

The Larger Cause of National Defence

The CDS and Defence Reforms

Lt General (Retd) Gautam Banerjee, PVSM, AVSM, YSM



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3, San Martin Marg | Chanakyapuri | New Delhi - 110021
Tel: 011-24121764 | Fax: 011-66173415
E-mail: info@vifindia.org
Website: www.vifindia.org

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Lieutenant General (Retd) Gautam Banerjee, PVSM, AVSM, YSM is a former Chief of Staff of Central Command and Commandant of the Officer's Training Academy, Chennai. He has been a long standing member of the strategic think tank, the VIF. Author of 10 books and over a hundred papers on defence matters, Gen Banerjee is currently the Editor of the Foundation.

The Larger Cause of National Defence: The CDS and Defence Reforms

Abstract

The landmark step of the Indian Government's appointment of CDS in the nation's defence establishment cannot be just one conclusive endeavour. The CDS and the institution that the incumbent would represent would be just one 'cog', albeit a central one, in the management of national defence. Thus, just as an array of mechanisms are needed to make the cog function, the institution of the CDS too would need a conducive ground – an eco-system, to wit – to perform in the best manner desired. Indeed, in order reap the advantages of the institution of the CDS to its full measure, there have to be rebuilt the entire system of our defence management – defence reforms, in short.

There are many hurdles to cross in our endeavour to reform our system of national defence to meet the parameters of the nation's military threats, technological and industrial capacities and fiscal affordability. These hurdles had stymied the reform process for so long and so effectively, that only a concerted mission from the incumbent hierarchy, with involvement of the strategic community, can breach the wall of ignorance and stray motivations that has so far ruled the system of national defence.

Taking due cognisance of domestic obligations as well as the courses adopted in advanced militaries, this Paper articulates a sublime vision of defence reforms that would protect the national interests – affordably and efficiently.

Introduction

The Government's Pioneering Pledge

The Government's recent announcement over creation of a Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) is truly a concrete step towards initiation of the long pending *defence reforms*. The announcement has been received by the nation with much hope and enthusiasm. Most of the discussion and debate over the issue among the strategically aware fraternity as well as the media have, however, been dwelling more on superficialities rather than the substances of national defence. Conversely, unlike other mature democracies faced with defence challenges, here in India there is little debate, confabulation or open brainstorming among the State functionaries, academia, domain professionals and think-tanks over such a fundamental issue as the larger ambit of *defence reforms*. What serious discussion over defence reforms that take place inside the government and military circles, are restrained by hierarchical diktats and the usual bureaucratic escape syndromes of 'secrecy' and 'we know all' – howsoever ludicrous it might be in the modern world.

The institution of the CDS is a major upgrade in streamlining the nation's defence system. But it would be just one of the vital institutional components of the Ministry of Defence (MoD). More specifically, the CDS would but be a 'cog', albeit a pivotal one, in the mechanism of national defence – and a 'cog' alone cannot complete a matrix of mechanism. The institution of the CDS can enhance the nation's defence mechanism only if the rest of the system – 'eco-system' so to say – is correspondingly restructured and geared-up to seamlessly integrate it into the overall systemic order. Unless that arrangement is created, the structure of national defence would wobble in imbalance to spread confusion, disruption and destabilisation. Indeed, unless the institution of the CDS is dovetailed into a larger ambit of *defence reforms*, we would be distracting from the Government's end-state goals.

There is therefore an express need to be engaged in purposeful discussions over the fact that for the nation to reap the full benefits of the Government's path-breaking initiative, it would be necessary to undertake a profound restructure of the nation's entire defence sector.

Defence Reforms and its Linkage with the Institution of CDS

Defence reforms are imperative to foster *congruence* among the three divergent classes of undertakings of India's national defence, namely:-

- Articulation of the State and its people's political aspirations in the matrix of global power play. This of course is purely a matter of political domain.

- Spelling out the State's mandate to its military in ensuring the protection of the nation's sovereignty and territorial integrity. This responsibility assumes additional salience when the nation remains under perpetual threat from two powerful neighbours working in collusion.
- Finding ways to ensure that the above two undertakings are met within the fiscal capacity of the State.

The first of the State's above listed undertakings confines the competence of the CDS to an advisory role. In the second, role of the institution of the CDS is central. Whereas in respect of the third, on account of the intricacies of modern warfare, role of the institution of the CDS in finding the afore-stated *congruence* among the three divergences would be momentous. As a corollary, seamless integration of the CDS into the nation's defence mechanism must no doubt be an imperative that would be overlooked only at the cost of affordable national defence.

To that end, it would be worthwhile to delve into the salient aspects of defence reforms that would lead to effective integration of the institution of the CDS into the nation's defence mechanism. It is proposed to conduct the discussion in following parts:-

- **Part 1:** The Modern Concept of Management of National Defence
- **Part 2:** Management of National Defence in India
- **Part 3: Certain Fundamental Incongruence's and Imperatives**
- **Part 4:** A Template for Defence Reforms – I:-
 - ◇ Section 1: Operational Command and Control;
 - ◇ Section 2: Debate over Centrality of the Three Service Headquarters; and,
 - ◇ Section 3: Control of Training, Logistic and Reserve Forces
- **Part 5:** A Template for Defence Reforms – II
- **Conclusion**

Part 1

The Modern Concept of Management of National Defence

Three Pillars of National Defence

It is universally accepted that a nation's military power rests upon three pillars, one of which is military-predominant in character while the other two are driven by diverse fields of civilian competence. These three pillars are:-

- One, military forces composed from the three Services of the '*military institution*', which are administered through military-specific policies and laws.
- Two, the '*defence establishment*' consisting of defence bureaucracy, procurement system, estates management, science and technology development facilities and military hardware production industry.
- Three, the nation's *dual-use infrastructure* which provide for the fundamental plank on which defence capabilities are nurtured – to wit, scientific institutions, internal law and order, transportation, telecommunication, energy, food, education, health and employment.

Notably, each of these three pillars are ruled by divergent conditions in terms of organisational goals, infrastructural requirements, core competencies, management practices and performance targets. For example, the first two are integral parts of the Defence Ministry while the third falls in multi-ministerial sectors. Further, as dictated by their distinct roles, cultural norms, organisational regulations and executive practices, the first of the above mentioned pillars is distinguished by its purely military character, while the other two are more or less in civilian domain. Indeed, both work towards a common goal, that is, to foster a regime of effective and affordable *national defence*. Consequently, to meet these two diverse and specialised characteristics, defence ministries of advanced nations of the world have, after arduous studies and experimentations, structured their nation's higher defence management into two distinct branches – or departments. For clarity in further discussion, we may refer to these two branches as the '*Military Institution*' and the '*Defence Establishment*' respectively.

Already in place more or less in India's Defence Ministry in form if not in content, the current structure would need to be streamlined in tune with renewed conceptualisations, experimentations and practices, and adopted for the benefit of effective and affordable national defence. Appropriately, India's long pending defence reforms must begin over such a footing.

Obligations of Political Management of National Defence

Application of military force to seek political ends is the most crucial – exacting, risk-prone and irreversibly decisive – responsibility for any nation's decision makers. Promulgation of such a mandate is made in the form of 'political directives' that the nation's military institution is required to uphold regardless of the sacrifices and costs that might ask.

In upholding the political directive, the strategic application of military force and its tactical articulation in combat require exclusive professionalism in the art and science of warfare. Therefore, that 'call' has to be responded to by those who are 'commissioned', trained and equipped by the State for that purpose. In other words, even if framing of political direction and its military application have to be undertaken in exclusive domains – the former by the political leadership and the latter by military professionals – the two functions are intrinsically inter-wined and convergent. Thus at the point of delivery, it is impossible to separate the process of defence policy-making from the state of military preparedness. The purpose of reiterating this obvious dictum is to point out that this understanding has so far not been heeded in the system that prevails in India.

In principle, the larger obligation of *defence management* rests upon the nation's political leadership for them to respond to the following responsibilities:-

- One, as mentioned above, the promulgation of an appropriate 'political directive' that is in tune with national goals, for the *military institution* to orient its strategic endeavours accordingly. That directive spells out the desired political 'end-state' to act as a beacon for the military leadership to plan appropriate strategies of force-application.
- Two, to orient the rest of the *defence establishment* to conform to their assigned roles in the nation's defence preparedness. Indeed, these roles have to be in tune with the strategic doctrines and tactical concepts by which the *military institution* commits itself to the furtherance of the political directive. Stimulation of true convergence among the various sectors of *defence establishment* towards their military-specific purpose is therefore a crucial part of the political leadership's charter. Indeed, that charter extends to participation of the entire civilian sector in the promotion of national defence.
- Three, making decisions and framing policies to marshal the nation's resources and so to provide for the right war wherewithal for the *military institution* in terms of men, military hardware and logistic back up for prosecution of war plans in accordance with the political directive.

Obviously therefore, in terms of variety and quantum of activities, *defence management* at the political level has more to do with foresighted build-up of defence manpower, infrastructure and arms industry. That such build up have to be contrived in tune with a diverse range of operations of war, sciences and technologies, and long gestation for manufacturing industries – all of which call for high fiscal investments – renders the matter of political management of national defence a responsibility of deliberate farsightedness. Besides, understanding of the extra-ordinary cerebral make-up of the soldiery and upholding the hoary covenant of state-soldier relationship are equally important responsibilities for the nation's helmsmen.

Two Complementary Sectors of National Defence

As it has been universally found, in the modern era of strategic management it is necessary to distinguish a nation's defence structure into two complementary sectors. For the sake of right focus, we have already distinguished these two by the description of the '*military institution*' and the '*defence establishment*' respectively. Thus the monolithic defence sector of the past stands bifurcated into two sectors. Needless to state, functional inter-dependencies between the two is built-in to finally converge at the delivery end of an all-inclusive military-civil-industry joint endeavour.

In formal conceptualisation, these two sectors of national defence may be defined as follows:-

- **The Military Institution.** The *military institution* represents a unique organisation that is dedicated to the 'call' for preparation, posturing and prosecution of warfare in order to perform the role of a nation's ultimate leverage of political power. To that purpose, the military institution remains wedded to its excruciatingly demanding role that the State 'commissions' it for. Accordingly, it nurtures its soldiery to engage in warfare across a wide spectrum of strategies and tactics to protect the most excruciating aspects a nation's cause.
- **The Defence Establishment.** The description of *defence establishment* conforms to the vast range of quasi-military charters of defence preparedness that have to be performed through military-dedicated and dual-use organisations manned mostly by civilian personnel of exclusive expertise. Obviously, management of the *defence establishment* requires realisation of indigenous technological competencies, industrial resources, fiscal capacities and political ambitions in order to deliver the requisite war wherewithal to the *military institution* in terms of quality, quantity and time-lines, for the latter to respond to the cause of national defence.

In India, the *defence establishment* would encompass the defence bureaucracy in the Ministry of Defence (MoD), the Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO), various Ordnance Factories (OF), Defence-specific Public Sector Undertakings (DPSU), the Department of Defence Estates (DDE), the private armament industry and dual-use infrastructure like transportation, supplies, information technology (IT), communications etc.

Having set out the parameters for further discussion, we may next proceed to recount the process by which India's national defence has been managed so far.

Part 2

Management of National Defence in India

Political Directions on National Defence: The CCS

Formal constitution of an apex level political body, duly counselled by competent professionals, to deliberate upon the task of national security is a universally adopted practice. Promulgation of the appropriate mandate for the nation's military institution to suitably organise itself, duly supported with allocation of the due structural and fiscal provisions, dwells upon that constitutional body. In the Indian system, there is the 'Cabinet Committee for Security' (CCS) to fulfil that role. It is a committee of decision making politicians having the counsel of professionals of due competent in the various fields of national security. Indeed, in past occasions, the political leadership has shown strategic maturity in handling the 1965 and 1971 Wars, the Sri Lanka, Kargil and 2001-02 'Parakram' Operations, and the process of nuclear weaponisation - notwithstanding debates, in hindsight, regarding the end-states achieved.

Defence Decision Support System: The NSC

To advise the CCS, there is an empowered body of grand strategists referred to as the 'National Security Council' (NSC), a 'National Security Advisor' (NSA) and consultative bodies in the form of the 'National Security Advisory Board' (NSAB) and the 'Strategy Policy Group' (SPG). The national level intelligence work is attended to by the 'Intelligence Coordinating Group', which is responsible for tasking and coordination among various intelligence agencies. Management of the nuclear force is organised under a 'National Command Authority' (NCA), which is made up of a 'Political Council' and an 'Executive Council', and supported by a dedicated Strategy Programme Staff to articulate the intended nuclear posture.

In April 2018, an empowered cross-department decision-making mechanism has been created by the Government in the form of a 'Defence Planning Committee' (DPC) with the express purpose of facilitating «comprehensive» planning for the defence forces in dealing with India's emerging security.

National defence decision making at the apex level, in tune with the State's priorities, is therefore well taken care of.

