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No. 51 May 2016

STATUS OF JOINTNESS IN INDIAN SECURITY APPARATUS

Vijai Singh Rana



INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE
STUDIES & ANALYSES

रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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A significant portion on unified commands has been taken from my paper, 'Enhancing Jointness in Indian Armed Forces: Case for Unified Commands', published in *Journal of Defence Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 1, January–March 2015, pp. 33–62.

ABBREVIATIONS

ABDACOM	Australian British Dutch American Command
ANC	Andaman and Nicobar Command
C3I	Command, Control, Communications and Intelligence
CCS	Cabinet Committee on Security
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CDS	Chief of Defence Staff
CDM	College of Defence Management
CIDS	Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (to the Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee)
CJCS	Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
C-in-C	Commander -in-Chief
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
COSC	Chiefs of Staff Committee
COAS	Chief of the Army Staff
COS	Chief of Staff
CSA	Chief Scientific Advisor
CPC	Communist Party of China
CMC	Central Military Commission
CINC	Commander in Chief of United or Specified Command in US
DE&S	Defence Equipment and Support

DRDO	Defence Research and Development Organization
FORTAN	Fortress Andaman and Nicobar
DSSC	Defence Services Staff College
GNA	Goldwater Nichols Act
GoM	Group of Ministers
GSD	General Staff Department
GSO	General Staff Officer
HSC	Homeland Security Council
IAF	Indian Air Force
IDS	Integrated Defence Staff
IJO	Integrated Joint Operations
IOR	Indian Ocean Region
IPKF	Indian Peace Keeping Force
ISRO	Indian Space Research Organization
IW	Information Warfare
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JFC	Joint Forces Command
JSW	Joint Services Wing
KRC	Kargil Review Committee
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MAC	Military Area Command
MR	Military Region
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
NDA	National Defence Academy
NDC	National Defence College
NDU	National Defense University
NSC	National Security Council
NSC	National Security Council
OOAC	Out of Area Contingency
OTA	Officers Training Academy
PGM	Precision Guided Munitions
PJHQ	Permanent Joint Headquarters
PRC	People's Republic of China
PLASAF	PLA Second Artillery Force
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PUS	Permanent Under Secretary
R&D	Research and Development
SA	Scientific Advisor
SFC	Strategic Forces Command
TLB	Top Level Budget
UAV	Unmanned aerial Vehicle
VCDS	Vice Chief of the Defence Staff
WZC	War Zone Campaign

INTRODUCTION

Jointmanship is a key ingredient for success in war. A nation that utilises the combined strength of its Armed forces effectively will prevail over the enemy

Air Chief Marshal Tipnis

Jointness in the armed forces has always been needed. Its early evolution started with the integration of infantry and cavalry, to which artillery got added subsequently. The World War I saw integration of aircraft and armour; and World War II saw the integration of the navies, armies and air forces. The joint operations by army and naval forces took place way back in 1862–63 during American Federal campaign against Vicksburg. However, the need for jointness and joint operations came into sharp focus from World War II onwards. Thus, lessons from the past point to the inherent need for jointness as an inescapable necessity. The profound transformation in the war fighting witnessed over the past few decades makes it even more necessary.

With a revolution in military affairs (RMA)¹ well and truly underway, conflicts today involve operations that would have been classified as ‘near inconceivable’ by military planners in a bygone era. Contemporary war plans involve coordinated offence and defence, pre-kinetic intelligence warfare campaigns, net-centric operations, cyberattacks and information warfare (IW). Modern-day warfare tools cater to a battle space that encompasses the landmass and island territories, high seas, ocean depths, airspace, cyberspace and the electromagnetic spectrum. In such a complex operational environment, militaries have little option but to adopt joint operations and integrated war fighting. The dynamics of battlefield operations today places a high premium on interoperable capabilities.

¹ Elinor Sloan, *Military Transformation and Modern Warfare: A Reference Book*, New Delhi: Pentagon Press, 2008, p. 3. Sloan quotes Andrew Marshall, Director of the Office of Net Assessment, US, for definition of RMA: ‘A major change in the nature of warfare brought about by the innovative application of technologies which, combined with dramatic changes in military doctrine and operational and organizational concepts, fundamentally alters the character and conduct of military operations.’

Seamless, integrated war fighting is, however, no simple enterprise. To ensure jointness, a military needs to undertake serious reforms, both at the operational and organizational levels. Over a period of time, military forces get cozy with their standard modes of operations—doing things just the way each service is comfortable with. Reforms require a degree of ‘unlearning’ old processes and procedures, that is, a gradual egress from one’s comfort zone into an uncertain space, where new procedures need to be worked out and new relationships established. Militaries around the world have, however, embarked on the arduous path of serious reform, establishing new codes, protocols and standard operating procedures and reordering the chain of command and control.

India, despite the vast and varied threats in the backdrop of RMA and two nuclear-armed hostile neighbours, has not been moving aggressively towards military transformation. Why has the military transformation not received the desired impetus? It could well be correlated to Rosen’s articulation on bureaucracy:

The essence of a bureaucracy is routine, repetitive, orderly action. Bureaucracies are not supposed to innovate by their nature. Military bureaucracies, moreover, are especially resistant to change. Colonel John Mitchell of the British Army wrote in 1839: ‘Officers enter the army at an age when they are more likely to take up existing opinions than to form their own. They grow up carrying into effect orders and regulations founded on those received opinions; they become, in some measure identified with existing views, in the course of years, the ideas thus gradually imbibed get too firmly rooted to be either shaken or eradicated by the force of argument or reflection. In no profession is the dread of innovation as great as the armed forces.’²

² Stephen Peter Rosen, *Winning the Next War: Innovation and Modern Military*, Cornell University Press, 1991, p. 2.

