

# Integrating the Indian Military: Retrospect and Prospect

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Wars are not fought only by the armed forces, but by the entire nation, the government and all its organs, the media and the people in an integrated and unified manner. The Kargil war was one such event that unified the nation. The political, diplomatic and military insights gained during the conflict have tremendous learning value for our politico-military structures and processes. It was with this purpose of learning lessons and sharpening our higher defence management that the Kargil Review Committee was formed in the aftermath of the Kargil War of 1999. And recent history of moving towards jointness among the three services and integrating them with the apparatus of higher defence organisation can be said to have started with the recommendations of the Kargil Review Committee of 1999 which was followed by a ministerial review by a Group of Ministers. The Task Force on Management of Defence, headed by Mr. Arun Singh had submitted its report in August 2001, wherein it had made a number of recommendations regarding integration of Service HQs with Ministry of Defence (MoD), changes in procurement and acquisition process, evolving long term perspective plans, creation of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) and putting in place of a Strategic Force Command besides tri-Service Andaman & Nicobar Command.

While considerable momentum was imparted to implement the defence reforms in early days due to the shock effect of Kargil, lately this shock seems to have worn off. The reforms as recommended by the GoM task

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force, especially pertaining to jointness and integration, are being neglected and there seems to be a lack of will in implementing them. A review of over five years of ongoing reforms in the defence establishment shows a mixed report card. While some baby steps have been taken towards enhanced jointmanship and integration, these reforms are more in form rather than in substance. This paper examines the progress made in implementing the defence reforms, especially the ones pertaining to jointness and integration, analyses the current levels of jointness and integration and also recommends what needs to be done further.

### Source of Jointness and Integration

The process of jointness and integration amongst the armed forces commences with the issuance of Raksha Mantri's (RM) Directive. And the process ends up by providing a single unified product and service to the nation in terms of defence and military capabilities, thus contributing to national security. At present RM's directive, apparently, is meant only for the three Services of the Armed Forces and is generic in nature. A more comprehensive document would be a Defence Planning Guidance (DPG) which assesses the military threats, provides goals, objectives and priorities for defence missions, looks at resource forecast and strategic technology forecast and gives out a broad strategy for the development of military capabilities. Respective departments of MoD like Department of Defence Production and the three Service HQs are given inputs by the DPG for developing their own strategies and plans to fulfil their allotted missions and objectives. Further, the formulation of a National Security Strategy is necessary before a Defence Planning Guidance can be evolved. DPG also serves as the starting point for politico-military interface. It provides a geo-political framework for assessing military force levels and budgetary needs. Though military inputs would be necessary to formulate

defence policy guidance, it would essentially be a document prepared at the RM's secretariat with a broad range of inputs from political, economic, industrial, technological, diplomatic and other spheres. Thus the current practice of preparing directives purely by military officials would not reflect the true objectives of defence policy guidance. This will be an instrument through which the Defence Minister exercises civilian control and authority over the entire defence apparatus.

The DPG and National Military Strategy are two distinct documents and one does not replace the other. DPG has a distinct capability perspective that applies not only to the Armed Forces but also to the other organs of the Ministry of Defence. Therefore, DPG perspective engenders an integrated view of defence issues.

It is quite evident that our defence policy objectives would be a sub-set of our national security strategy. Further, our defence policy would guide military strategy, defence research and development, defence production and procurement and would also aim at making adequate resources available for defence. In addition it will cover many other facets of defence policy, some of which may be classified. The GoM Report of 2001 had recommended that RM's directive should be issued twelve months before the commencement of the next five year defence plan. This Directive forms the conceptual basis for the Defence Plan. It was also recommended that the Ministry of Finance should give a firm indication of the availability of financial resources for a period of 5 years, at least 6 months before the commencement of the ensuing Five Year Plan<sup>1</sup>.