Management of National Defence: The MoD

At the next tier, an empowered policy-making body is needed to translate the political mandate, for *military institution* to find an efficient mechanism for national defence -in terms of the right balance between organisational architecture, force-composition, equipment profile and professionally trained and motivated personnel. In developed nations, this function is performed by their Ministries of

Defence or equivalent set up. These Ministries promulgate the nation's defence policies through issuance of formal *national security strategies*, regular undertakings of *strategic defence reviews* and outlining *strategic guidelines* for the military leadership as well as the defence bureaucracy to follow. Similarly, this policy-making body guides the rest of the *defence establishment* to be truly responsive to the material and cognitive requirements of the *military institution*. Needless to state, formal participation of military professionals in the above mentioned functions of the national defence apparatus should be mandatory. But that is not the case in India - so far.

... the first step of defence reforms would be to restructure, firstly, the MoD at the policy-making level, and secondly, the three Services and various department of the defence establishment at the executive levels ...

In India, the MoD, manned by a bureaucracy and headed by a Raksha Mantri (RM) attends to that responsibility; astute no doubt, neither have the strategic expertise and experience of military functions. In theory, the CCS, the rest of the security apparatus and the MoD, all have the option of 'inviting' professional military advice, but that choice remains with those who might not always appreciate that necessity. Absence of formal military participation at the policy-making level leads to in-optimal harness of the nation's defence, intelligence and industrial assets for the formulation of military-specific task-tables at the MoD level. Similarly, the absence of structured involvement of the Ministries of External Affairs (MEA), Home Affairs (MHA) and Finance in defence policy making is filled up through *ad hoc* means which might be, if at all, cobbled up from situation to situation. Obviously, in matters of national defence, professional advise 'invited' from 'visiting fellows' cannot be expected to do justice to the complex cause.

As a result of these anomalies, when it comes to the policy making level, translation of apex level decisions on matters of national defence is attended to in an unstructured and situation-specific consultative mechanism. The MoD, at its best, performs merely as a post office to attend to the staff work associated with projections made by the three Services and the various defence establishments on their capital, revenue, material and personnel management schemes. At its worst, the MoD invokes 'red tape' and 'cost-cutting' ideas to deflect professionally adjudged projections. That, in fact, is the reason behind many of the deficiencies in India's management of national defence, starting with the inability to promulgate a formal *national security strategy* and ending at perpetuation of a disjointed *military force-structure*.

Domains of Defence Policy Application: Service Headquarters and Defence Departments

At the third tier of policy-articulation and implementation mechanism, there are the distinct domains of the three Service Headquarters of the *military institution* and various Departments and Directorate Generals of *defence establishments* to attend to the functions of executive level policy-articulation and implementation. The three branches of the defence services have their dedicated intelligence, finance and such paraphernalia, and join hands in tri-service synergy only in exceptions rather than as a rule. Similarly, in the defence procurement agency, various defence-dedicated establishments and the defence industrial sector, the management role is more or less performed 'in-house'. Defence policies are therefore made more by consensus rather than in conjunction.

In other words, at the third tier of defence management, the three Services of the *military institution* on the one hand and the various domains of the *defence establishment* on the other -notwithstanding their professional competence - exercise excessive inner autonomy, bordering on self-centrality, to conduct their business in a manner that their aspirations, rather than the overall cause of national defence, play a larger role. The express need to reform of these hierarchies in tune with the nation's political-economic-industrial conditions and necessities of the modern era defence management must therefore be the call of times.

The inference is clear: while the matter of *national security* at the political decision making level is adequately attended to, albeit sans integral military advice, at the next level, that is the policy-making MoD level, its translation into the nation's *defence preparedness* suffers from structural and procedural deficiencies. Appropriately therefore, the first step of defence reforms would be to restructure, firstly, the MoD at the policy-making level, and secondly, the three Services and various department of the defence establishment at the executive levels.

... India's huge defence sector is afflicted with as many voids as there are redundancies, a situation that breeds operational hollowness for war; besides, it weakens the prospects of military diplomacy and arms trade in peace – accrual of dividends form defence investments, to wit ...

In delving into the abovementioned restructure of the defence management system, the first step would be to identify, in the following Part, certain key anomalies in the present system and the imperatives thereof.

Part 3

Certain Fundamental Incongruence's and Imperatives

Imperatives of Joint-Ministerial Functions

To deal with the challenges of *national defence* there is the MoD which is responsible to ensure that the armed forces have the training, equipment and institutional back-up that is necessary to fulfil their mandate within an affordable budget. As for management of external threats, the MEA assumes significance as a 'lead agency', more or less, just as the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) does when the nation's integrity is threatened by externally aided insurgency - justifiably so. These ministries function with the back-up from over a dozen internal agencies and interact with various strategic partner nations, the aim being to protect, in the realm of international power-play, the security, independence and interests of the country.

Deliberate and joint - not just collaborative - function between the four key Ministries, however, is limited to occasional interactions at the apex level when discussions are dominated by political considerations and diplomatic parameters. In-depth evaluation of the capacity of the nation's *military institution* and productivity of its *defence establishment* to meet the political aim do not figure in such confabulations. In effect therefore, confabulations over the nation's military capability - and its corollary, military options - stand conditional to four separate, virtually autonomous and often anomalous factors, that is:-

- One, as to what external threat the MEA may envisage from its own angle;
- Two, what resources the MoD may find to prepare its defence forces;
- Three, as to what intelligence, police and other civil support may the MHA provide in that endeavour; and,
- Four, as to what fiscal support might be forthcoming from the Finance Ministry.

Imperatives for the Twin Determinants of National Security

In the contemporary dispensation, preservation of national security must be built upon the twin determinants of *national defence policy* and *internal security policy*. This is so because warfare by various alternate means has emerged as an enticing trend. The purpose of protecting the nation's integrity would therefore be contingent upon maintaining internal stability against export of insurgency or proxy war, demographic infiltration, rise of radical inclinations, people's revolt and lawless mobocracy. Consequently, absolute segregation between external and internal threats to national security is neither always practical nor is it synergic in effort.

Conversely, in the Indian system, these two pillars of national security stand tilting away from each other, joining up only in exceptions to deal with exigencies, and then reverting to their own cocoon of *status quo*.

Imperative of Synergic Management of Security Forces

In dealing with various classes of threats to national integrity, there have been certain formal assignments of roles to the Central Intelligence Agencies and the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF). However, driven by distractions in favour of departmental autonomy over the post-1971 decades, optimum operational level synergy of their substantial capabilities with the nation's defence forces has been diluted. As a result, the nation's internal security mechanism remains at half-cock in undertaking of counter-insurgency and counter-terror operations, leaving the threats to simmer even when recessed – the Maoist rebellion being a glaring example. At the other end, military operations are planned and conducted in superfluous assimilation, many times even total exclusion, of the CAPF.

Ultimately, the exchequer lands up paying the cost of all such anomalies; indeed, the contrast with the synergic system of regular, reserve, militia and police forces that is operative in US, UK, Russia and China, is glaring. Formal linkage between national defence and internal security, and *inter alia*, effective assimilation of the CAPF into military operational duties, as had been the case earlier, would bring the nation better dividends in terms of military deterrence, posturing and prosecution of warfare. Indeed, that purpose of synergic association of the CAPF with the military institution must be met through a reformed national *defence management* structure and its system of *defence policy-making*.

... reforms in *military institution* would be aimed at fostering a culture of innovative strategising in application of military power .. in concert with military strategy, force-structure and fiscal, techno-industrial resources committed to national defence ... For the *defence establishment*, the purpose would be to render credibility to defence acquisitions, development and production of war-quality hardware, better management of military assets ...

Fallouts of the Incongruence's

The above incongruities in management of national defence are but just the ones which are less discussed – the list is not exhaustive – it is also beyond the scope of this paper.

In sum, while the purpose of conjoined government level strategising and organising for national defence remains but tentative at the CCS level downwards, the decision as to what military necessities are need to be acceded to remains but contingent on bureaucratic interpretations from professionally diverse hierarchies. The result is that India's huge defence sector is afflicted with as many voids as there are redundancies, a situation that breeds operational hollowness for war; besides, it weakens the prospects of military diplomacy and arms trade in peace – accrual of dividends from defence investments, to wit.

We have so far discussed the broad parameters of defence reforms needed to strengthen our national defence capabilities. The stage is thus set to delve into the possible modalities of applying these reforms. To that end, the next Part offers a template to proceed with the process of comprehensive defence reforms.

Part 4

A Template for Defence Reforms - I

The Purpose of Apex Level Defence Reforms

Ultimately, the thrust of management of national defence at all the levels as elaborated above has to be directed at finding answers to technological and fiscal challenges that constrain indigenous innovation of customised military strategies, and accordingly tune into efficient management of military personnel, forces and hardware. Strengthening the bureaucracy's stakes in defence management, incentivising defence research and industry to bring relief from import-dependence, and offer of special provisions for development of a modern defence infrastructure – all under the spirit of 'military necessity' – have to be intrinsic to that reformation effort.

In that endeavor, leaving the apex political body of the CCS to mandate the overall direction of *national security* endeavours, the MoD would continue to:-

- Firstly, translate the political mandate on *national defence* into all round defence preparedness;
- Secondly, exercise overarching control over the *military institution* as well as the rest of the *defence establishment*; and,
- Thirdly, marshal and coordinate all inter-ministerial and inter-sectorial resources which go to strengthen *national security* in general and *national defence* in particular.

... modern military institutions cannot be managed efficiently, effectively and affordably by three autonomous and self-centric Services functioning in splendid autonomy ... possession of an efficient, modern and affordable military institution cannot proceed in a cost-and-time bound manner but through the institution of CDS system, the last word being that an astute institution of CDS, besides optimising the nation's defence capability, would release the nation from the sufferings of archaic and wasteful processes of defence planning ...

For the *military institution* in particular, the reform would be aimed at fostering a culture of innovative strategising in application as well as posturing of military power. That would require joint-force centric rather than just arm and weapon centric modernisation, adoption of comprehensive rather than just incremental force re-structure, and reconciliation of the disconcert between military strategy, military force-structure and fiscal, technological and industrial resources committed to national defence.

Similarly, for the rest of the *defence establishment*, the purpose would be to render credibility to their undertakings of defence acquisitions, development and production of war-quality hardware, better maintenance of stocks of war-materials, management of defence estates and execution of construction works – not just for organisational self-perpetuation, but for the sole benefit of its military user.

Proposition for Comprehensive Defence Reforms

We may now elaborate an outline structure of the MoD that could foster the aforementioned three pillars of competencies. The point to note is that while the imperatives of reforms must be sacrosanct, neither the proposed nomenclatures nor the charters need to be so; formalisation of these aspects have to be a follow-up matter of micro-deliberations, implementation and adjustments based on hands-on experiences which are to be managed under the two distinct defence departments as mentioned above.

To begin with, the MoD is proposed to be broadly structured as indicated at Figure 1 below:-

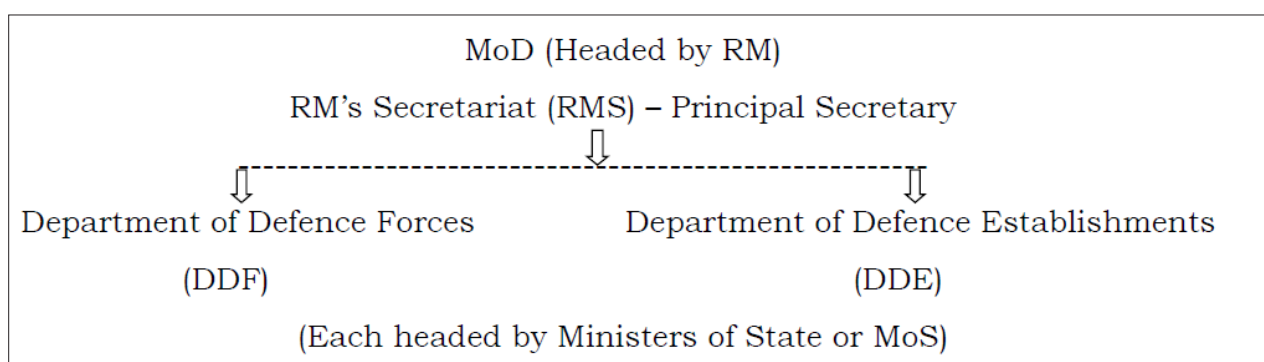


Figure 1: The MoD

The proposition for defence reforms begins with formal classification of two distinct but goal-congruent departments under the MoD, each headed by a Minister of State (MoS), with the RM presiding and in full control over all affairs of *national defence*. The RM's secretarial services would be performed by the Raksha Mantri's Secretariat (RMS), headed by a Principle Secretary. This Secretariat would be staffed by Services professionals as well as a stream of defence-dedicated bureaucrats complementing each other's professional expertise and executive experience. These departments are described as:-

- The Department of *Defence Forces*, or the DDF;
- The Department of *Defence Establishments*, or the DDE.

Propositions regarding the two afore-stated Departments are discussed in the following paragraphs. It would be seen that in the overall context, the fundamentals of defence reforms must rest upon:-

- Intimate civil-military cooperation at the decision making level;
- Integration among the three Services at the conceptual and implementation level;
- Tri-Service autonomy with operational level jointness in execution of military plans.

