, post-independence evolution has been influenced more by the context and contemporary personalities, rather than a professional view of things, in line with changes taking place in the world militaries after World War II. Up to the early 1920s, the Viceroy had an ‘Army Secretary’ of the rank of Major General to advise him on military matters. He was a Principal Staff Officer (SO) to the Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C), who was the second in hierarchy in the country. In 1921, he was replaced by a civilian Imperial/Indian Civil Service (ICS) officer and re-designated as Defence Secretary, who still remained an SO to C-in-C.

In 1946, when the interim government was formed with Jawaharlal Nehru as the Vice President, radical changes were made. The C-in-C was

dropped from the Viceroy's Council and replaced by a civilian defence member, who became the Defence Minister on independence. Lord Mountbatten, as Governor General, blocked all attempts to designate the Defence Secretary as senior to the Chiefs, including bringing them under his chairmanship in any committee. Though the post of the C-in-C was abolished in 1955, there was only a semantic change in designation. The role and function of the Chiefs remain unchanged. In 1963, Cabinet Secretary was appointed who was designated senior to the service Chiefs. When the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs (CCPA) was formed, the service Chiefs were not a part of it and it was the Defence Secretary who started representing the defence services. In 1986, the Policy Advisory Committee was formed and, again, the service Chiefs were not included. When it gave way to National Security Council in 1999, after the Kargil War, the service Chiefs were kept out of it, which has not been the case in other countries.

The evolution of HDO also does not present a healthy picture. Lord Mountbatten entrusted the task of drawing up an HDO for India to his Chief of Staff, Lord Lionel Ismay. He chose to avoid massive restructuring and recommended a system of committees to coordinate national defence. At the apex level, the Defence Committee of Cabinet (DCC) had the service Chiefs and Defence Secretary in attendance. The DCC stopped functioning in 1957, and an Emergency Committee of the Cabinet was formed during the Chinese operations in 1962. This later gave way to CCPA, of which service Chiefs were not members/attendees. Presently, the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) fulfils this role of apex level of security architecture of the country.

#### WHAT AILS INDIA'S SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

India, with the second or third largest military force, is the only major country which neither has integrated force structures nor a suitable HDO. This is despite the fact that we have two contiguous neighbours—China and Pakistan—as adversaries, with live and unresolved borders. Furthermore, all three are nuclear-capable states. The lack of integration has been a feature of the Indian Armed Forces from the very beginning. For example, in the Indo-China War of 1962, the Indian Air Force was hardly involved, especially in an offensive role. In the Indo-Pak War of 1971, a blockade of Karachi by the Indian Navy could have eased the pressure on the western front for the Indian Army. However, this was not done as our culture and ethos of 'go it alone' by each service is too deeply

ingrained and we have become used to working, and planning, in silos. At a tactical level, when the airbase at Pathankot was attacked by suicide terrorists in January 2016, there was more than a division of army units just beyond the boundary wall of the airbase, but troops were flown in from Delhi to undertake the counter-terrorist operation. An integrated structure would have obviated looking at Delhi for everything, shortened the loop and ensured quick operational synergistic response.

Thus, the major problems confronting the Indian security architecture set-up presently are as follows:

1. *No integration*: The Ministry of Defence (MoD) is a separate entity from service HQs, staffed exclusively by 'generalists' civilian officers. Since 1961, the service HQs have been attached offices of MoD. This causes infructuous duplication of work as military matters analysed by professionals at very senior levels in service HQs are re-examined by junior officials lacking domain expertise in the MoD. Without getting into the debate about Schedule 2 and Schedule 4 of the Allocation of Business and Transaction of Business Rules 1961, there is an urgent need to transform with the changing times and requirement. In this era of core competencies and ever-shortening response timings, delays can be fatal; and this needs urgent remedy, lest we learn at our peril.
2. *Dual responsibility*: The Chiefs of Staff are currently saddled with the dual responsibility of being operational commanders as well as principal advisers to the leadership in planning national security. These roles almost contradict each other. As part of security structure at the national level, they must not only look at force structuring and capability development, but also strike a judicious balance between immediate and long-term requirements vis-à-vis fiscal availability. Operational commanders, on the other hand, must keep forces combat ready through operational and logistic planning, as well as prepare them for warfighting at Corps and divisional levels. Another related aspect that often escapes notice merits to be highlighted here. Today, the operational accountability is that of the service Chiefs, but responsibility for equipping the fighting forces rests with the MoD.
3. *More bang for the buck*: A lack of integration with other elements of power, between the MoD and service HQs, also reflects in lack of integration between the armed forces, to the detriment