Therefore, the RM's directive for the Tenth Five Year Defence Plan (2002-2007) should have been issued one year earlier or at least in 2002. But it was not issued in time. It is believed that a draft directive was prepared by

the HQ Integrated Defence Staff (IDS) but its approval had been kept pending. Is it because it has not been legislated or is there no statutory obligation to produce this document like say the Annual Budget of the government? The last RM's Directive is said to have been issued in 1983 when Mr. Venkataraman was the Defence Minister. It has also been brought out by many observers that RM's directive appears on the scene too infrequently. General Bipin Joshi had also prepared a draft directive during his tenure and sent it to MoD for approval. But nothing came out of that. RM's Directive for the Eleventh Defence Plan (2007-12) should also have been issued in 2006 but apparently it has not been issued, thus highlighting the weakness in our joint and integrated defence planning processes and structures.

The defence of a nation state is intimately connected with its national security objectives. The objectives are generally spelt out in overall national security strategy, which contains both military and non-military aspects of security, a survey of threats, challenges and opportunities in the security and strategic environment. The US regularly publishes a National Security Strategy document (the last one was issued in March, 2006). Countries like China and Australia publish "White Papers" on defence. China issued its latest "White Paper" on defence in December 2006<sup>2</sup>. However we are yet to evolve a clearly enunciated national security strategy document. Even the GoM Report observed that "*the defence planning process is greatly handicapped by the absence of a national security doctrine and commitments of funds beyond a year. It also suffers from a lack of inter-Service prioritisation as well as requisite flexibility*".

However, it is heartening to note that MoD has finally decided to evolve their long term defence planning based on a well defined national security strategy and objectives. Appearing before the Parliament's Standing Committee on Defence in April 2007, the MoD representative stated that

*“The revised Long Term Integrated Perspective Plan (2007-22) is being prepared following a deliberate and integrated 'Top Down' approach by articulating National Security Strategy, National Military Strategy, National Military Objectives/Capability and so on. Such an exercise has been undertaken for the first time and is an extremely involved process with inputs from the three Services, MoD, NSA and various other agencies.”<sup>3</sup>*

The document is expected to be ready by the end of December 2009. This underscores a number of very important issues. First, so far, defence planning has been resorted to without the benefit of a well articulated NSS and National Military Strategy. Secondly, the three Services have been evolving their plans based on their own individual view of threat perceptions. Thirdly, the approach of the armed forces has been to incrementally add on to the equipment and weapons systems rather than evolve joint military capabilities. And by the time the new document is ready, three years of the current 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Defence Plan (2007-12) would have elapsed, thus causing further delays in the evolution of a joint and well integrated defence planning process.

It is believed that a DPG is also likely to be formulated soon and once DPG is issued, RM's Directive may become superfluous as it is likely to include all the contents of the Directive. DPG would most likely be a classified document and the frequency of its formulation should coincide with our defence planning cycle. This would introduce a certain amount of stability in our joint planning process. On the other hand, security and strategic situations do not always follow a predicted path (as the Kargil experience in 1999 and the military stand off with Pakistan in 2002 had shown) and it may be necessary to carry out a mid-term review. It is also normal to plan for certain contingencies, which may arise during the period of DPG.

As a corollary to the above, it also needs to be understood that defence capabilities take a very long period to fructify and therefore it is mandatory

that DPG should coincide with the Long Term Integrated Perspective Plan (LTIPP). LTIPP reflects the joint and single service capabilities to be evolved over a period of 15 years. The DPG would be a living document and it would be impacted upon by a number of factors. For instance, the security environment is not only driven by external factors, but particularly in the case of military capability, by the response of the external environment to the developments of one's military power and military strategy. Thus, DPG would also contain a long term guidance which would be reviewed and concretised in every plan period to make it contemporary with the emerging milieu of threats and challenges.

In case of the US, the Secretary of Defence exercises control by issuing a Defence Policy Guidance (DPG) which is a classified document. The DPG document is made with the advice of the Chairman Joints Chiefs of Staff (CJCS). The DPG is instrumental in initiating the Department of Defence's Planning, Programming and Budgeting System<sup>4</sup>. Another tool used by the Secretary is the Contingency Planning Guidance (CPG), which informs the CJCS of general and strategic areas of concern to the political leadership for which contingency planning should be carried out. It is prepared in consultation with CJCS, goes through the National Security Council and is approved by the President. Experience has shown that we need a joint and integrated defence planning system suited to Indian conditions. Our ad hoc reactions and planning for operations in Maldives and Sri Lanka bear witness to the absence of any coherent long term joint planning. Our experience in Operation Parakram shows that political purpose and guidance to the military has to be very firm and clear if military success and political objectives are to be achieved.