Elaboration of the Proposed Template for Defence Reforms

No matter what be the reasons genuine or contrived to resist the change from comfort to unfamiliar zone, modern military institutions cannot be managed efficiently, effectively and affordably by three

autonomous and self-centric Services functioning in splendid autonomy. Indeed, for the nation's possession of an efficient, modern and affordable military institution to happen, the only course left is to break-free of nearly two decades of post-Kargil log-jam and move forward in the quest of defence reforms shaped by modern tenets of defence management. That undertaking, however, cannot proceed in a cost-and-time bound manner but through the institution of CDS system, the last word being that *an astute institution of CDS, besides optimising the nation's defence capability, would release the nation from the sufferings of archaic and wasteful processes of defence management.*

Of necessity, the parameters of the proposed Defence Reforms as related to the DDF would have to be discussed in two distinct sections, as listed below:-

- Section 1: Operational Command and Control;
- Section 2: Debate over Centrality of the Three Service Headquarters; and,
- Section 3: Control of Training, Logistic and Reserve Forces.

Section 1: Operational Command and Control under the DDF

Defence Preparedness and Strategic Planning

Within the ambit of the political mandate vested upon the *military institution* and exercised through the RM and his MoS, the proposition envisages the DDF to superintend, through its functional arms - the Integrated Service Headquarters (IHQ), its institution of the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) and the three Service Headquarters - all matters specific to management of the military forces and those related to direct prosecution of war. To elaborate, this Department (DDF), with the CDS as its professional head as well as the Government's top military advisor, and with intimate participation of the three Services Headquarters as well as the Headquarters of Joint Operational Commands, would attend to apex level aspects of integrated tri-service prioritisation, implementation and monitoring of various modernisation schemes as well as integrated military force-application in war and peace at the national level – the *operational functions* of the MoD in short.

Through the three Service Headquarters, the DDF would also exercise broad supervisory functions related to recruitment-to-release of personnel, training, upkeep and modernisation of field formations as well as static institutions, equipment management, operational logistics, fiscal management and creation and maintenance of infrastructural assets that are dedicated to the direct prosecution of military operations – the *force management functions* of the MoD, in short.

Use of the term 'institution of CDS' is noteworthy as it refers to an *institution* in which professionals and systems of diverse experiences and roles are forged together to function towards a singular objective. Besides the intimate association of the three Service Chiefs, the institution of CDS is to be manned by experienced *tri-service staff* at the decision-making level as well as by *service-specific staff* at the directional level. In the interest of smooth and efficient functioning, the executive level functions would remain for the Service Headquarters and their directional level hierarchies, for these to undertake the direction, implementation and supervision of their service-specific decision-making.

In this arrangement therefore, joint-staff work at the Headquarters CDS is predominant in 'broad decision-making' and translating 'broad decisions' to 'general directions' at the joint-services domain.

The follow up Service and Arm specific decision-making and executive directives would continue to remain vested upon the Service Headquarters' charter.

Exercise of Operational Control by the DDF

The proposition envisages that the Integrated Service Headquarters (IHQ) would be a tri-service institution, made up of a CDS at its head. Thus while ministerial control over this Department would be exercised by the RM and the MoS, a professional tri-service institution of the CDS would be attending to the apex level responsibilities of translating the nation's defence mandate into integrated military policy-making and implementation of these. Besides, it would provide for the secretariat of the MoS, and even if staffed mainly by military professionals, would also have the required numbers of defence-dedicated civil servants, defence scientists, finance managers and similar experts at appropriate levels of hierarchy to meet the needs of quasi-military domain expertise and experiences.

The CDS would be the Government's topmost military advisor and a professional head to plan and direct the forces in war according to the military mandate enshrined through a *national security strategy*. Thus within the military hierarchy, the IHQ and its institution of the CDS, would be the highest policy making body on *joint-services* matters - obviously, with due participation of the three Services Headquarters headed by the Service Chiefs. A salient charter of the institution of the CDS would therefore be to carry out integrated long-term perspective planning for defence preparedness. That would imply formal designation of operational tasks to the three Services, prioritisation of these at the national platform and corresponding appropriation of resources, including the related budgetary and capital procurement matters. To handle the complex charter of the IHQ, there would also have to be two Vice Chiefs of Defence Staff (VCDS), one to attend to joint operational staff functions and training, and the other to oversee joint military logistics and acquisition plans.

In war situations, the IHQ (CDS) would command and control the tri-service joint operational employment of military forces. The operational plans would be executed in the field by joint force headquarters with the forces allocated to them by the Service Headquarters as specified by the CDS. Contrary to the reservations professed over the CDS institution, this system is not much different from the present system wherein the Service Headquarters allocate tasks and forces for the Commands and field formations to execute the plans. Doubtlessly, the key advantage of the CDS system comes from committed and synergic tri-service force-participation - economy of resources to be precise.

Next, the three Service Headquarters, headed by the respective Service Chiefs, would continue to conceptualise, design, organise, build, maintain and train their service-specific war capabilities. These Headquarters would continue to define the futuristic vision in shaping war strategies for their Services, and organise the corresponding force-structuring, training, and personnel and motivational aspects. In operations, these Headquarters would allocate their forces to mission oriented joint forces headquarters. Accordingly, besides shaping and structuring their specific Services, the three existing Service Headquarters would be the functional arms of the IHQ(CDS). Indeed, in all these endeavours, there would be the key role of the Service Headquarters, for these to be the fountain-head of planning and participation in integrated operational tasks.

Lastly, the above conditions cannot be diluted; diminishing the role of the institution of CDS in order to get past the systemic fear and resistance over the change would be a profanity that would set the system back from the very purpose of defence reforms.

Salience of Single-Service Professionalism

Notably, a key factor which dictates the parameters of inter-service jointness is that modern warfare requires life-time experiences in optimal exploitation of the complex characteristics of the numerous war-inventories and astute tactical harness of these in the field. Therefore, for the joint-command to perform successfully, there would have to be instituted a mutuality of right balance and judicious reconciliation between nurturing single-service domain expertise on the one end, and experience of joint command, control and staff work on the other. This kind of subtle delineation is necessary to cater to the complexities of each of the elements of modern military institutions and the domain expertise that is needed to exploit these elements to the maximum advantages in war. Indeed, this is a system that has been found, after many trials, most workable in advanced militaries.

... exploitation of modern and highly complex military systems consisting of hardware, support accessories, logistics and fine-tuned battle procedures that evolve through practical experiences require long years of Service and Arm specific training and practice ... while the *integrated* battle plans would be orchestrated through *joint force-composition*, the single-service land, sea and air components would execute their part of the overall undertaking through the expression of their Service and Arm specific expertise and experiences...

Further, to avoid redundancies, ambiguous ownership and clash of demands in joint-services environment of war and peace, it is necessary to formulate new mechanisms, processes and procedures to regulate the management and control of multi-purpose military assets like multiple-use weapons and equipment, support services and logistic infrastructure. No doubt, these factors require serious consideration and experimentation in terms of joint as well as service-specific training, cadre management, exposure to experience and career planning of personnel, followed by formally conjoined harness of multiple-use military wherewithal.

Finally, the facts to appreciate are that:-

- Firstly, in the contemporary political-military-fiscal dispensation, the power of effective national defence can only be afforded through integrated defence and joint-services approach;
- Secondly, for the above condition to work effectively, it is necessary to adopt the joint-services command and service-specific control system;
- Thirdly, the institution of CDS is fundamental to the congruence between political mandate, fiscal allocation and overall military capability.
- Fourthly, it is banal to suggest that the CDS system would rub against the existing 'tried and tested' single-service autonomy. As experienced in modern militaries, Defence Reforms would actually boost the salience of single-service domains.

New Definitions and Characteristics

In devising own course for defence restructure into a system of joint-services command, and taking cue from universal experiences of defence reforms, it may be useful to define a set of terminologies for restructured military command, as follows:-

- A **‘Joint Services Operational Commands’** (JSOC) are to be tri-service command headquarters organised for conduct of joint warfare in all dimensions. Its extent of operations is defined, not by fixed geographic or regional boundaries, but by the prevalence of a strategic situation. Therefore, to secure such military objectives as mandated at the MoD and DDF level in response to a strategic situation, the CDS makes mission-specific allocation of war resources for the JSOC to conduct operations within a boundary defined, while the Service Headquarters provide these forces duly organised, trained and equipped for deployment in operational role. (As it would be seen later, creation of one JSOC has been suggested by amalgamation of Headquarters Central Army, Southern Naval and Central Air Force Commands to form one Headquarters Joint Services Operational Command (JSOC) and one Headquarters Joint Services Regional Command (JSRC) from the existing set of 17 Command Headquarters of the three Services. Subsequently, three more Headquarters JSOCs may be raised to cater for multi-front war, including the expanse of the Indian Ocean).
- **‘Joint Services Regional Commands’** (JSRC) are theatre level regional command headquarters of joint-services composition organised to exercise command and control over all military assets, institutions and installations which may be located in their regional or geographical jurisdiction. Thus all forces of the three Services located in a particular readjusted and redefined geographic region are to be controlled by the designated Headquarters JSRCs. Obviously, there would also be exceptions and cross-orbat (‘orbat’ meaning order of battle) of forces due to operational tasking as well as administrative convenience. Simply put, JSRCs are to be the tri-service incarnation of India’s existing single-service regional command headquarters. (As it would be elucidated later, creation of one Headquarters JSRC has been suggested out of the abovementioned amalgamation of Headquarters Central Army, Southern Naval and Central Air Force Commands).
- **‘Strategic Reserve Forces Commands’** (SRFC) are single-service command headquarters which have under them certain regular fighting formations to act as *strategic reserves*. To keep within the ceiling of national resources allocated at the disposal of the military institution and yet retain flexibility of need based deployment, it would make sense to maintain a reckonable part of the nation’s total regular formations as *strategic reserves* – say, one third. Further, the proposition also entails reactivation of the institutionalised system of time bound mobilisation, when necessary, of professionally skilled and periodically refreshed former servicemen who are released lately from ‘colour service’. These ‘reservists’ are to be formed into national reserve units and formations which remain sequestered at peace time. Both, *strategic reserves* and the *national reserve forces* are to be managed and controlled by the respective Service Headquarters through their dedicated SRFCs.

Operational control over the JSOC and JSRCs is exercised directly by the institution of CDS while that over the SRFCs, unless deployed under war situations, is exercised by the concerned single Service Headquarters. But in the overall context, each Service Headquarters have control as well as responsibility for the state of operational and logistic preparedness in respect of all the forces as well as the support assets and infrastructure dedicated to their Service.

Proposition of an Outline Organisation for DDF

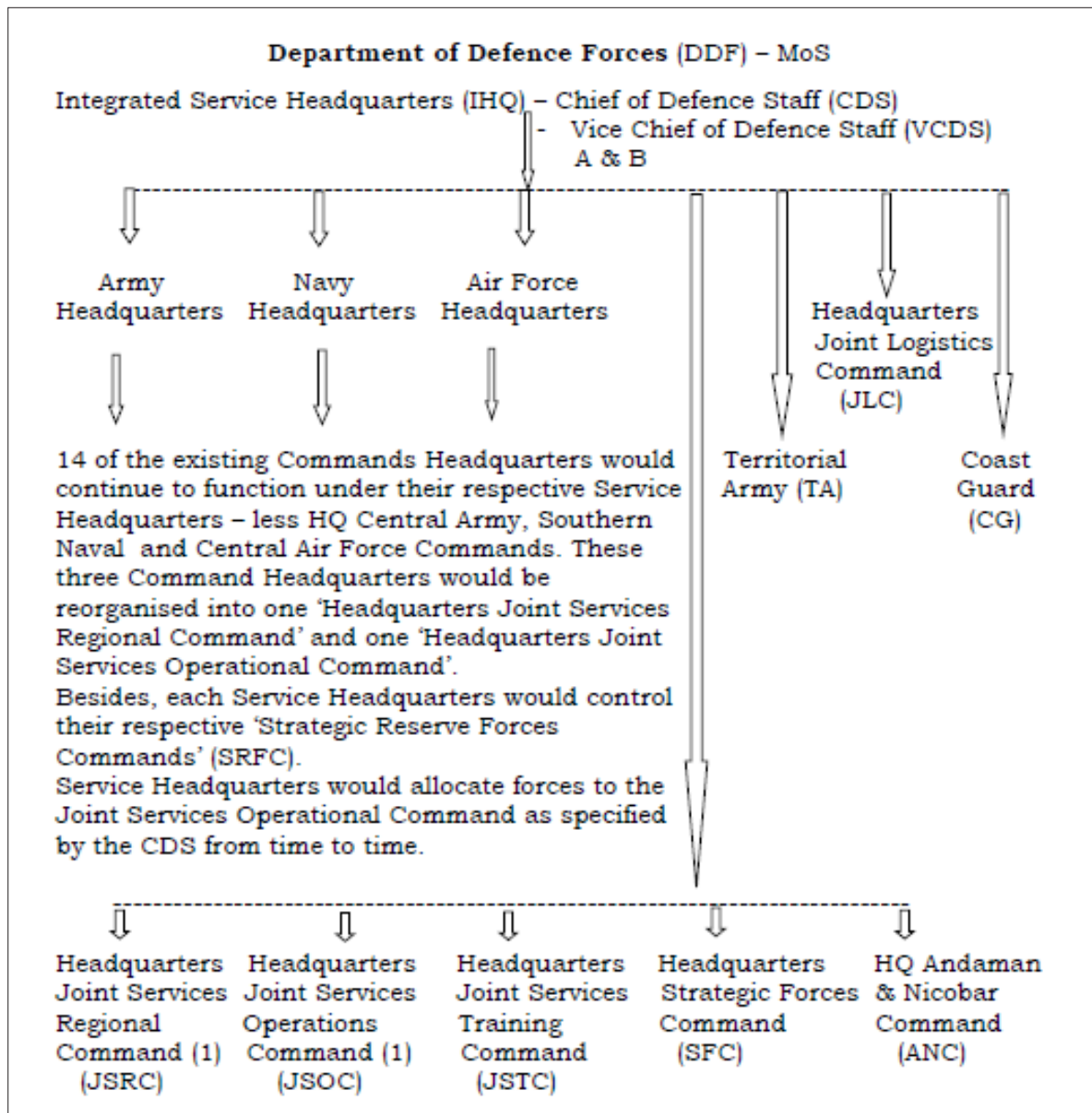


Figure 2 : The DDF

(Note: Certain more command headquarters would have to be raised to meet the imperatives of modern warfare, for example, special forces command, IW or cyber command, space command, national defence university etc.)