of the nation. Integration and better synergy between the army, navy and air force will serve to enhance combat potential of each one of them, and will also result in huge resource optimisation, something sorely needed in a developing country like India.

4. *Single point advice:* A rotational Chairman Chief of Staff Committee is not in a position to render effective single point military advice to the leadership. The establishment of a CDS or a full-time Chairman Chief of Staff Committee can render bipartisan single point advice on military matters, which is a force multiplier in these times when technology is forever compressing the decision loop.

#### KARGIL AND BEYOND

The Kargil operations of 1999 jolted the country and highlighted the major deficiencies in the military structures. As a result, the government of the day instituted reviews, committees and task forces to recommend changes where required. Such recommendations had been made several times earlier as well, by individuals and bodies. What was different this time around was the follow-up actions by the government and translating the recommendations into changing organisations and roles in military structures, to the extent of even evolving totally new ones. The Kargil Review Committee, led by K. Subrahmanyam, made some scathing recommendations, which were made public. I am tempted to quote his statement that sums it up best: 'Politicians enjoy power without responsibility, bureaucrats wield power without accountability, and the military assumes responsibility without direction.'

Subrahmanyam recommended the creation of the post of CDS, even though his own earlier stated stand was against it. The Group of Ministers (GoM), led by L.K. Advani, also endorsed this recommendation and set up four task forces to suggest structures for higher defence management, intelligence, internal security and border management, respectively. The GoM also recommended restructuring of MoD, planning and budgeting procurement procedures and Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), as well as setting up of a National Defence University.

The task force on higher defence management was led by Arun Singh. This task force conducted an extensive study and made comprehensive recommendations, which were accepted in toto, with very minor modifications. Major recommendations of the task force were as follows:

1. Redesignation of service HQs from 'Attached Offices' to 'Integrated HQs of MoD'.
2. Delegation of financial and administrative powers to Service HQ and lower formations.
3. Creation of CDS and a Vice Chief of Defence Staff (VCDS).
4. Establishment of HQ IDS, Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC) and Strategic Forces Command (SFC).

### HQ IDS

Subsequent to the abovementioned committees' recommendations, the HQ IDS, ANC and SFC were raised, albeit without a CDS. The VCDS was, therefore, designated as Chief of Integrated Defence Staff to Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC). The HQ IDS has gradually evolved as an interface between the three services, as well as between the MoD and service HQs, on tri-services or bi-services matters and issues. An important HQ at the national level without a full-time head is not the best of arrangements, especially as it is, at times, saddled with the task of walking a tightrope between the three service HQs on various issues. Let us examine the roles envisaged for HQ IDS, how it has fared so far and what more can be done to improve its functioning.

#### Functions of HQ IDS

One of the defining roles mandated to HQ IDS was to spearhead integrated capability development of the armed forces. 'Capability development' remains one of the pivotal activities for keeping a nation's armed forces modern, technologically empowered and logistically endowed. It is a multidisciplinary field spanning diverse subjects, ranging from warfighting to logistics, finance to technology, indigenisation to refining of work procedures/processes, and so on. It relies heavily on modern management concepts, modelling techniques, and advanced mathematical tools to convert its inherent subjectivities into scientifically derived, 'objective' inputs for use by the defence planner.