## Awaiting Political Consensus on CDS

The Parliament's Standing Committee on Defence has been repeatedly questioning the government on progress regarding creation of the Chief of

Defence Staff (CDS). As a result of repeated recommendations of the Committee in their reports, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) had issued letters to National and State level political parties in March 2006 to begin political consultations with them on the issue of establishment of the post of CDS. In their 15<sup>th</sup> Report to Parliament, the Committee observed that since inordinate delay had already taken place, the Government must expedite the matter and come to a consensus for establishment of CDS, which is an urgent need to cater to the growing security challenges.

It is believed that the process of consultation with political parties has been initiated by issuing letters to National and State level political parties by the Raksha Mantri in March 2006 for obtaining their views on the establishment of Chief of Defence Staff. Further, reminders have also been issued in June 2006 and again in January 2007<sup>5</sup>. Replies from only four political parties have been received so far. Thus, continued procrastination in the matter would only add to the problems of evolving joint and integrated structures.

It needs to be noted that the GoM Report had observed “*capabilities of Armed Forces can be enhanced significantly, if rather than operating as three individual units, they operate with a high degree of jointness and in close tandem with one another in conduct of various tasks, including training. Modern warfare demands much higher degree of coordination in operations by all the three Services than ever before. Creation of CDS would promote greater jointness in the Armed Forces*”. Besides single point military advice, CDS was to administer the Strategic Forces and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the defence planning process through intra- and inter-Services prioritisation of acquisitions and projects. The institution of CDS was to be the first step towards a series of structural reforms. But in the absence of CDS the other reforms which have taken place also lack substance. What the MoD and the government need is an integrated view from an effective and experienced spokesman for our

senior military leadership. There has been generally an apprehension among civil servants and the polity that CDS may become too strong or vesting him with powers of central advice would dilute civilian control. There is also a lurking suspicion that CDS may also dilute the role of the three Service Chiefs. However, these apprehensions and observations are not valid as the task of CDS is clearly defined.

CDS would only command/administer those forces which are tri-service in nature, like Strategic Forces Command (SFC) and the tri-Services Andaman & Nicobar Command. He would also coordinate and resolve substantive inter-Service doctrinal, policy, planning and operational issues, which, as observed by the GoM, the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) has been unable to resolve. The Services are very sensitive to their share of the budgetary pie. Historically, the budgetary allotment to the Services has followed a fixed pattern with their shares of the budget remaining the same. There has been little or no attempt at inter-Services prioritisation in planning and budgeting. CDS thus becomes an important facilitator for inter-Services prioritisation, joint force development, evolution and updating of joint doctrine, evolution of integrated perspective plans and joint military strategy.

It appears that the Standing Committee on Defence has given up coaxing the government for instituting CDS. Because, in its 16<sup>th</sup> Report, the Committee has opined that due to reasons advanced by the Government, it does not wish to pursue further its observation on the creation of CDS.

## HQ Integrated Defence Staff: A Review

Based on the recommendations of the GoM report, an Integrated Defence Staff (IDS) structure was put in place by merging the erstwhile Directorate General of Defence Planning Staff and the Military Wing. It began functioning in October 2001. Even though HQ IDS has achieved

considerable progress in most of the areas of its defined mission, its integration with the MoD is only in form rather than in substance. For all practical purposes, HQ IDS is still a separate entity by itself and is not integrated into the MoD. If IPS officers and other cadre officers can be posted to higher level appointments in the Home Ministry, there is no reason why military officers cannot be posted to MoD or why civil officers cannot be posted in HQ IDS. This would be a right step for promoting integration.

Further, it is being argued that pending decision on setting up the institution of CDS, HQ IDS has been set up under the Chief of Integrated Defence Staff to the Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee (CISC) in 2001 to support the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) and its Chairman in the optimum performance of its roles and functions, bringing together and coordinating several functions common to the Services. Planning functions, including the formulation of Long Term and Five Year Plans were brought under the Integrated Defence Staff. Strategic Forces Command, Tri-Service commands like the Andaman and Nicobar “theatre” Command have been set up to promote jointness and synergy in operations. The Defence Intelligence Agency was set up to coordinate intelligence inputs from the Service intelligence directorates and provides interface with the other intelligence agencies like Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO), and Intelligence Bureau (IB). In the field of training several tri service institutions like National Defence Academy, Defence Services Staff College and College of Defence Management (CDM) have been brought under the Joint Training Committee of HQ IDS.