An outline structure of the proposed DDF, which may form the basis of discussion and for further evolution may be considered as depicted at Figure 2. The figure is self-explanatory; it is also followed up with detailed explanations in subsequent paragraphs.

The outline structure depicted here is indicative of the certain keynote features, namely:-_

- One, integration of the institution of CDS;
- Two, operationalisation of Joint Service Command Headquarters;
- Three, upholding the sanctity of Service Headquarters and,
- Four, upholding professional as well as cadre protection goals.

Let us examine the implementation of these features, as depicted in Figure 2, in sequence.

The proposition for institutionalisation of the CDS System begins with amalgamation of Headquarters Central Army, Southern Naval and Central Air Force Commands to form one each of Headquarters Joint Services Operational Command (JSOC) and Headquarters Joint Services Regional Command (JSRC) from the existing set of 17 Command Headquarters of the three Services, leaving, for the present, the rest of the 14 as these are. Besides, there are the propositions to raise additional command headquarters to exercise control over the new formations to be raised according to the requirements of modern era warfare.

Proposed Stages of Restructure to Joint Services Commands

Indeed, for a smooth changeover to the joint-services system of management of the military institution, there have to be the need to limit unsavoury fallouts while negotiating through many systemic hurdles; political, bureaucratic and military fixations make this task even more challenging. To chart through these hurdles in a deliberate, gradual and controlled manner, we may propose the adoption of a mixed approach to manage the change in Stages as elaborated in following paragraphs.

Stage 1

- One, amalgamation of Headquarters Central Army, Southern Naval and Central Air Commands, to form two command level headquarters, that is, one each of HQJSOC and HQJSRC, to begin functioning directly under the CDS.
- Two, assignment to the JSOC, even if tentative or flexible, of an operational role, and orbating certain formations under that one HQJSOC, for this headquarters to develop in joint-service orchestration of combat expertise and experience, directly under the CDS.
- Three, orbating of all existing single-service assets that are located in the geographical jurisdiction of the existing Central Army, Southern Naval and Central Air Regional Commands under one HQ Central JSRC. Command and control over all the tri-service military assets located within the realigned inter-command boundary would thus be vested in this joint-service Headquarters, functioning directly under the CDS.
- Four, leaving out the three amalgamated command headquarters, the Services Headquarters may retain control over all the rest of their 14 single-service geographical or regional command headquarters and their subordinate formations.

Stage 2

- One, formal constitution of three HQ SRFC to function under each of the concerned Service Headquarters. These HQ SRFCs would exercise command and control over those *regular single-service formations* which are designated as *strategic reserve*. Besides, as discussed earlier, management of the *national reserve* forces before and after mobilisation would also vest upon the respective single-service HQ SRFCs.
- Two, phase wise amalgamation of rest of the 14 single-service geographical command headquarters and restructure of these into the required numbers of HQ JSRC - say, one each (or more) to be responsible for the Northern, Eastern, Southern and Western Theatres - besides there would be the already restructured HQ Central JSRC. As the restructuring proceeds, command and control of these JSRCs would be transferred to the CDS.
- Three, simultaneous raising of two more HQ JSOC - one to cater for the possibility of two-front war and another one to cater to strategic commitments in the Indian Ocean. Thus a total of three (or more) HQ JSOCs are to be raised to conduct operations in northern and eastern mountains, western plains and southern seas, directly under the CDS.
- Thereafter, it would be wise to allow the environment to condition itself over a period of five years or so, thus allowing the human resources to assimilate into new culture of joint command and control.

Military Force Application through Joint Services Commands

The first feature of this proposition is crucial. To begin with, it envisages the creation of one HQ JSOC and one HQ JSRC through amalgamation of one command headquarters each from the three Services. The JSOC, headed by a Commander-in-Chief, would be entrusted with operational command over a sensitive or any one of the 'hot' theatres which may be specified as necessary, and accordingly entrusted with command over certain orbated fighting formations from the three Services – for example, one or more of the Army's strike corps or Army Headquarters reserve formations and a complementary proportion of naval and air formations. Over time, as stated, three more HQ JSOC may be raised to cater for possible multi-theatre war in Northern, Eastern, Western and Southern Fronts.

... while at the Service and Command Headquarters levels the HQ JSOC and HQ JSRC may function as 'integrated' tri-service entities, the lower combat as well as static formations and units – e.g. corps, fleets, air bases - have to continue to function in service-specific modes, with built-in elements of other Services incorporated as necessary, much like as it is done today...

In similar manner, one HQ JSRC would also be raised from the abovementioned amalgamation of three existing command headquarters, and assigned the operational and logistic responsibilities of the same scope as it is exercised by the existing Central Army, Navy and Air Force Command Headquarters. Accordingly, the geographical extents of this Command would be redefined to conform to a common tri-service jurisdiction.

For the present, all 14 other single-service regional commands may to continue as these exist and continue to function under the respective Service Headquarters. Then at an appropriate time, the restructure would lead to amalgamation of the rest of the 14 single-service regional command headquarters to form a total of three (or more) joint-service HQ JSOCs, one for each theatre of operations; and two, a total of five (or more) HQ JSRCs, one each for the Northern, Eastern, Western and Southern Theatres, HQ Central JSRC already having been in place at the Central Theatre in the first instance. Besides, there would be the need to raise three single-service Headquarters Strategic Reserve Forces Commands (SRFC) to function under the respective Service Headquarters.

Then there would be the tri-service headquarters of the Joint Logistics Command (HQ JLC), the Joint Services Training Command (HQ JSTC), the Strategic Forces Command (SFC), and the Andaman & Nicobar Command (ANC), all functioning directly under the institution of the CDS. Further, as discussed later, certain additional numbers of command level headquarters would be also needed for management, command and control of multi-spectral warfare capabilities of the modern era like information warfare, and cyber, space and special forces.

After a period of five years or so, as the HQ JSOCs and HQ JSRCs find bearing, all the 17 odd top heavy and operationally semi-autonomous behemoths would get consolidated into the right numbers of Command Headquarters, most to function under the IHQ (CDS) and some under the Service Headquarter, all fully geared to prosecute joint-strategies under the conditions of modern warfare. A point to note here through experiences and examples from modern militaries is that even if the number of units, formations and controlling headquarters increase in tune with the modern requirements of warfare, these force accretions do not translate to manpower accretion. In modern warfare, synergic coordination of optimum force levels assumes centrality.

There is a perception among the layman strategists to point at the nation's huge military manpower and the high cost of maintaining these. It needs to be clarified that the military manpower is dictated by: firstly, obsolescence of military hardware; secondly, huge deficiencies in duly specified military inventories; and thirdly, the challenge of unending insurgencies – all these aggravated by unusually aggressive neighbours.

Imperatives of Pure Service-Specific Domain Professionalism

No doubt, managing the reconfiguration and restructure of existing single-service regional commands without upsetting continuity and effectiveness of organisational, operational and logistic balance would be a challenge humungous. To retain balance therefore, while the right numbers of HQ JSRC, each headed by its joint-services Commander-in-Chief, are created through amalgamation of two or more single-service regional headquarters, all the existing organisational tiers below the HQ JSRC would continue to retain their existing service-specific structures.

The single-service components of the HQ JSRCs would thus function under their respective erstwhile single-service command headquarters which are re-designated as the respective Field Army, Navy and Air Force Headquarters. Correspondingly, the appointment of the Command Chiefs of Staff may be re-designated as Commanders Field Army, Navy and Air Force. This is a crucial stipulation to meet the imperatives retaining operational balance during force-structuring - and that enjoins us to delineate the military nuances of the terms 'integration' and 'jointness'.

Astute exploitation of modern and highly complex military systems consisting of hardware, support accessories, logistics and fine-tuned battle procedures that evolve through practical experiences require long years of Service and Arm specific training and practice. Therefore, while the battle plans would be *integrated*, and orchestration of that plan would be carried out through *joint force-composition*, the single-service land, sea and air components would execute their part of the overall undertaking according to their service-specific battle drills, procedures, tactics and weapon-usage – in other words, through the expression of their Service and Arm specific expertise and experiences. The roles and tasks to be performed are to be assigned accordingly to one or more single-service components of the *joint forces* allocated to secure the objectives. To illustrate, destruction by fire power may be carried out by artillery, naval armament or air attacks either singly or jointly, each exploiting its available numbers and characteristic strengths in varying proportions depending upon the ruling conditions. This fact is also imperative in upholding career management of the personnel so as to maintain the salience of building up service-specific domain expertise over years of training and exercises, even while meeting the demand for adequate exposures to joint-service staff work.

To reiterate, to avoid unmanageable degree of systemic turmoil, disruption and cross-connection, it would be necessary to preserve the existing vertical hierarchies of single-service domains while horizontal inter-service linkages are established and mutual familiarity, confidence and dependability is built up. In other words, while at the Service and Command Headquarters levels the HQ JSOC and HQ JSRC may function as ‘integrated’ tri-service entities, the lower combat as well as static formations and units – e.g. corps, fleets, air bases – have to continue to function in service-specific modes, duly grouped with elements of other Services as necessary, much like as it is done today. The difference here would be that the apex level command authority over all of the tri-service regional command orbat vests upon one joint-services Commander-in-Chief. At the next level, each of the Service components would continue to function under the control of respective Field Army, Navy and Air Force Commanders, maybe in their existing single-service regional command headquarters locations. In this manner, while the system evolves and stabilises, disruption in the existing command, control, logistics, communications, and even location, accommodation and infrastructural facilities would be minimal. Only the infrastructure for the newly created joint-services Commanders-in-Chief’s office and secretariat would need to be created in each of the geographical regions.

In due course of time, the final organisation of the DDF is envisaged as depicted in Figure 3. It consists of five JSRCs, three SRFCs and four JSOCs, besides the other Command Headquarters (JLC, TA, JSTC, SFC, ANC, IW/Cyber, Special Forces and Space Commands).

Final Structure of the DDF

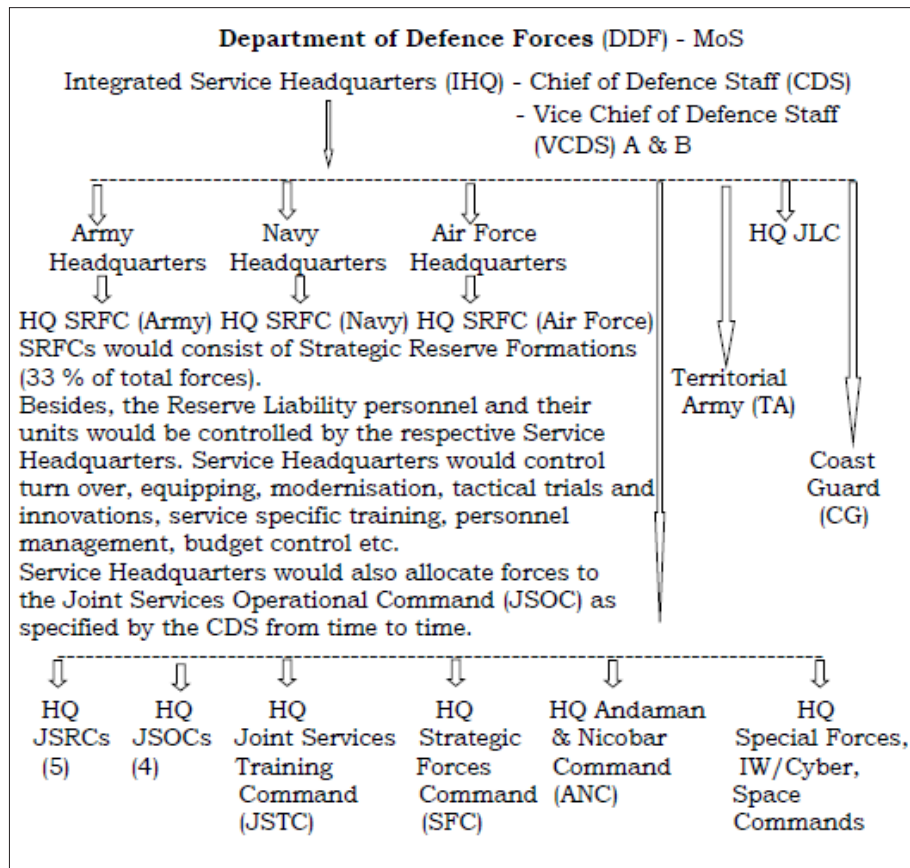


Figure 3 : The Final DDF

Before proceeding further, it would be in order to address the reservations against the proposition as it affects the roles and status of the three Service Headquarters and the Service Chiefs – such reservations have been, after all, the main cause for the long proposed reforms to be held up.