In the pursuit of capability development, HQ IDS has played, and continues to play, a pivotal role. It is responsible for coordination, integration and providing inputs on matters related to formulation of policies and planning of force structure of the services. It undertakes the formulation of long-term policy, planning and force development of the three services, budget (general and defence) analysis, acquisition, procurement, and technology management. The HQ IDS is responsible

for formulating the Long Term Integrated Perspective Plan (LTIPP) and the Five Year Defence Plan based on the anticipated threat perception, force structures, modernisation, and development of equipment and funds required.

While the 15-year LTIPP and five-year Services Capital Acquisition Plans (SCAPs) are vision documents providing insight into the future acquisitions, the proverbial action plan for capital acquisitions is the Annual Acquisition Plan (AAP). This plan, unlike the former two, is anchored to a firm budgetary allocation and provides an actionable road map for MoD to conclude ongoing cases into firm contracts. The HQ IDS not only formulates the plans but also ensures that the formulation methodology remains contemporary by bringing in constructive improvements. To engender inter-agency synergy from the inception stage itself, HQ IDS examines each case for interoperability and commonality and also, where applicable, enables joint procurement of equipment.

Having worked out the long-term and short-term plans, HQ IDS steers the entire capital procurement of the three services to realise/translate the acquisition plans on ground. It has recently started using Operational Research, Statistical and System Analysis (ORSA) techniques for analytical decision making in the areas of force structuring, capability building and prioritisation of weapon systems. It has a full-fledged ORSA vertical which conceptualises and coordinates development of ORSA models for tri-service applications.

To provide a monitoring oversight on the acquisition process, HQ IDS has conceptualised and installed a software-based programme, which enables real-time monitoring of all capital acquisition cases. The 'Planning, Archiving and Analysis Network' (PLANET), besides providing a comprehensive database, also facilitates detailed analysis of capital acquisition schemes so as to introduce constructive changes in the procurement process.

Even in the realm of policy framework, HQ IDS works closely with the MoD to simplify the Defence Procurement Procedures. Some of the important policy guidelines promulgated in the last three years to give a boost to indigenous industry, as also to further the 'Make in India' programme, include the following:

1. simplified Make II procedure;
2. strategic partnership model;
3. draft defence production policy;
4. guidelines on capacity assessment of Indian shipyards;

5. waiver of royalty fees; and
6. review of provisions of customs duty on defence procurements.

To enable industry to undertake forward planning, and initiate steps towards technology development, etc., HQ IDS has promulgated a 'Technology Perspective and Capability Roadmap' (TPCR 2018).<sup>3</sup> The document presents an adequately detailed perspective of the requirements of the armed forces for the next 15 years. On similar lines, to provide a level playing field to the private industry and to acquaint the industry with upcoming procurement cases, HQ IDS conducts monthly interactions with Indian Business Organisations (IBOs).

The operations branch of IDS is responsible for various current operational issues that involve participation of more than one service. It is responsible for preparation/upgradation of Raksha Mantri's (RM) Operational Directive, all matters concerning the 'Union War Book', as well as conceptualisation and preparation of joint plans for threats requiring a tri-service response. It handles joint operations as well as logistic issues of the three services. The Integrated Space Cell (ISC) of Ops Branch is also responsible for direct projection, creation and utilisation of space assets, according to the Defence Space Vision and joint space doctrine. In the field of information assurance, it coordinates joint system development together with cross-linkages between national information security agencies, Defence Information Assurance and Research Agency (DIARA) and Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA). As a service HQ, HQ IDS is responsible for planning and coordination of operational aspects relating to ANC.

Crisis management is a very important and live role that the operational branch performs, which includes policymaking and coordination of all aspects pertaining to disaster and crisis management, including chemical, biological and nuclear disasters, as well as coordination of tri-service disaster responses to natural disasters/accidents. Planning and conduct of tri-service exercises and multinational exercises also form part of its charter. Humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) has really been a success story, with HQ IDS playing a pivotal role in coordinating with agencies and ministries, as a part of National Crisis Management Group, and coordination of efforts of the three services as required. Most recently, the Kerala floods of 2018 and Hyderabad are a case in point.