A review of HQ IDS's endeavours since 2001 would indicate difficulties being experienced in forging jointness and integration in planning processes and structures.

IDS is at present working on a Long Term Integrated Perspective Plan (2007-22). In the immediate wake of its establishment the first LTIPP for the 15 year period of 2002-2017 was to have been worked out. The same had been made and had received the approval of COSC and had been awaiting the approval of Defence Acquisition Council and Cabinet Committee on Security. But because of delays in approvals, mostly due to lack of coordination between Ministry of Finance (MoF) and MoD, LTIPP (2002-17) had to be shelved and replaced with the current LTIPP (2007-2022). Further, the Tenth Five Year Defence Plan (2002-2007) was approved in end December 2004, while it should have been approved at least sometime before the commencement of the plan. Funds asked by the Services and those allotted by MoF were at variance thus resulting in plan slippages. The Standing Committee on Defence observed in August 2004 that “*the Committee is not happy with planning mechanism in the MoD which has moved only at a snail's pace – a situation with no approved Defence Plan to speak of even in third year of the plan period*”<sup>6</sup>. This had led to overall uncertainty about the availability of committed finances for long term plans of weapons acquisition and modernisation of the Armed Forces. There has been no serious effort towards inter-Service prioritisation in the LTIPP. It continues to be largely a sum of the perspective plans of individual Services. This compels one to remark that the more things change the more they remain the same. If LTIPP is going to be just an amalgam of respective Service plans then it undermines the most important mandate given to CDS and HQ IDS.

However, as mentioned earlier the Eleventh Defence Plan is also going to suffer the same fate as the Tenth Plan since it has not been approved so far. The 11th Defence Plan projections were sent to the Ministry of Finance for consideration with the approval of Raksha Mantri in July 2006. In September 2006, MoF had indicated that it would be realistic to assume year on year increase in Defence allocations in the range of 8-10 percent for the purpose of initiating planning exercise for the 11th Plan, as against the

annual average growth rate of 12.35 percent per year indicated by Ministry of Defence<sup>7</sup>. Some suggestions were also made on certain operational aspects having substantial financial implications with the request that the Ministry of Defence review the same with the objective of rationalising expenditure. In October 2006 the Raksha Mantri had again written to MoF on this issue. The matter remains under examination in the Ministry of Finance.

The Parliament's Standing Committee on Defence in its 16<sup>th</sup> Report (released in April 2007) felt constrained to remark that “*the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Defence should not shift the responsibility to each other; rather together they must approve the Eleventh Plan at the earliest, so that it does not face the same fate of Tenth Plan. This will further facilitate both the Ministry of Defence to plan their finance, equipment acquisition and utilise the allocated amount to the fullest extent in a time-bound manner*”<sup>8</sup>. The Committee was also perturbed because of the mismatch between the projection and budgetary allocation for the first year (2007-08) of the plan.

Coming back to the question of lack of integration and inter-service prioritisation: It appears that the Navy has already formulated a Maritime Capability Perspective Plan covering the period 2007-2022. And the other two Services are in the process of doing so. All the three plans are expected to be integrated into an LTIPP and its approval obtained from the Defence Acquisition Council by the end of October 2009. But the major question of disjointed planning still remains. How has the Navy formulated its Capability Plan without deriving the same from NMS and NSS? Would the LTIPP be really an integrated plan or just an amalgam of the three Service plans? Would the COSC be ever able to reduce the allocation of one Service and allot the same to the other Service for a coordinated and joint development of military capabilities based on a common vision of threats and challenges? For instance, if the Army feels very strongly that the Air

Force should have dedicated ground attack fighters like the A-10 or any other modern equivalent aircraft to provide close air support, then would the Army be willing to reduce its allocations and proportionately increase funds for the Air Force for this purpose? Similar argument can be extended to other military capabilities for attaining the goals of inter-Service prioritisation. Apparently, our defence planning structures and processes have not attained the required degree of maturity.