... examples of advanced militaries suggest that with control over the service-specific domains of turnover, training, equipping, modernisation, personnel management, logistic chains and installations, research and innovations, military technology and industrialisation, etc. - the centrality of the Service Headquarters' role cannot but gain more salience ...

Just as in the present system the Service Headquarters undertakes national level orchestration, preparatory and deployment functions, leaving the conduct of campaigning to single-service command headquarters, in the joint services command system too that arrangement would more or less continue...

Section 2: Debate over Centrality of the Three Service Headquarters

Redress of Apprehensions over Joint-Services Commands

In the Indian context, it is necessary to address the apprehensions of what is viewed as dilution of the roles and competencies of the single Service Headquarters in the joint-services dispensation and their

perceived 'loss' of operational flexibility and fiscal autonomy. As a corollary, there is strong aversion to the institution of CDS as it is seen as the harbinger of the much repudiated joint-services hierarchy to sit over the Service Headquarters which are seen as the final repositories of national defence. Actually however, viewed in the context of developments in the contemporary matrices of national defence, such apprehensions have no validity; these need to be well dissected.

One key argument against joint-services commands is hinged to a logic that modern means of strategic mobility allows air capabilities – and indeed even naval and ground forces too – to be flexibly and successively applied across the nation's entire geographical spread. It is construed therefore, that allocating these assets to regional rather than all-India centralised control would be wasteful for a nation that can ill afford the redundancy and duplication of operational resources – particularly when India has no ambitions beyond its borders. Actually however, the said arguments hold little water. Indeed, allocation of forces has always been a time-situation specified battle grouping; it is never a final appropriation or a permanent severance from centralised control, nor does it imply obligatory relocation of assets. After all, the Service Headquarters could always hold their assets under centralised control and deploy and redeploy these on case-to-case basis according to the priorities specified by the Headquarters CDS – and even revert these back to centralised control after a mission is accomplished. Such modalities of mission-and-time specific force allocations, reversions and reallocations are but a standard practice of operational planning and execution in all advanced militaries.

The resistance over the institution of CDS and its purported appendage of joint-services operational commands is also underlined by fears of turf-loss. Top hierarchies of the Services and *inter alia*, the Service Chiefs fear that jointness would diminish the autonomy enjoyed by their sway over their respective Service Headquarters, who, it is feared, would be left with no 'operational' responsibility or 'control' over fighting forces. Conversely however, experiences of advanced militaries suggest that with control over the service-specific domains – namely the aspects of turnover, training, equipping, modernisation, personnel management, harness of logistic chains and installations, involvement in research and innovations, assimilation of military technology and industrialisation, etc. – the centrality of the Service Headquarters' role cannot but gain more salience. Besides, as discussed subsequently, the role of Service Headquarters in strategic planning, organisational implementation of plans and intimate control over these aspects are actually set for wider and deeper coverage in an integrated military system.

Indeed, such resistance has been faced by all advanced militaries of the world – and rejected in national interest – with good results. Besides, it is also a time that usual bureaucratic instincts of wrestling for the turf – in terms of

... notion that allocating assets on regional basis rather than keeping these centralised would be wasteful for the nation holds little water .. allocation of forces has always been a time-situation specified battle grouping; it is never a final appropriation or a permanent severance from centralised control, nor does it imply obligatory relocation of assets. Indeed, modalities of mission-and-time specific force allocations and re-allocations are but a standard practice of operational planning and execution in all militaries .. India included ...

civil-military status, grades, emoluments etc. – is jettisoned at this instance in favour of national good. Appropriately therefore, to get past the systemic hurdles, centrality of the three Service Headquarters needs to be assured while promoting jointness in war-fighting, gaining experiences in phased manner and applying course corrections to gradually evolve into a more efficient joint-services command structure. Formal induction of the three Service Chiefs as members of the nation's defence planning institution, equitable distribution of roles among the three Service Headquarters and promulgation of a judicious charter for the joint staff to function, followed by brisk evolution towards joint-services perfection, would be the imperatives in this context.

Admittedly, each argument has merit but progress cannot be resisted for long – these are inevitable. Therefore, rather than stymieing progress, the answer lies in proceeding through the defence reforms while adopting measures to address the systemic and perceptive hurdles. There is no doubt that *to prosecute what must be a contemporary dispensation of joint-service warfare, it is rather pompous to continue with the existence of as many as 17 odd autonomous service-specific command headquarters, with each party duplicating many of each other's assets and charters of work, while operational planning remains consigned to their autonomous rather than synergised perceptions and priorities.* The cost of such disjointed management of defence is rather heavy for a nation which nurtures its territorial and sovereign integrity while committing its priority to societal progress.

Issues of War Worthiness and Defence Preparedness

Just as in the present system, wherein the Service Headquarters undertake national level force-orchestration, coordination, preparatory and deployment functions, leaving the conduct of campaigning to be undertaken at single-service command headquarters level, in the joint services command headquarters system too that arrangement would more or less continue. Herein the joint services command headquarters would be allocated forces by each of the Service Headquarters as specified by the CDS based on integrated joint-services plans prepared at the HQ CDS in mutual conjunction with the Service Headquarters.

The proposition further suggests that command and control of the decisive *strategic reserve* formations as well as the *national reserve force* units and formations will remain vested upon the respective Service Headquarters through the creation of single-service Strategic Reserve Forces Commands (SRFC).

A most significant boost to the cause of national defence would accrue from the focus that the Service Headquarters would be able to direct in shaping the process of design, development and field trials of sophisticated military hardware; presently, that role gets marginalised under the burden of operational priorities. The proposition would motivate the Services to create a new class of technically astute warriors – as in all modern militaries – who would be competent in devising battle-worthy and soldier-sensitive hardware design parameters and so enable the defence research, development, trial and production industries in efficient production of modern military hardware. It would then be possible for the Service Headquarters to lay down formal policies regarding the performance, logistics, development period and life cycle criteria of various military weapon and equipment systems, monitor and scrutinise the various military and quasi-military modernisation projects and carry out course corrections with requisite professional military understanding. Hiccups and heart-breaks, as observed in the case of design and development of Arjun Tanks and the Tejas Fighter Aircraft on

the one extreme, and conceptual stalemate over development of ‘modular’ designs for tank variants, weaponries for Counter Surface Air Operations etc. on the other, may then be addressed through deeper deliberations and alacrity.

... it is rather pompous to continue with the existence of as many as 17 odd autonomous service-specific command headquarters, each duplicating many of other's assets and charters, while operational planning remains consigned to their autonomous rather than synergised perceptions and priorities ...

Indeed, as the above listed charters - which presently remain just about superficially attended to - gain due attention of the Service Headquarters, realisation of their centrality in the matter of national defence will dawn soon enough. The membership of the Service Chiefs in the nation's Higher Defence Organisation and their enhanced lien over the nation's *defence establishment* would reinforce that centrality. The proposition in question would therefore

... while the existing command headquarters would be merged to form joint-services command headquarters, the Field Army, Navy and Air Force Headquarters subordinated to each of such joint-services command headquarters would remain in more or less service-specific mode, with few joint-services additions ... discard of redundancies would be compensated by addition of force-multiplying wherewithal ... hierarchical appointments would not be curtailed...

influence an over-time shift to the joint command system while upholding the centrality of the Service Headquarters – as indeed it has happened in all advanced militaries. To reiterate, as Headquarters JSOC and Headquarters JSRC get functional over a period of time and operational control over these shift to the institution of CDS, the roles and status of Service Headquarters would remain as exalted as ever by the lead role these would play over the apex level operational planning, control and execution. Therefore, apart from formally having to share their high table, which is in any case inevitable in coming sooner or later, the role, status and powers of the three Service Headquarters and their Chiefs remain unaltered by all reckonings, with the added gain of higher synergy, fast response prosecution of war.

The proposition under discussion may not be treated as either sacrosanct or rigid, and must be open to better counsel, finer innovation, flexibility, logical application and mid-course corrections. But there may be no compromise on amalgamation of the single-service regional commands, all 17 of these, under a more appropriate numbers of HQ JSOCs and JSRCs, each of these harnessing under its fold the existing service-specific command structures and the assets thereof. Furthermore, there must be no compromise on prosecuting any future war or war-like application of military force only through duly composed, mission specific joint-services commands. The combination of these two stipulations are at the core of the reform process and therefore qualify to be viewed as a national cause.

Resolving Anxieties over Hierarchical Protection

Creation of joint-services commands would definitely raise hierarchical and cadre post protection anxieties, mainly at level of Command C-in-C's appointment. To get over such anxieties, due appreciation of the practical realities are called for within the fraternity at-large. These realities are: -

- As discussed earlier, in joint warfare, the roles of the fighting elements, force-composition, domains of training and expertise, weaponry and equipment, and infrastructure at the operational and tactical levels must retain their service-specific characteristics. Therefore, while the structure and composition of the existing command headquarters would be merged to form joint-services command headquarters, the Field Army, Navy and Air Force Headquarters subordinated to each of the command headquarters would remain in more or less service-specific mode, with few joint-services additions, for these to operate as functional arms of joint-service operations - as indeed it is the case with other advanced militaries.
- Indeed, discard of duplications and redundancies would be compensated by addition of force-multiplying wherewithal for conduct of modern warfare. Therefore, professional expertise, management and career prospects would remain protected, enhanced in fact.
- The number of existing star appointments would not be curtailed; reforms need not be bogged down by such a concern. The institution of CDS and the restructured HQJSOC, HQJSRC, HQSRFC, and modernisation related new raising of additional command headquarters would take care of that - just as it has happened in case of joint-services militaries, including the latest entrant, China.

Let us now turn to discussion of the proposition outlined for the rest of the Commands of the DDF (JLC, TA, SRFC, JSTC, SFC, and ANC).

Section 3: The DDF's Charter of Control over Training, Logistics and Reserve Forces Commands

Jointness in Higher Level Organisational Management

In proceeding with the discussion over the other components of the DDF as depicted in the organisational structure in Figures 2 and 3 above, it is reiterated that the purpose of institutionalising these command level headquarters is to foster organisational optimisation of resources and infrastructure that provide for the foundations of war preparedness in terms of *training*, *logistics* and *reserve forces*. Accordingly, joint management of military training and logistics at the apex level would, as far as practical, cut down the duplications and redundancies in terms of common purpose assets and infrastructure while maintaining the sanctity of service-specific training curricula and logistic requirements which would continue to be regulated by the concerned Services.

In effect, the proposition is but an upgrade of the existing system of arms and service-specific training within the ambit of single-service training commands and similar arrangements for logistic back-up, with the added advantage of synergic and optimal utilisation of resources and infrastructure at the tri-service level, free from duplication and compartmentalisation.

Coming to the reserve forces, these units and formations have multiple roles and contingencies to prepare for. For the same purpose these forces have no permanent affiliation. A side effect is that many times these forces get relegated in their priority of resource allocations. The proposition therefore envisages that the responsibility of maintaining the war-worthiness of regular *strategic reserve* as well as the *national reserve* forces of each of the three services – say, to the tune of 30 percent of the total force levels – would be better organised under their respective Service Headquarters through their respective HQ SRFCs. This arrangement would also reinforce the imperative of keeping the Service Headquarters at the apex level operational command and control mechanism, as discussed in Section 1 above.

Finally, at this stage there being no apex level changes envisaged in the structure of the Strategic Forces Command, Andaman & Nicobar Command and the Coast Guard, these need not be covered in the following discussion.

Having brought up the salience of jointness in management training, logistics and reserve forces, it is intended to touch upon the broader aspects of each.

... to foster innate jointness in training at the functional level, the answer lies in, firstly, lacing the parent Service course contents with tangible upgrades in theories and practices of jointness both in operations and logistics, and secondly, conducting purely joint warfare training capsules, courses and exercises...