It also coordinates all training exercises, in India and abroad, involving more than one service. Recent examples of successful conduct

of tri-services exercise, INDRA, with Russia in 2017 and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) exercise with eight militaries in 2018 bear mention. Besides, several joint exercises between the three services are also conducted in different parts of the country.

The DIA, headed by Deputy Chief (DC) IDS (Intelligence) and Director General (DG) DIA, is responsible for providing integrated intelligence inputs on defence issues to the RM, the CDS (when in place), Chairman, COSC, Chiefs of Army, Navy and Air Staff, Defence Secretary and National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS). The DIA is, therefore, responsible to collect, collate and evaluate military intelligence obtained from the three services, and other intelligence agencies and sources, pertaining to national security and prepare integrated analysis and assessments. It is also the interface between the military intelligence directorates and the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), Intelligence Bureau (IB) and NSCS.

With the mandate of technical intelligence, DG DIA is also responsible for managing major inter-services technical intelligence (TECHINT) organisations, like the Defence Image Processing and Analysis Centre (DIPAC) and the Signal Intelligence Directorate of the armed forces, and future military TECHINT-related activities. The TECHINT units deployed in various sectors continue to share information with field formations in real time as hitherto fore, to ensure operational effectiveness of units/formations deployed in counter-insurgency, Line of Control, and other such roles.

The HQ IDS has a unique mandate of net assessment and is charged with the responsibility of initiating and coordinating net assessments of the standing trends and future prospects of India's security capabilities and military potential in comparison with those of other countries, or groups of countries, so as to identify emerging or future vulnerabilities, challenges and opportunities for India. The Net Assessment Directorate has been able to successfully carry out net assessment of current and projected India and foreign military capabilities by country or regions, like South Asia, Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and Asia. This aids in analysing specific current and projected capabilities of India and foreign countries, with a view to draw up the security policy, doctrine and strategy at national and joint services levels. Further, it helps us to derive the specific weapon systems, force development, economic sustenance and defence infrastructure. It helps in focusing our attention on technological drivers of strategic balance, for example, revolution in military affairs

(RMA), emerging dangerous and dual-use technologies, weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), missiles, space and nanotechnology.

Training is an all-pervading and important function in the armed forces. The training branch of IDS is playing a significant role in formulating joint doctrines of military capability in strategic and joint operations; coordinating defence services joint doctrines; and training-based job responses formulated by policy and plan branch to non-conventional and unconventional threats to national security in various areas, including energy, environment and health. In 2017, the joint armed forces doctrine and joint armed forces training doctrine were promulgated in public domain for the first time in the country.<sup>4</sup>

The IDS formulates joint training policy and directives for all personnel in the armed forces, and also steers the functioning of all tri-service training institutions, such as the NDA, Defence Services Staff College, Military Institute of Technical Training, and the School of Foreign Languages. Recently, IDS has identified a few more subjects in which training of the three services can be combined, namely, intelligence, military law, music and nuclear, biological and chemical warfare. The process of merging their training is currently underway.

One of the recommendations of the GoM in 1999 was the establishment of a National Defence University in India. All the groundwork has been carried out and Cabinet approval is awaited for the creation of the Indian Defence University, as it has been finally named. A world-class national war memorial, however, was created in New Delhi in record time and dedicated to the nation earlier this year.

### **Has IDS Achieved its Aim?**

It is evident from the previous section that HQ IDS is playing a central and critical role in capability development of the three services, starting from formulation of long-term plans to AAP, execution of the categorisation process, real-time monitoring of cases, refining of acquisition processes/procedures and ensuring greater synergy and integration within the armed forces. It is also true that since the raising of HQ IDS, significant progress has been made in these and many more such areas. Having laid a strong foundation, it is only appropriate that HQ IDS, in concert with the services, now carries forward the positive momentum to conquer the challenges that lie ahead on the road to truly integrated capability development, which is aptly supported by a robust and vibrant indigenous defence ecosystem, both in the public and the private sector.