CDS or HQ IDS needs to be given the requisite degree of authority for inter-service prioritisation in joint capabilities programme development. Further, it can also be seen that despite the new structures like Defence Acquisition Council and new improved procedures for defence procurement the malaise of lack of joint and integrated approach in procurement remains.

### Problems of Disjunction in Logistics

Procurement is the first major phase of logistics. In order to streamline defence procurement, a new Defence Procurement Procedure 2006 (DPP-2006) was introduced. This in turn was built upon the erstwhile DPP-2005 which itself was a review of DPP-2002. But in spite of the frequent reviews of DPP the capital acquisition planning has suffered from delays and a low percentage in attainment of the targets set out for procurement. One of the most important issues from the point of jointness has been the lack of coordination among the Services while procuring common weapons systems and equipment common to them. They have resorted to independent procurement of common systems instead of planning joint procurement to obtain the best value for money, reduce tendering cost and minimise processing time. This audit observation has been made by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India in his Report on Defence Services for the year ending March 2006 and presented to Parliament in May 2007<sup>9</sup>.

The Defence Procurement Procedure for capital acquisitions of June 2005 (DPP-2005) was especially formulated to include a clause which stressed on the Services to evolve Joint Service Quality Requirements (JSQR) for equipment common to the three Services. The same clause has again been emphasised in the latest DPP-2006. However, while submitting requirements for medium lift utility helicopters, common to the three Services, no JSQRs have been evolved even though the role envisaged for the helicopters is the same. There is a need to formulate JSQRs to gain synergies and best value for the money spent. Further, not long ago the Army and the Air Force had purchased UAVs from the same country/vendor but at different rates, thus allowing the vendor to exploit the disconnection between the services. And the process of independent procurement of UAVs has been on for over ten years (It is under import since 1996). Joint procurement would have definitely resulted in *'minimising delays, economy in procurement and avoided placing of repeat orders'*.

There seems to be a pattern in acquiring common systems independently; Oxygen-cum-Communication Mask worn below the helmet by the pilots of the Air Force and Army Aviation was procured independently by the two Services. The Army procured the Mask ex-import at four times the cost at which it was procured by the Air Force indigenously. Similarly, Sniper Rifle SVD for Special Forces was obtained by the Army and Air Force independently, which resulted in avoidable excess expenditure. In 2003, the Army took almost a year to evaluate Underwater Diving Equipment while the same had been acquired by the Navy much earlier in 1999<sup>10</sup>. HQ IDS was expected to streamline the process and evolve JSQRs for common equipment but it has not been able to overcome the disconnection between the Services because of attitudinal and structural issues. However, it appears that in December 2006, HQ IDS had taken action to constitute an Inter Services Equipment Policy Committee (ISEPC) for procurement of

systems and items common to the three Services. ISEPC would also look into the issues of developing JSQR.

While the MoD has recognised the difficulties being experienced in the procurement system by deciding to institute a committee (in December 2006) to look into re-structuring of the Acquisition Wing, it is equally necessary to look at the other aspects of the defence logistics system which need to be integrated and harmonised. After procurement, the second phase of logistics involves transportation, storage, inventory control, and distribution and supply management. And the third phase involves sustainment of the defence forces through maintenance, replenishment, and servicing of equipment and weapons systems. All these phases and functions of logistics are amenable to a joint and unified approach. Merits of a common Defence Logistics Agency (DLA) or Defence Logistics Organisation are too well known to be repeated here. The US and UK armed forces have such organisations. The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) has even introduced joint logistics units at the theatre level with effect from October 2004 to cater to all the logistics needs of the three Services at the operational level. Pakistan for its part has a National Logistics Council which aims at unifying the entire national logistics effort.