Proposition on Joint Military Training

- Jointness in prosecution of warfare conforms to the concept of inter-arm and inter-service ‘interoperability’ and ‘redundancy’. It therefore offers the flexibility to perform many of the combat tasks – like fire attack, mobility, targeting, investment, interdiction etc. – by more than one mean or method. Deliberate interlacing of jointness in military training therefore assumes salience in modern war, the main factors for consideration being as follows:-
- Joint warfare requires higher acumen in synergic execution of battle procedures in a joint service milieu. That calls for an additional tier of expertise in which wider nuances of inter-service operational interoperability are to be mastered and orthodox self-restrictions and reservations overcome. Similarly, the art of managing redundancy among the combat resources to be committed and those either to be kept in reserve or released for better use elsewhere needs to be mastered. This end is achieved by joint training in tri-service battle procedures as well as joint staff work.
- Even within service-specific domains, modern warfare calls for deeper expertise in exploitation of complex weaponry, accessories and equipment. Therefore, standards of parent service training must continue to be raised to meet the need and capability based application of operational jointness.
- There is much scope for rationalisation of the number of training institutions which are run independently by the three Services. Some of these institutions may be designating

into joint training facilities and the course curricula extended to cover common syllabi, joint battle procedures and joint staff work.

In the existing system of service-specific control over training institutions and the curricula these follow, the standards of parent Service training is very high. However, as for the aspect of training in joint operations is concerned, that part remains more or less a matter of expediency rather than a serious charter – it is mostly notional. To foster innate jointness at the functional level therefore, the answer lies in, firstly, lacing the parent Service course contents with tangible upgrades in theories and practices of jointness both in operations and logistics, and secondly, conducting purely joint warfare training capsules, courses and exercises. The implication therefore are:-

- In order that parent Service and arm-specific training standards are maintained at compatible levels of modernisation, continuation of the existing system of management of training in each Service would continue;
- Such course contents would have to be expanded, as appropriate, to cover the joint operational aspects of the topics addressed; and,
- New training curricula would be needed to impart conceptual as well as hands-on training on prosecution of joint operations.

The option would be to institute a joint hierarchy to superintend parent Service as well as joint training curricula. The policy would be to continue to organise intra-service training through Directorate Generals of Training Branches of each of the three Service Headquarters. On the other hand, the gamut of joint training which would encompass purely joint as well additional contents in parent Service courses are to be superintended by the Headquarters Joint Services Training Command or the HQJSTC. Such systemic assimilation of dual, or even multiple control of training – ‘joint control’ actually – is rather usual in joint-services environment. It is wise to conform to that by shedding the narrower fervours and fears.

At the directional levels, training courses to impart due expertise in joint planning and staff work would have to be run by rationalising the charters of some of the top training institutions like the various war, tactical, technical and logistic colleges. Finally, advanced and conceptual level training on integrated information, space, special forces and nuclear warfare would have to be conducted in designated tri-service training institutions. These tri-service institutions, including the National Defence University, may be placed directly under the IHQ (CDS). To that extent, the traditional notion of training being a function of command gets a broader implication in the joint-service dispensation.

... modern militaries are attended to by a two tier arrangement that consists of a *national level organisation of defence logistics*’ and a *military level organisation of military logistics*’ ...the former synergised the larger ambit of multi-sector national capabilities while the latter synergises the management of tri-service logistics...

Next, we may touch upon the aspect of joint logistics.

Proposition on Military Logistics

Dictates of India's geographical spread and political and diplomatic concerns require her to maintain large military forces at a fair state of readiness, which in turn have to be sustained through complex chains of local as well as import based logistics. As a corollary, there is much scope to cut down on logistic duplications and redundancies on the one hand, and the capability voids on the other. In so doing, a higher degree of logistic synergy that enables the combat forces of each of the Services to be maintained at the requisite level of operational efficiency would be achieved. The native military thinking must therefore graduate to the consolidation of many of the compartmentalised components of tri-service military logistics – procurements, maintenance, stocking, harness of service installations, transportation, delivery, experimentation, audit, and finally, expense and salvage. To that end, modern militaries are attended to by a two tier arrangement that consists of a *national level organisation of defence logistics* and a *military level organisation of 'military logistics'*. Notably, the former synergised the larger ambit of multi-sector national capabilities while the latter synergises the management of tri-service logistics.

To strengthen military logistics as indicated in the proposed outline structure of the DDF, creation of a Headquarters Joint Logistics Command (HQJLC), to function as the apex *military logistic* policy-making body under the DDF (IHQ-CDS) may be thought of. HQJLC would be headed by a Chief of Joint Logistics (CJL) who would exercise policy-making, joint-directive and supervisory level control over the Directorates General of Army, Navy and Air Force Logistics. For operational level logistics, however, the latter would remain answerable to their respective Service Headquarters. HQJLC may therefore be organised to perform according to the following charter:-

- To translate the perspective, prioritisation, inventory and budgetary policies of the DDF/ IHQ, for further customisation and implementation by each of the Service Headquarters through their dedicated Directorates General of Operational Logistics, or Chiefs of Materials.
- Formulation of standard management policies towards optimal life cycle conciliation of production, storage, usage, discard and disposal of various common categories of military hardware – like the consumables, weapons, equipment and transport, new inductions and replenishment items. Codifying such policies requires joint undertaking among the military professionals and their industrial counterparts. HQJLC, in conjunction with the Directorates General of the three Services' logistic branches (or the Chiefs of Materials) would be expected to tackle that kind of challenges.
- The unforgiving nature of war leads to situations when logistic preparedness might turn out to be over-insurance in one instance and inadequate in another. Even if this dilemma remains beyond full resolution, professional minds of HQJLC would still be the best balancing factor in finding near-best inventory management solutions, advantages of which are vast.

... in consequence of the past quarter century long regime of non-performance on modernisation and innovations, India's military force-structure been afflicted with a state of stagnation ... rationalisation of efficient military logistics should be the most readily achievable call today, and a most rewarding one towards affordable defence preparedness...

Interface of Joint Logistic Command (JLC) and Chief of Defence Logistics (CDL)

Next, as the *military logistics* branch of the CDS, the HQJLC would interface with a larger ambit of national level *defence logistic* functions of the 'Chief of Defence Logistics' (CDL) which would form a part of the MoD's proposed second Department of Defence Establishment (DDE) -details would be discussed in the following Part. In this context, the nation's overall *defence logistics* would be facilitated by the participation of the HQJLC in the following manner:-

- HQJLC and the Directorates General of the Services' logistic branches would be the military interface between the user arms and services of the armed forces and the national level defence logistics functions of the Chief of Defence Logistics (CDL) which forms part of the proposed second department of the MoD, that is, the DDE.
- In its charter of military interface with the CDL, HQJLC would perform the field forces centric role of proposing, guiding and monitoring defence research, development and industrial production, field trials of logistic innovations and standardisation. Presently, in absence of such a professional military interface, there are gaping voids in the national level *defence logistics* management system which in turn imposes heavy penalty on the nation's defence preparedness and optimal utilisation of finances.

Lastly, going beyond the above listed charter, HQJLC is also needed to raise the national level *defence logistics* from its subaltern status and take lead in covering the fundamental disconnect between operational and logistic imperatives of India's strategic challenges. Some of effects of that disconnect are exemplified by just two illustrations:-

- India's mountains-specific conditions are unmatched elsewhere and therefore global defence industry has not found it profitable to produce military hardware customised for operation in such terrain. Development of indigenous, unique mountain-specific weapons and equipment would therefore offer quantum operational advantages to the Indian forces. Conversely, there has hardly been any effort towards such native innovations.
- Management of combat inventories, particularly the munitions and spares, leaves much to be desired. The result is that the key weaponry like tanks, guns, ships and aircraft remain under-fed even at critical junctures. Surely, an industry which sends rockets to the moon should be capable of overcoming this debility, provided there is the backing of professional user-guidance and synergic effort.

In consequence of the past quarter century long regime of non-performance on modernisation and innovations, India's military force-structure has been afflicted with a state of stagnation. If shorn of distracting influences, rationalisation of efficient military logistics should be the most readily achievable call today, and a most rewarding one towards affordable defence preparedness.

... Strategic Reserve Forces Commands (SRFC) under each of the Service Headquarters are composed, in one part, of *regular strategic reserve formations* .. in another part, it would have *national reserve forces* manned by the recalled 'reservists' on mobilisation...

Proposition on National Military Reserves: The Strategic Reserve Forces Command (SRFC)

This proposition is made in the context of ‘transformation’ of the Indian military institution - which, to reiterate, is a sub-set of overall defence reforms and the all-encompassing endeavour of affordable military modernisation. The proposition entails raising of the ‘Strategic Reserve Forces Commands’ (SRFC) under each of the Service Headquarters, which are to be composed, in one part, of *regular strategic reserve formations* - which are presently designated as Service Headquarters Reserves. In another part, the SRFCs would have in their orbat the normally sequestered units and formations which, on mobilisation, are to be manned by the recalled ‘national reservists’. The SRFCs would thus be made up of one regular and another reservist components to provide for the nation’s military reserves forces. That permits keeping the nation’s regular standing military forces at their best fettle within a rationalised commitment of the nation’s resources, and at the same time affords the ability to build up, when required, the force levels at short notice according to the dictates of political situations and military challenges.

Most modern defence departments have adopted this approach to maintain comparatively ‘leaner and meaner’ standing military forces. Integral to this step, those nations have also instituted effective procedures to call up their reservist personnel, refresh their training, equip them from pre-stocked and routinely maintained inventory of weapons and equipment, and form them up into pre-designated ‘reserve’ combat units and formations within a strictly specified ‘mobilisation’ time line. This policy of balancing regular and reserve forces permits maximisation of the dividends from the nation’s investment on military power.

The strategic situation that confronts India permits only a limited space for her to adopt such a policy. But even then there is enough scope to take advantage of the concept of ‘regular strategic’ and ‘national reserve’ forces, and in so doing, overcome the unwanted contradiction of having a larger military force that stands but ‘hollowed’ with equipment deficiencies on account of unaffordable budgetary burden. The purpose of formally placing the SRFCs under respective Service Headquarters is to ensure that command, control, training and war preparedness of the regular strategic reserve as well as the mobilised reserve formations are accorded the full attention, for these to be integrated into overall battle plans either as independent entities or as part of larger formations, and grouped as necessary under one or more HQ JSOC(s), HQ JSRC(s) or even directly under the Service Headquarters to reinforce offensive and defensive operations.

This proposition facilitates ‘right sizing’ of the military institution, assimilates optimum management of equipment life cycles, makes it affordable to keep regular forces duly modernised, and yet tap the vast resources of trained and professionally skilled former servicemen who are released from ‘colour service’ at young age. The proposition also permits induction of personnel having post-release civil experience as well as those possessing high-technology skills who are so vital in manning the forces in modern warfare. It also conforms to the contemporary principles of defence finance and human as well as material resource management. In passing, it also addresses the reservations of the Service Headquarters regarding their operational role as well as the common concern regarding prospects of career in higher ranks.

Indeed, creation of SRFCs is in tune with the universal trend of military force-structuring. In similar vein, another meaningful step would be to invigourate the institution of the Territorial Army (TA).

... TA units can also perform particularly well in such specialised fields like static air defence, transportation, cyber, IW and space operations, and terror funding at a fraction of the cost of regular military units ...

The Territorial Army (TA)

India's Territorial Army (TA) has played a commendable role in undertaking comparatively lesser intense operational duties in wars and insurgencies. Besides, it has also played stellar role in running railways, other essential services, and production and pumping of petroleum oil during times of crises and major disruptions. In fact, incessant insurgencies in various parts of the country has led to assignment of near-continuous roles to the TA troops, and consequently, a more or less unbroken embodiment of the majority of the enlisted TA units. Thus over time, the TA has come to occupy a significant role in the configuration of Indian military force-structure. This state of high dependence on TA units is likely to continue due to India's twin neighbours' never ending aggression and internal insurgencies.

Besides the standard military employment, embodied TA units can also perform particularly well in the fields of static air defence, transportation in rear areas, cyber operations, trailing of terror funding and such specialist tasks at a fraction of the cost of regular military units that the exchequer would have to bear otherwise. In particular, landmark advantages of possessing wider range of competencies through the TA would accrue when expert combat support operations have to be executed in the domains of space, cyber and IW. There is therefore a case to incorporate the TA organisation into the modernised force-structure through a mix of new raisings and selective conversions from regular units.

For effective utilisation of the TA, its cause needs to be promoted by means of binding legislation upon the employers as well as policy upgrades in matters of organisational effectiveness and personnel management. Such steps, followed up with placement of the TA under the command and control of the MoS DDF (IHQ/CDS) would pay rich dividends to the nation in terms of enhancement of operational and technical capabilities of the military institution.

Other Functions of DDF

The other aspects of the DDF's function - that is, command and control over the Strategic Forces Command and the Coast guards, as well as the new raisings of Special Forces, Space and IW Commands - need no elaboration at the proposition stage. It would be more appropriate to delve into these aspects as a wholesome package of comprehensive military transformational analyses.

Final Shape of the Proposition

Over a ten year period, evolution of the DDF organisation may be envisaged as depicted in Figure 3, Section 1 above.