On the operational front, HADR exercises with National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and various states' administrations have paid rich dividends. Coordination and conduct of exercises in India and abroad has also enhanced our combat preparedness. However, until operational structures are integrated, the operations branch continues to be in coordination mode, but is now poised for a big take-off. The ongoing raising of Defence Cyber Agency, Defence Space Agency and Armed Forces Special Operations Division will fulfil a long-standing security need of the country. These technical fields do not brook any boundaries between military and civil realms, let alone between the three services. Hence, it is only apt that these structures are being raised under HQ IDS. The operations branch will then be directing operations of its own.

Originally envisaged to be established as a command, the space structure is being raised as the Defence Space Agency for now. Increasingly, all our communications, surveillance and reconnaissance-based intelligence are riding on space-based satellites. The number of military satellites is also growing. The Defence Space Agency is being raised to plan, execute, control and manage all tri-services space-related aspects, including communication, position–navigation–timing (PNT) and space-based intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR). In addition to this, space control and management will form an important part.

Cyber warfare is the next frontier where wars will be fought. To paraphrase, it may be the realm that will help a country influence (as against fighting) another to the point of domination, without firing a single shot or a single kill. The enemy would look to paralyse some critical services of the country, throwing it in disarray. For instance, if the banking services, the power grid or the train services of a country are paralysed, it can have serious consequences. All this, and more, is possible in the cyberworld. While critical information infrastructures like these are the mandate of National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO), defence-related cyber infrastructure will be the mandate of the Defence Cyber Agency (DCA). The non-critical information infrastructure will remain under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. The Defence Cyber Agency will work in close concert with other agencies.

An Armed Forces Special Operations Division is being raised to create a tri-services commando capability. These Special Forces of all three services will live, train and operate together. Of special importance

is the fact they will be equipped uniformly, and an integrated structure will enable a culture of picking up best practices from each other as well as from other forces they may choose to emulate. The assigning of roles and tasks will depend on the context and requirement at the time. Their range of capabilities will offer great flexibility in their employment to the operational leadership.

At the end of this discussion, the question that we must ask is: have we moved forward in integration of structures between the three services for resource optimisation and enhancing combat power? The answer is: only marginally so. There is scope to integrate more in logistics and training, though there has been better integration in training issues and establishments.

### **What More Can IDS Do?**

So far, we have seen the role that HQ IDS was envisaged to play in jointness, in warfighting, in capability development as well as in preparing for the challenges of tomorrow, keeping in mind the ever-changing nature of warfare. Further to this, can it also play a pivotal role to synergise the important elements of power harmoniously, so that the nation can realise its full potential? The CCS addresses the issues well at apex level, but there is a felt need for coordination between various organs of the government at functional level rather than the MoD or the service HQ planning security of the nation by themselves. More so, in the absence of a published national defence strategy, it becomes all the more necessary to have a smooth functional-level coordination. With this in view, a Defence Planning Committee was constituted in May 2018. It comprises of the three service Chiefs and the three secretaries of Defence, Home and Finance, respectively. The chairmanship of National Security Adviser brings in the Prime Minister's Office oversight; and the Chief of Integrated Defence Staff to Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee (CISC) being the member secretary and HQ IDS the designated secretariat provides institutional memory and coordination. Within the first few meetings itself, this committee has proved its worth and has facilitated resolution of several vexed security issues.

What have we achieved in jointness and what more can be done to further it? In my view, a fair amount has been achieved, slowly and steadily, especially if you consider the handicap of not having a CDS or a full-time Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff. However, much, much more can be done. Appointing a CDS should be the first step. As recommended

by all relevant committees, including the Naresh Chandra task force, the new government must take this step, without disturbing the three services or the roles of the Chiefs, and appoint a full-time, permanent Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff or Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He could then be charged with the mandate of enhancing jointness and integration between the MoD and the services, and between the three services gradually, leading eventually to integrated theatre commands as seen in all major militaries in the world. In 2017, for the first time and with full consensus, the Chairman, COSC wrote to the Defence Minister to appoint a full-time Chairman, COSC. It took 13 years to arrive at a consensus between the three services on this. Now, it is squarely a leadership call to appoint one.