Mr. Arun Singh had observed as far back as 1989 that “Enormous sums of money are being spent (and often wasted) on maintaining individual logistics support in common items among the services and also developing management approaches (including computerisation). A Defence Logistics Agency could be set up to standardise and integrate to the extent feasible.” However, surprisingly, the need to institute a DLA failed to find mention in the GoM Report even though the necessity for a new acquisition organisation was highlighted. Even the CAG in his Report of 2007, while recommending the need for an integrated defence acquisition

organisation encompassing all the functional elements and specialists in defence acquisition under one head, omitted to recommend the necessity of a DLA under one head, to unify all the logistics functions of the three services. DLA would integrate (besides procurement) maintenance and repair systems, military depots and transportation between the three services. It would also liaise with the civil sector for integration of civil resources. It would also exploit tools of IT for integrated logistics management, with emphasis on interoperability and compatibility between the three services. There is considerable scope for privatisation of defence support facilities. The goals of outsourcing, which is acquiring increased salience among the Services, can be best attained by following an integrated approach. Therefore, there is a need to create a DLA which could be under HQ IDS or it could be a separate entity under MoD.

### Progress in Promoting Unified Thinking

The promulgation of a joint doctrine (albeit in classified domain) in May 2006 was a significant achievement in implementing the mandate given to HQ IDS. The joint doctrine has been formulated through an elaborate process which involved a number of training institutions of the armed forces and various think tanks dealing with military and security issues. It complements the existing doctrines of the three services. The Indian Army had released its revised doctrine consisting of two parts in 2004, with Part Two being classified. The Indian Air Force also has a doctrine in the open domain while the Navy had released its maritime doctrine in June 2004. It can be said that a joint doctrine should have been formulated first and then the respective Services should have derived their doctrines from a common military doctrine. Yet this does not dilute the importance of having a joint military doctrine almost after five years of the existence of HQ IDS. Though a critical appraisal of joint doctrine cannot be made because it is classified, it is believed to be generic in nature. Hopefully, the joint

doctrine would enable us to evolve joint operational concepts and precepts at field, army, and theatre levels and even at tactical levels so that jointness can be practiced at cutting edge levels.

A doctrine is distilled wisdom which has been collected based on past experiences and thought processes evolved over a period of time. Joint doctrine is an authoritative guidance on how joint military operations should be conducted in a given set of military circumstances; however, it requires judgment in application. It is also dynamic in nature as it would continue to be impacted upon by a number of factors. The dominant factors impinging on evolution of doctrine would be the dramatic changes occurring in technology and changing nature of warfare and conflict. The release of joint doctrine was also an indication to India's potential military competitors that the country is well prepared militarily and that the value of its conventional deterrence stands enhanced. While releasing the Joint Doctrine last year Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, the then Defence Minister, had remarked that “*there is a need to evolve a road map towards furthering the process of joint commands so as to make resources available for modernisation*”<sup>11</sup>. But considering the procrastination in instituting the post of CDS, the possibility of creating joint theatre commands like Andaman and Nicobar Command seems to be unlikely in the short to medium term.

Another step to promote joint thought among the services and security community was the creation of Indian National Defence University (INDU). Concept of INDU is based on similar institutions existing in countries like the US and China. The INDU is expected to be a multi-disciplinary “centre of excellence” in the country in education and research on national security issues. INDU is proposed to be an institution of national importance. Consequently, it was to be established by an Act of Parliament. Additional Colleges/Institutions have been recommended to be created for education and research on national security and

technological issues. As part of these new Colleges/Institutions, the Committee (headed by K. Subrahmanyam) had recommended a new think tank for defence and security issues, based on GoM Report on "Reforming the National Security System", with a focus on policy-oriented research. The recommendations also included the provision for the establishment of a War Gaming and Simulation Centre. But five years after acceptance of recommendations INDU has still not fructified. Even though funds for INDU have been earmarked and both Haryana and Punjab have offered land for the purpose no meaningful progress has been made in this regard. This can be contrasted with Pakistan having announced in March last year that it would create a National Defence University and by March this year it was inaugurated. The inaugural function included an Indian observer also.

Further, while the government has been able to provide land for Special Economic Zones and pass necessary regulations to govern them within a short period of less than a year, a simple act for establishing INDU has not been legislated even five years after the need being felt for it. Similarly, at the military level while some war gaming and simulation models have been made at battalion or tactical levels, joint war gaming simulation models at operational levels are yet to be evolved. Even a small entity like Taiwan has joint war gaming simulation models (including necessary software) at theatre levels to carry out simulation and practice to hone skills in joint warfare and improve the efficiency of the military machine through learning. Therefore, it can safely be said that the knowledge age is dawning at a glacial pace in the Indian Armed Forces.