In Sum

Notwithstanding the banal affliction to hang on with *status quo*, the landmark achievement of the restructure would be that the strategic concepts, training, logistics, planning and prosecution of war would be a joint-services and convergent effort. It would release the Indian military institution from continuation of an archaic practice of committing to fight three different single-service battles and patching up, only when mutually agreed upon, at certain operationally critical junctures before returning to individual Service pursuits. Modern warfare does not permit prosecution of disjointed battles, and calls for joint and simultaneous prosecution of different modes low to high scale warfare – including ‘hybrid war’, to wit.

Indeed, the creation of CDS is just a ‘keel laying’ step towards the larger ambit of defence reforms. Unless the ‘keel’ is built upon in pursuance of a grand design of commissioning a ship, its purpose is but doomed. Creation of the CDS is a part of the endeavour of defence reforms; the nation’s defence planners would be wise to institutionalise it to its logical end.

Part 5

A Template for Defence Reforms - II

Conceptual Moorings of the Department of Defence Establishment, or DDE

Finally, it is necessary to enunciate the underlying concepts and key factors of the proposed organisational structure of the DDE, which combined together with the DDF, provides the ground over which India's reformed structure of national defence is built. To elaborate, the DDE would bear the prime responsibility of multi-sector policy-making, development and coordination of national defence, and *inter alia*, the nation's social, technological, industrial and fiscal capacity to defend itself. In so doing, the DDE would provide for the foundations over which a reformed DDF, with the institution of the CDS as its pivot, would find its fruition.

Proposition of Outline Organisational Structure of the DDE

In its skeletal form, the DDE may be envisaged as depicted at Figure 4, and further elaborated in subsequent paragraphs:-

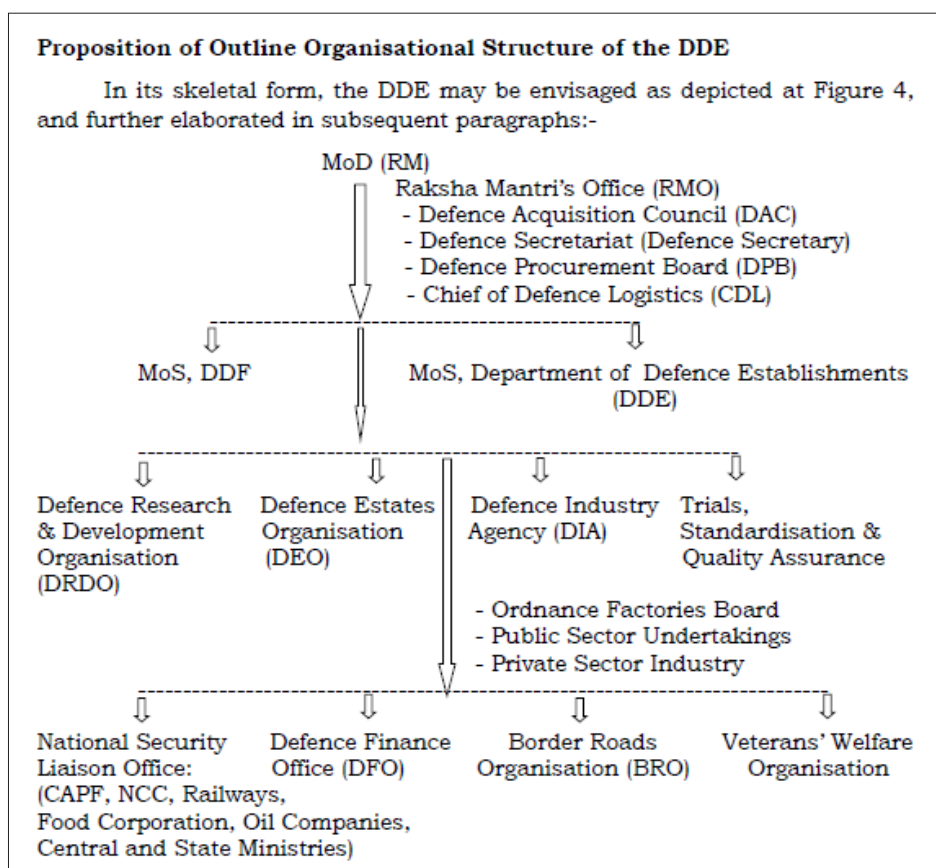


Figure 4 : The DDE

The DDE's regulatory roles would cover all such national level ventures such as: -

- Defence research and development, defence estates, defence-industrial base, defence procurements through indigenous manufacture or import, life-cycle maintenance, stocking and replacement and periodic modernisation of military hardware - the entire gamut of equipping and maintaining the military forces in short.
- Management of national level *defence logistics* to provide for an infrastructural platform for the *military logistics* to perform effectively. Notably, term 'defence logistics' is distinguished from 'military logistics' which is a part of the military institution, as discussed in the previous Chapter. Besides those listed in the preceding sub-paragraph, here the term *defence logistics* also covers the nation's overall strategic capabilities in terms of transportation, communications, shelter, food and fuel supply infrastructure, war-time medical provisions etc. along the borders as well as in the rear areas.
- Homeland back-up to military operations in terms of tasking the National Cadet Corps (NCC) and the CAPF, besides nation-wide implementation of the provisions of the 'Union War Book'.
- Pre-recruitment as well as post-release functions of personnel management, including education, second career, resettlement and veteran's welfare in conformity to the hoary state-soldier covenant.

The above considerations are briefly discussed in the following paragraphs, the purpose being to introduce these rather than to attempt a dissection of such vast topics within the confines of a short paper.

Defence Acquisitions and Procurements

Acquisition of military hardware as regular procurement to replenish scaled weapons, equipment, transport and expendable military hardware as well as to cater to periodic force-modernisation are matters of extreme complexity. The imperatives here are:-

- One, management of large inventories of diverse source items;
- Two, extraction of best service from original and extended life cycles of hardware through refurbish or overhaul;
- Three, control over rates of discard and expense of hardware in step with technological developments; and,
- Four, strict observance of the stipulation for cent percent replenishment and safe levels of stocking of hardware, accessories and fast expendables, particularly the munitions.

The necessity of achieving optimal balance between indigenous production, import, reserve stocking and judicious regulation of expenditure further exacerbates that complexity - a situation that the Indian defence establishment has not been able to master. There are reasons to suspect that this failure is attributable not so much to lack of ability as it is to the lack of orientation and seriousness of purpose. Indeed, less resourceful countries have done better in this respect.

In order to comprehensively address the fallouts of inefficient capital acquisitions and revenue procurements on the state of the nation's military preparedness, most of the advanced nations have created dedicated departments to deal with these aspect of defence management. These departments are manned by top professionals having long experience in promotion of hardware designs, harness of defence technology and management of production lines, and have military professionals embedded to keep the right focus through in-built provision for user participation and mutual guidance.

In India, such common sense measures have remained more or less stymied due to the successive government's fluctuating concerns over the state of the nation's defence preparedness. Official unaccountability over defence projects and expenditures, tacit endorsement of organisational as well as cadre parochialism, and a condescending attitude over the principle of 'military necessity' have added to the malaise. However, over the past decade or so, substantial efforts have been made to define and streamline a formal process to better manage the systems of defence research, industrial competence and hardware procurements. But having only recently sensitised itself on these foundations of national defence, there is much to be done yet at the apex level of defence management before these provisions start working at full effectiveness; India's past defocus and rather late entry into modern defence industry being the major deficits to cover.

In the context of defence acquisitions, the outline organisational structure for the DDE as proposed above envisages the following:-

- The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), headed by the RM, to exercise apex level control over the full gamut of capital acquisitions and procurements. Besides, the DAC would, through the DDE, undertake the roles of resolution, rationalisation and arbitration over the contentious inter-sectoral issues of defence preparedness.
- Further, with the secretarial support and coordination among the plethora of subordinate organisations being undertaken by the Defence Secretariat headed by the Defence Secretary, the proposition envisages the DDE to exercise control over all fundamentals of the nation's defence preparedness. At the ministerial level, control over defence procurements would be exercised through the Defence Procurement Board (DPB) headed by the Defence Secretary.
- In the context of the requirements and priorities of the *military institution*, the process of customisation and monitoring of defence research projects, modernisation schemes and innovation of technical designs are to be overseen by the DDE's top military representative in the form of the 'Chief of Defence Logistics' (CDL). The CDL would also help in formalisation of policies on production scales and capacity utilisation in respect of the various constituent enterprises of the *defence establishment*.

... efforts have been made to define and streamline a formal process to better manage the systems of defence research, industrial competence and hardware procurements ... but there is much to be done yet at the apex level of defence management before these provisions start working at full effectiveness ... India's past defocus and rather late entry into modern defence industry being the major deficits to cover...

Build-Up of Defence Industry

One key purpose of the DDE would be to correct the severe anomaly that afflicts the nation's Defence Industrial Base (DIB). Having inherited a fairly competent military industry, the Indian leadership in the early years after independence had the right sense to establish a DIB. However, its growth was stymied by confining that 'base' just to the replacement of dated equipment of a barely tolerated armed forces. That - and their self-righteous disdain of creation of a competent DIB which could have kept up with the technological advancements through competitive export of military hardware - ensured that the defence industry never really could rise above rather modest goals and dated military technologies. India therefore not only lost out in nurturing a strong and vibrant defence industry, it also let go of the opportunity for defence trade that has been a robust source of economic sustenance in many developed nations.

India's DIB boasts of 52 DRDO Laboratories, 39 OFs and nine DPSUs including four shipyards, all dedicated to defence, but none responsible, in real sense, either to the State, or more appropriately, to the military institution, their sole user and the cause of existence. The MoD's Department of Defence Production exercises tenuous controls over the OFs, has little authority over the DPSUs, has no control over the DRDO; it has no accountability towards the military institution either. It is so that first named remains content in obliging the forces to make do with items of obsolete designs and supply even those items which are not needed by the forces any more, the second sustains itself through production of basic use items to captive military and civil customers, and the third seeks acclaim in farming and medicinal research while remaining stagnant on design and production of sophisticated military hardware.

The cause of such malaise is not difficult to find - the practice of incorporating military professionals in defence industrial organisations, with due authority at the conceptual, design and production levels, has given way to departmental turf-consolidation and cadre back-scratching with the connivance of a motivated bureaucracy. The result is stark: the defence

... to rationalise the overall burden of national security on the public exchequer, modern militaries have scaled up their civil-sector dependency from a limited practice of 'civil-military coordination' to a higher level of 'civil-military integration' of dual-use infrastructure and assets to bolster the defence plans...

industry is yet to produce a decent rifle, while its 'flagship' products like tanks, aircraft and guns, even the simpler ones like night sights and bullet proof jackets etc., fail to inspire combat worthy confidence among the soldiery. A key purpose of reforms in the *defence establishment* must be to remedy that situation.

Hopeful Developments

Many steps have been taken during the recent years to remedy the situation from within the defence enterprises - the DRDO, the OFs and the DPSUs - with encouraging results. Besides, during the past couple of years, the defence sector has been opened up to indigenous industry, provisions for technology transfer have been strengthened, setting up local manufacture base have been encouraged

and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) facilitated. However, these steps are incremental rather than profound and are still held hostage to the bureaucratic mind sets on the one hand and various shades of graft on the other. Therefore, fruition of these initiatives at the ground level may be yet another decade away.

If the recent initiatives towards achievement of self-sufficiency in defence production are to bear fruition, national defence policy-makers have to orient each of the enterprises of the *defence establishment* to be accountable towards the *military institution*, and thus dedicatedly focus on strengthening the foundations national defence. In that, the goal of national self-reliance and performance accountability would be better served if the military institution is recognised as the primary, in fact the sole, stakeholder, and integrated, in a ‘user-partner’ mode, into the project management system right from the conception, through design and development, and up to the delivery stage. That degree of integrated approach to defence industrial development would necessitate empanelment of technically high-qualified services professionals and appointing them to the steering level appointments in each of the enterprises of the defence establishment as well as on certain specified appointments in the MoD. All advanced nations assign military professionals to high-value defence projects at the apex or key levels; had that practice not been jettisoned in favour of misplaced autonomy and cadre rivalries, the fate of the Arjun Tank, new family of small arms, mines and military explosives, the Light Combat Aircraft, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, modernisation of communications and many more key projects would have been more satisfactory.

Here, the proposition envisages the creation of a ‘Defence Industry Agency’ (DIA) under the DDE to perform the following roles :-

- Seamless coordination among the constituents of the DIB and monitoring of projects in terms of quality and quantity parameters, timelines, and budgetary allocations and expenditure.
- Fostering industrial and business partnership practices – joint ventures, transfers of technology, setting up manufacturing units, cross-attachment of experts etc. – to find a reckonable space in global high-technology defence industry, particularly in the field of advanced weapon systems.
- Resolution of inter-ministerial issues between the ministries of Defence, Finance, Home, External Affairs, Heavy, Medium and Small Industries, Environment and Forests and finally, the State Governments.

The issue of reforms in the various constituent enterprises of the nation’s *defence establishment* is a subject by itself, and therefore best addressed by the combined wisdom of experienced professionals coming from the within as well as outside of such organisations, and then guided by the user’s concerns which are best enunciated through the defence bureaucracy and professional military representation.