This Chairman would provide the much-needed, single-point military advice to the leadership. It would also obviate another big anomaly brought out earlier, of operational accountability resting with the service Chiefs, but responsibility for equipping the armed forces resting with the MoD. With a full-time Chairman, not only this accountability can be owned by the services but it will also enable HQ IDS to realise its full potential. The Chairman can be charged with the mandate of identifying more structures to be integrated, gradually paving the way for eventual full-scale integration, including theatre commands.

#### THE WAY AHEAD

The threat to India is both external and internal, from state as well as non-state actors. Transnational threats posed by the activities of state and non-state-sponsored terrorist organisations are exacerbated by the dynamics of intra and inter-state conflicts, which pose a danger to regions beyond the primary theatres.<sup>55</sup> The asymmetric risks involved need all elements of national power to be applied in harmony. Territorial disputes with nuclear-capable neighbours, foreign-abetted separatist groups and left-wing extremist movements in the hinterland define our security challenges. Maritime security will also assume increasing importance in future as India progresses to her rightful place in the world (economic) order. Threats in non-contact domain of cyber, space, information and psychological warfare are likely to proliferate and grow in lethality and complexity.

The national threat is further complicated by technological advances as the technological curve is under compression; and future operations of warfare are likely to be conducted under increased transparency,

accuracy, lethality and continuous technological upgrades. India has moved to a proactive and pragmatic philosophy to counter various conflict situations. It calls for moving from a sub-regional framework to a more global framework. National security, under its ambit, includes commerce, science and technology, diplomacy, military and several other elements of power. The synergy for security has to start from the armed forces and only then can other agencies harmonise the national effort towards national security.

The military being an important component of 'national security', future defence planning and capability development need to be aligned with the national security paradigm. Instead of a bottoms-up approach, India needs to adopt the well-structured and logically sequenced defence planning process that starts with important strategic guidance documents at the apex level, and include elements such as a 'National Security Strategy' and 'Strategic Planning Guidelines', that serve as beacons and signposts to the defence planner. In the interim, we can make do with some issue-based, functional-level consensus at the Defence Planning Committee.

The need to integrate the long-term strategic planning of the three services has never been greater. A formalised, structured and joint process for undertaking force development planning would facilitate true integration in operations, sharing economies in training and effective inter-services prioritisation in procurements, which is, in fact, *enshrined* in the charter of HQ IDS. Another area where inroads need to be made is the adoption of readily available modern management techniques and mathematical models in capability development. This will ensure greater objectivity in defining future capabilities, assessing present capabilities and determining the capability deficit.

Besides integrating force development planning, there is also a need to underpin it with assured budgetary support, on the lines of the UK's Defence Capital Expenditure Plan (DCEP). In the absence of long-term financial assurance, the integrated plans will continue to be implemented in a piecemeal manner without a stable perspective. Consequently, it will not be possible to realise their true potential in terms of invigorating indigenous research, development and manufacturing. Committed finance over the longer term will streamline procurement process, help shorten acquisition timelines, and provide the much-needed thrust to indigenisation.

Last, but not the least, HQ IDS needs to lead the armed forces in providing due impetus to indigenisation. Since 2014, a number of reforms have been introduced under the 'Make in India' initiative with an aim to achieve the goal of self-reliance in defence production and to build a robust defence industrial ecosystem. The results, however, have not been very encouraging. With close to US\$ 150 billion likely to be spent on modernising of the armed forces in the next 10 years or so, it is only logical that the nation progressively builds indigenous capabilities to design, develop and manufacture complex weapon systems which are suitable for the future needs of the armed forces. Towards this, HQ IDS, in concert with other stakeholders, needs to spearhead indigenisation.