Additionally, a Centre for Joint Warfare Studies has been formed in September 2007 under the aegis of HQ IDS to promote jointmanship among the Services, Ministries and Intelligence Agencies connected with National Security. It will conduct studies and research work in Joint war-fighting. In addition, it will conduct orientation courses/ capsules for

various ministries/agencies (including procurement agencies) connected with HQ IDS/Services. The centre is still in an embryonic form and is yet to take off. However, “Purple Pages”, a journal promoted by HQ IDS, has started its publication with the objective of promoting joint and unified thought processes, concepts and precepts.

## Progress of Jointness in Information Age

Coordinating the intelligence effort of the nation along with defensive and offensive information on warfare activities has been acquiring increasing salience in the current knowledge age. Considerable progress has been achieved through the creation of a Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA), which coordinates the intelligence effort of the three services and provides a common interface with the civil intelligence community. Director General DIA is also a member of the Intelligence Coordination Group, which works under the National Security Advisor. It prepares the reports for national planners. DIA is responsible for overall supervision of all the military attaches in India and those posted abroad. DG DIA is also a member of the National Information Board and member of the Apex Committee on Satellite Surveillance Board. He also controls the strategic assets like Defence Imagery and Photo analysis Centre (DIPAC) and SIG INT. The DIA also coordinates certain aspects of information security and information warfare. DIA functions under the aegis of HQ IDS. Progress has also been made in the area of evolving a joint information warfare doctrine.

The Standing Committee on Defence noted in May 2005 that the Directorate for Information Warfare, under an Additional Director General (created in August 2003) as part of the Military Operations Directorate of Army HQ, had been performing the functions of formulating policy and guidelines on all aspects of Information Warfare and monitoring its implementation in the Army. It was evident that Information Warfare had a

very vital role in the operations of the Air Force and Navy as well. Therefore, the Committee had recommended that this Directorate should be a tri-Service body and should coordinate closely with the Ministry of Home Affairs and intelligence agencies so that information received from them could be effectively utilised not only against external enemies, but also against insurgent groups operating in the country.

Thus, a Defence Information Warfare Agency (DIWA) was formed to handle all aspects of Information Technology and Information Warfare (IW) including psychological operations, cyber war, network security, electro-magnetic spectrum and sound waves. Though the three Services have separate set ups for such activity, DIWA is the nodal agency and apex policy-making body to coordinate the efforts of the three Services. The psychological operations aspects of IW, though forming part of DIWA, are also coordinated by DIA. A joint information warfare doctrine has also been formulated to serve as a base document for IW activities. DIWA has been providing military inputs through the Chief of Integrated Staff Committee to National Security Council and the National Information Board which coordinates the joint and integrated effort at national level<sup>12</sup>. Recently, DIWA has acquired a new designation, i.e. Defence Information and Assurance and Research Agency; the functions, apparently, continue to be the same. At the national level a Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) exists to evolve suitable responses to cyber attacks. Services are also coordinating their effort, for instance through constituting similar teams at their own level; for instance CERT-A established by the Army.

### Perception Management – Lack of coordinated and Unified Effort

Another area where coordination between military and civil agencies has been weak or non-existent has been in the area of perception management

operations and activities. It was only during the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971 that a High Power Committee was formed to shape perceptions of the international community to elicit a favourable response to India's actions against Pakistan. Our record of shaping perceptions during the Kargil conflict and Operation Parakaram has been somewhat mixed. There is a need to evolve suitable organisations and structures at the apex level, say under the aegis of National Security Council and thereafter at HQ IDS level to guide the perception management activity. Existing organisation and resources with the Army for carrying out psychological warfare activities (or psychological initiatives when it comes to dealing with an internal target audience, for instance in insurgency affected areas) are very meagre and the approach to the same is generally handicapped by multiple agencies attempting to carry out similar tasks without adequate coordination. Perception management operations need institutional and doctrinal innovation and support, which is lacking in the current dispensation. Perhaps this subject would be included for study by the proposed INDU. Impact of information age has created complexities in managing perception of both domestic and foreign audiences. The Military needs to disseminate information about its own activities to the media, and for that it needs public and media support in its efforts during both peace and war. Thus, a joint and integrated effort would ease the difficulties of shaping perceptions in the current knowledge age.