... need for better assimilation of the nation’s civil wherewithal and infrastructure into military applications is a national cause towards economy of effort ... the proposition envisages the MoS DDE (Defence Secretary-CDL) to remedy the situation...

The DDE's Role in Application of the Concept of the Nation's '*Military Necessity*' and '*Military Lien*'

Independent after centuries of slavery, free India has ever been proud of her nationalist heritage, but has yet remained seeped in a mind-set that eulogises military traditions but turns complacent when it comes to keeping abreast with the ever changing strategic imperatives of warfare. The problem is exacerbated by India's strategic bindings, when surrounded by powerful military aggressors, targeted through antagonistic political and cultural rivalries, and held down by material as well as cognitive poverty, she could not, or did not, address her military concerns. Indeed, while material and temporal shortcomings can be made up in a comparatively shorter time, it takes extraordinary efforts to overcome cognitive dilutions. That brings us to the concepts of '*military necessity*' and '*military lien*'.

War, by definition, must be a national effort up to the ultimate limits of its resources and capabilities - it is the nation that goes to war, not just its military institution. Commitment of the entire range of national assets into war effort has therefore been a standard practice ever. In modern times, with development of robust civil wherewithal and infrastructure on the one hand, and a marked diffusion in war waging capability among state, quasi-state, non-state and in-state rebel insurgencies on the other, marshalling of dual-use resources to the furtherance of military operations under different situations becomes even more of an imperative. That is a condition in which the nation's all-round efforts are synergised not only to multiply the military force-capability, but also to rationalise the overall burden of national security on the public exchequer. As a corollary, modern military institutions have scaled up their civil-sector dependency from a limited practice of 'civil-military coordination' to a profound level of 'civil-military integration' of dual-use infrastructure and assets to bolster the defence plans. It is to address this situation that confers a key role upon the MoS DDE (Defence Secretary-CDL).

In India, integrated harness of civil-military wherewithal and infrastructure for the purpose of waging war has been an old practice. The practice is duly sanctified by the provisions of the 'Union War Book' as well as various peace-time injunctions of the State. However, in the post-1971 War period of peace - 'conventional' peace, if you will - the practice has faded somewhat. The trend of nonchalance in responding to military requisitions from various ownership ministries and departments makes that rather apparent. Indeed, in their flawed interpretation of democratic liberty, successive governments have allowed the very concept of 'military necessity' over the civil sector to be smothered by a growing clamour for departmental autonomy and all the stake holders' consensus which many times translate into exclusive self-centred priorities. Thus the hoary provision of 'military lien' of the nation's citizens as well as institutions stand diluted if not repudiated. For example, defence funded rail and road projects languish while the funds are diverted for expediencies, environment clearances cases are held up by frivolous concerns, lands are encroached upon, quality of supplies keep sliding, and court cases go into celestial orbit - the list is long. Even the standard lien, that of devolution of operational back-up upon the police forces, have many times failed to materialise to the degree desired.

When it comes to the assimilation of civil wherewithal into the nation's military preparedness, it is best to shun consensual decision making in national interest. However, in a contradictory trend, representation of defence interests through embedding military professionals, the soldier-citizens of the TA and the military reservists in various key civil departments has become diluted over the years. As a result, in the context of the nation's consolidated war-waging effort, the scale-up to the level of 'integration' of civil dual-use infrastructure and assets to meet the imperatives of contemporary military commitments has not matured yet.

The need for better assimilation of the nation's civil wherewithal and infrastructure into military applications is a national cause towards economy of effort. The proposition envisages the DDE to remedy that situation.

... the idea behind the proposed DDE is that the commitment of protecting national security must lead to the institutionalised recourses to near-seamless and synergic assimilation of all of the nation's civil wherewithal and infrastructure towards that prime purpose....

Proctor of Military Lien: A National Security Liaison Office

In order that all of the State's assets, infrastructure and apparatus are dovetailed into the nation's consolidated defence capability in general and military preparedness in particular, the proposition calls for creation of an inter-departmental coordinating office under the DDE. The purpose envisaged is that of duly empowered supervision, coordination and control of all the civil sector assets of military significance through an Office referred to here as the '*National Security Liaison Office*'. The role of this Office would be to foster mature and responsive interaction between the defence forces and the various Central and State Ministries and Departments like Home, Industries, and Environment and Forests – the CAPF, NCC, Railways, Shipping, essential services, the Food Corporation, Oil Companies, dual-use industries and so on, to cite some examples.

In the contemporary context of national security this measure has assumed salience in view of the following developments:-

- Evolution of extensive dual-use industries which bolstered by the extensive networks of surface, sea and air transportation may fulfil many of the basic needs of the military forces in field as well as rear areas.
- Emergence of a reckonable commonality between external and internal threats – such as rise of armed militancy, proliferation of arms-drug trade, sophistication of terror funding etc. - which require astute policing to support military forces as and when the latter are deployed to control threats which might have gone beyond the scope of usual policing.
- Substantial expansion have taken place among the CAPF to fulfil the contemporary scope of civil administration. During critical situations, these forces may also be effective in bolstering the strength of military forces by undertaking many of the quasi-military tasks. As mentioned earlier, that has ever been a standard charter of responsibility, but that has somewhat been diluted on account of expanded role of police forces and affliction with hierarchical autonomy - at the cost of national exchequer, of course.

... while the DDF (CDS) plays its role, the stage is set by the DDE, both functioning in synergy of thought and action

The DDE as the Grounds-man for National Defence

Apart from the national assets discussed above, the proposed structure of the DDE includes within its ambit of control many other organisations like the DRDO, Defence Estates Organisation (DEO), the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) etc. The roles of these organisations are already well defined and self-explanatory, which the DDE would further undertake to upgrade and synergise towards an overall defence preparedness.

Heavy costs of national security on the one end, and spill-over of military concerns to the civil sector on the other allows avoidance of duplications, redundancies or last minute resort to ad hoc arrangements in articulation of the nation's military power. The idea behind the proposed DDE is that the commitment of protecting national security must lead to the institutionalised recourses to near-seamless and synergic assimilation of all of the nation's civil wherewithal and infrastructure towards that prime purpose.

It needs no emphasis that in performance of its role, the DDE and the institution of CDS would need the DDE's buttress.

The State-Soldier Covenant

Finally, the matter of Veteran's Welfare requires a brief mention. This is an issue of the hoary 'State-Soldier Covenant' which binds soldiers, sailors and airmen to uphold the nation's cause even at their ultimate cost, in return for a state-protected retreat after their time is over. In the recent years, however, this unique commitment seems vilified, much to the detriment of the majesty of the Indian State. This matter needs serious revisit at the highest policy-making levels if the nation is to harness the extraordinary loyalty of its ever-celebrated soldiery.

The proposition therefore suggests a revamp of the functioning of the existing of Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare under strict watch of the DDE, with the CDS playing an advisory role.

Conclusion

The comprehensive discussion on defence reforms and the place of CDS in it leaves only three aspect to be brought out in concluding remarks. These are:-

- The DDF-DDE interface;
- Focused implementation of reform propositions;
- Monitoring and audit of reform process.

The DDF-DDE Interface

The proposition envisages the institution of the CDS to be the fulcrum of all DDF activities as related to the military institution. Similarly, it also envisages the institution of the Defence Secretary (Principal Secretary of Defence) to be the fulcrum of all DDE activities as related to the nation's defence establishment. In this context, it needs no emphasis to aver that the two institutions would form the inseparable twins to uphold the sanctity of nation's defence edifice. Here, one-upmanship should be disdained in favour of the nation's good. *In short, while the DDF (CDS) plays its role, the stage is set by the DDE, both functioning in synergy of thought and action.*

... for the fruition of defence reforms, the Standing Task Force must take into account the past experiences and the reasons for the past attempts finding little success

Focused Implementation of Reforms

The task of implementing defence reforms is admittedly an extremely complex one. In advanced nations, the content, range and scope of reforms are set by empowered group of top experts consisting of strategic thinkers who set the tone, and long experienced military professionals, defence bureaucrats, sociologists, economists and legal experts, who pitch in to shape that endeavour. Implementation of the reforms are then affected through institutionalised mechanisms so as to prevent stagnation or disorientation of reform schemes, while at the same time retaining defence preparedness among the various elements of military institution. Notably, these monitoring mechanisms operate either under promulgated legislative acts or formally enunciated policy instruments, and are then made accountable to the nation's highest legislative and executive bodies.

As described in the preceding Chapters, during the past decade or so there have been some attempts made by the Indian Government to tone up its system of 'Higher Defence Management'. Even if many of the easier and uncontested – and therefore of limited significance – provisions for improvements have been instituted, the fundamental purpose, that is of modernising the *national defence management system* to correspond to the contemporary challenges, has more or less remained elusive yet. The difficulties encountered have been found to be as much in the superficialities in the scope and depth of the reforms proposed through consensus among the hung-up hierarchies as it has been in the failure to implement even that bit. It would therefore be wise to appoint an empowered *Standing Task Force* to monitor progress, apply periodic course corrections and finally, put the new systems to validation tests, besides rendering periodic progress reports to the nation's Commander-in-Chief and the Parliament.

For the fruition of defence reforms, the above mentioned Standing Task Force must take into account the past experiences and the reasons for the past attempts finding little success, the key ones being as follows:-

- The convening authorities of defence reforms – politicians, reform committees and bureaucrats – had been afflicted with inadequacy of strategic experience and expertise, which was further exacerbated by their reluctance to engage in wider consultations with the strategic community at large. These laymen therefore just could not fathom the range and scope of the task at hand. Opting for narrow and selective consultation, these authorities found themselves weighed down by trepidation due to divergence of professional opinions which appeared to them to be uncertain and contradictory. As a result, reform proposals came to be narrowed rather than being comprehensive, and thus failed to integrate with the rest of the defence management system. For example, in absence of compatible charters and personnel policies, integration of Service Headquarters into the MoD turned into a cosmetic exercise, just as the defence acquisition processes did not dovetail into the process of budgetary provisioning.
- Options and analyses of defence reforms could not be freed from the archaic notions of administering the military as handed down by the previous generations of prejudiced governing establishments. Contrary to the pristine principles of exercising a right balance between political authority, bureaucratic responsibility and professional control over war and dual-use assets, finances and personnel management, the defence bureaucracy had been reluctant to let go of its disproportionate control over military administration, while the political class remained resigned to bureaucratic interpretations of professional military advice. This charade was further complemented by the military hierarchy either being unwilling or unsure of standing by their professional assessments and articulate these to the decision makers with the force of logic. For example, new policies could not simplify even the process of tactical restructure of military units, routine upgrade of weapons and equipment, and resolution of sundry issues at the Service Headquarters level; these had still to be referred to the bureaucracy-shackled Ministry. Resultantly, the past proposals for defence reforms failed to enthuse the military professionals who could neither detect any advantages from half-baked approvals nor find any cause to exert over catalysing the implementation of such reforms.

- Most importantly, looking through just the technical and organisational expediencies, the authors of defence reforms – civilian and military professionals – failed to appreciate the role of human element in implementation of the changes. Thus nothing was done to ‘sell’ the reforms to those functionaries who would actually implement these. There was practically no efforts to find ways to address organisational opposition, assuage innate fears, or bypass these to render these irrelevant, and so foster a win-win atmosphere wherein each participating group could feel benefitted by the reforms.

An organisational law rules that, “*a prejudiced organisational structure translates itself into similarly prejudiced organisational behaviour ..., and that renders even the most rational initiatives rather difficult to implement*”. This law explains the resistance against substantial reformation of the *national defence management organisation* and the *system of defence policy-making*. To avoid log-jam therefore, any new systemic initiative towards defence reforms must take that cultural hurdle into account and adopt a proven method of constituting an empowered Standing Task Force that would monitor and control implement the reforms. This Task Force should consist of military intellectuals and astute bureaucrats, besides of course the heads of each of the implementing organisations or departments.

Monitor and Audit of Reform Process

Advanced nations invariably have statutorily in-built mechanisms for monitoring, stock-taking and course reviews of the reformation process in their system of defence management. The British, realising their inability to absolve possible deviations and redundancies in implementation of the razor-edge provisions of their ‘Strategic Defence and Security Reviews’, went a step further by composing a dedicated committee for implementation of reforms which took care of removing impediments, undertook review of long embedded organisational cultures, addressed vested interests and reported to the Parliament through the Defence Secretary (the Minister) on annual basis. As for the US, Russia and China, the intimate State-Military bindings ensures that degree of supervision.

In India too, we have the ‘Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence’. However, neither its membership subscribes to any strategic or military experience nor are its reports taken seriously by the Government. For the much overdue defence reforms to bear fruition in line with its fundamental objectives, this situation must change. Formal professional testimony, parliamentary debate and assignment of responsibility and accountability must form part of the statutory initiatives in this regard. The vast amounts spent, and societal costs borne in providing for the nation’s military security, justifies such an arrangement.

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VIVEKANANDA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION

3, San Martin Marg, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi – 110021

Phone: +91-11-24121764, 24106698

Email: info@vifindia.org,

Website: <https://www.vifindia.org>

Follow us on [twitter@vifindia](https://twitter.com/vifindia)