Moving towards new frontiers, and preparing for the changing nature of warfare with the advent of new technologies like cyber, space, artificial intelligence and big data analytics, it is only appropriate that the three services, and even other instruments of power, adopt an integrated approach towards their exploitation. The essence of integration of the armed forces lies in preparing systematically for the 'emerging triad' of cyber, space and special operations, even as it builds an integrated land–air–sea warfighting machinery, while maintaining credible nuclear deterrence and guarding against unconventional threats.

For this military capability to result into action, it is imperative that the political decision makers are not only kept abreast but also seized of the exact nature of the security threat. They have to be rendered professional advice of ideal military response options to effectively deter or counter emerging security threats. The appointment of a Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff will fulfil these needs aptly. His appointment will combine the responsibility for equipping and modernisation of armed forces as well as the accountability for operations under one authority. It will further set the stage for synergetic integration of the armed forces, leading eventually to setting up of integrated theatre commands. These steps will propel India to realise its rightful place in the world order.

#### NOTES

1. The Heseltine Reforms were led by Michael Heseltine, a British businessman and Conservative politician who was a Member of Parliament from 1966 to 2001, and a prominent figure in the governments of Margaret Thatcher and John Major. Heseltine was Secretary of State for Defence from 1983 to 1986. Broadly, under these reforms '...the CDS and PUS became the principal advisors to the Secretary of State for Defence. The respective service chiefs

had very little role in policy formulation. However, they had the privilege of direct access to the Prime Minister'. See Vijai Singh Rana, *Status of Jointness in the Indian Security Apparatus*, IDSA Monograph No. 51, New Delhi: IDSA, 2016, pp. 39-40. Also see Rajneesh Singh, *British Reforms to its Higher Defence Organisation: Lessons for India*, IDSA Monograph No. 40, New Delhi: IDSA, 2014.

2. The Goldwater-Nichols Act 1986 was aimed at improving 'jointness' or 'interoperability' among the arms of the US military. Two instances of military failures led to the pushing of the legislation through the US Congress: Operation Eagle Claw, aimed at rescuing American hostages from Tehran in 1980, in the aftermath of the Iranian Revolution; and Operation Urgent Fury, aimed at rescuing American hostages from Grenada in 1983. Common to both was the inability of the military to operate collectively. According to Justin Johnson, '[t]he Act made a number of significant structural changes to the DOD, including streamlining the military's chain of command and requiring that officers have joint experience in order to be promoted into senior positions.' See Justin Johnson, '2017 NDAA: Define the Goldwater-Nichols Problem Before Trying to Solve It', *The Heritage Foundation*, 12 July 2016, available at [https://www.heritage.org/defense/report/2017-ndaa-define-the-goldwater-nichols-problem-trying-solve-it#\\_ftn2](https://www.heritage.org/defense/report/2017-ndaa-define-the-goldwater-nichols-problem-trying-solve-it#_ftn2), accessed on 24 July 2019, for a concise intro to this Act.
3. See 'Technology Perspective and Capability Roadmap' (TPCR - 2018)', available at <https://mod.gov.in/sites/default/files/tpcr.pdf>, accessed on 23 July 2019.
4. The doctrines are available in the public domain. These can be accessed at [https://www.ids.nic.in/IDSAdmin/upload\\_images/doctrine/JointDoctrineIndianArmedForces2017.pdf](https://www.ids.nic.in/IDSAdmin/upload_images/doctrine/JointDoctrineIndianArmedForces2017.pdf), and [https://www.ids.nic.in/IDSAdmin/upload\\_images/doctrine/JTD-14-NOV-FINAL.pdf](https://www.ids.nic.in/IDSAdmin/upload_images/doctrine/JTD-14-NOV-FINAL.pdf).
5. See 'Global Security Environment', at <https://indianarmy.nic.in/Site/FormTemplate/frmTempSimple.aspx?MnId=k4qLLSRMfuCPYDxjjFVVyww=&ParentID=MBAwzyxthgA5x8djga7Emw==>, accessed 23 July 2019.