## Conclusion

Jointness and integration are the same as unity of effort. Inter-service cooperation and economy of effort are two of the most important principles of war which provide synergy to our military endeavours. The primary aim of defence reforms was to achieve unity of effort among the three Services and other supporting agencies. There is an absence of common vision for threat perception amongst the Services, which is likely to be overcome by

articulating NSS and NMS which may happen within the next two years or so. DPG is also likely to be formulated in the same time span which would guide the three services and other defence support agencies and departments towards achieving common goals. The most important reform, of creation of CDS, which would resolve many inter-Service issues, has not been implemented. Though some progress has been made on the issue of integration with the MoD, IDS still remains substantively outside the structure of MoD. The long term perspective planning as well as medium term defence planning is yet to take off in the manner desired and as mandated in the GoM Report. Contentious issues like inter-Service prioritisation in planning, acquisitions and projects have not been addressed in a meaningful manner. The partial implementation of GoM recommendations have the potential to create dissonance rather than moving towards inter-Services harmony amongst the Services and supporting agencies.

Though many integrated structures like DIA, DIWA and DAC have been created, the culture of jointmanship and integration is yet to take firm roots among the Services and defence supporting agencies. Jointmanship does not mean suppressing the unique and distinctive war fighting capabilities and culture of the individual Services. In fact, it thrives on such uniqueness. However, the quintessence of jointness lies in achieving a degree of flexibility to fulfil a common goal.

It is also recommended that a quadrennial review of defence reforms as well as of the defence effort should be carried out by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence to monitor the progress achieved and make further recommendations for improvement of the defence effort. Alternatively, a comprehensive legislation on the lines of the US Goldwater-Nichols Act should be introduced so that statutory obligations compel the political leadership and the civilian bureaucracy to pay

adequate attention to the defence effort in a time bound manner besides “forcing” the three Services to become more “joint and integrated” in their approach towards the defence of the realm. 

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#### Notes

- 1 'Reforming The National Security System –Recommendations of Group of Ministers' at [www.mod.nic.in/newadditions/rcontents.htm](http://www.mod.nic.in/newadditions/rcontents.htm).
- 2 'The National Security Strategy Document of the United States of America' at [www.gov/nsc/nss.html](http://www.gov/nsc/nss.html). 'China's White Paper on Defence' titled 'China's National Defence in 2004' at [www.china.org.cn-ewhite](http://www.china.org.cn-ewhite). (Published since 1998.)
- 3 Standing Committee of Defence (Fourteenth Lok Sabha), Sixteenth Report, April 2007, pp. 46-48.
- 4 Douglas Lovelace Jr., 'Unification of the US Armed Forces: Implementing the 1986 Department of Defence Reorganization Act' pp. 21-23 at [www.carlisle.army.mil/ssi/pdf/PUB324.pdf](http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ssi/pdf/PUB324.pdf).
- 5 Standing Committee of Defence , Fifteenth Report , [Action Taken by the Government on the Recommendations contained in the 11th Report of the Committee (Fourteenth Lok Sabha) on the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Defence for the year 2006-07], pp. 82-83.
- 6 Standing Committee of Defence,(Fourteenth Lok Sabha,2004-2005) , First Report, August 2004, para 48.
- 7 Status of 11th Defence Plan of Sixteenth Report, n. 3, pp. 55.
- 8 N. 3, pp. 53.
- 9 Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for year ended March 2006, Union Government (Defence Services) Army and Ordnance Factories, No. 4 of 2007 (Performance Audit), pp. 1-2.
- 10 For instance n. 9, pp. 9-10.
- 11 'First Ever Joint Doctrine Released' The Hindu, May 18, 2006. Also at <http://www.hindu.com/2006/05/18/stories/2006051818900900.htm>.
- 12 Saikat Datta, 'Forces get ready for Information War' The Indian Express, February 23, 2003.