India's technological, doctrinal and organizational structures need to be structured in tune with the emerging geostrategic environment and the threats faced by the nation. Presently, the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) is headed by the longest-serving chief, whose tenure may vary from a month to more than a year. Apart from this, in the existing organization, the responsibility to deal with Pakistan devolves on four army commands, two air force commands and one naval command. Similarly, three army commands and three air force commands deal with the Chinese threat.³ Whereas all security agencies have specified tasks under aid to civil authority, including disaster management, it is the Indian Armed Forces which primarily handles the internal security threat. Some commands have been earmarked for out-of-area contingency (OOAC) tasks;⁴ however, no dedicated command exists for undertaking or coordinating the same. To top it all, India has still not appointed the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) despite having accepted its necessity more than a decade ago.⁵ The world over, all developed and emerging major powers have focused on military transformation and undertaken doctrinal and organizational changes to ensure better integration and synergy amongst their armed forces.

In India, the debate on defence reforms has been going on for the last couple of decades, but it received greater impetus after the Kargil War. The Group of Ministers (GoM) Report on National Security made a number of recommendations. Of these, the three most important ones were:⁶ appointment of the CDS; creation of unified commands; and integration of the service headquarters (HQ) with the Ministry of Defence (MoD). Though integration of service HQs with

³ K.V. Krishna Rao, *Prepare or Perish: A Study of National Security*, New Delhi: Lancer Publishers, 1991, p. 411.

⁴ Input based on author's interaction with some retired services officers. In case such an organization exists, perhaps its structure and organization tree is classified.

⁵ *Reforming the National Security System: Report of the Group of Ministers on National Security*, New Delhi: Government of India, 2001.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 99–103.

the MoD has been carried out, it is almost entirely a superficial/cosmetic than actual integration. The other two recommendations have not been taken to their logical conclusion. Apart from appointing the CDS, a reorganization of the military to form unified commands would serve to integrate operations and bring greater synergy to the military effort. The appointment of CDS remains imperative and in the long-term perspective, unified commands will have to be planned and raised.

The issues of ‘integration of service HQs with the MoD’ and ‘importance of training and professional military education to promote jointness in the armed forces’ have not been covered in the monograph, though they remain very important to achieving the desired jointness and integration in the armed forces. Similarly, integration of the armed forces with intelligence agencies and paramilitary forces, the relationship between the civilian bureaucracy and the service HQs and their role in enhancing jointness and integration with the armed forces have not been included in the monograph. This monograph attempts to establish the necessity of appointing a CDS and establishing unified commands to enhance jointness and integration at the strategic and operational levels, so as to conduct future wars in the framework of integrated operations in the Indian context. While dwelling on the essential arguments for and against CDS and unified commands, the narrative will seek to outline various options available to India for appointing a CDS and establishing unified commands.

Before arguing the case, it is imperative to understand the meaning of certain terms.

1. *Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS)*: The CJCS is the highest-ranking military officer of the United States (US) Armed Forces and is the principal military advisor to the President, the National Security Council (NSC) and the Secretary of Defense.
2. *Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)*: The CDS is the professional head of the British Armed Forces and the most senior uniformed military advisor to the Secretary of State for Defence and the Prime Minister. The CDS is based at the MoD and works alongside the Permanent Under Secretary (PUS), the ministry’s senior civil servant. In the European Union, the equivalent position is ‘Chief of Defence’.

The US concept of combatant commands includes unified commands and specified commands and these are defined as follows:

1. *Unified Command*: A command with a broad continuing mission under a single commander and composed of significant assigned components of two or more military departments that is established and so designated by the President, through the Secretary of Defense, with the advice and assistance of the CJCS.⁷ Examples of unified commands include Pacific Command, Central Command, Africa Command, European Command, Northern and Southern Commands of the US; and the Andaman and Nicobar Command in the Indian context.
2. *Specified Combatant Command*: It is a command normally composed of forces from a single military department that has a broad, continuing mission, normally functional, and is established and so designated by the President through the Secretary of Defense with the advice and assistance of the CJCS.⁸ The US Special Operations Command, Strategic Command and Transportation Command and Indian Strategic Forces Command are some examples of specified combatant command.
3. *Theatre of War*: This term denotes properly such a portion of the space over which war prevails as has its boundaries protected, and thus possesses a kind of independence.⁹ The theatres for the US Armed Forces are earmarked by geographically dividing the entire globe into different theatres. In the Indian context, one military analyst states:

Conceptually, a theatre should include within its geographical boundary the entire geographically contiguous territory of a competing entity or an adversary including geographically contiguous territories of those entities or states which, in the

⁷ *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of United States*, Joint Publication 1, March 25, 2013, p. GL-12, available at www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp1.pdf (accessed June 15, 2014).

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. GL-11.

⁹ Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, available at www.clausewitz.com/readings/OnWar1873/Bk5ch02.html (accessed June 29, 2014).

event of hostilities, may collaborate either with the adversary or with own country. It must also include adjoining seas and space above that may be essential for manoeuvre of own forces to address the threatening entity/adversary and its geographically contiguous collaborator(s).¹⁰

Jointness and its Implications

To address the question of jointness, one must first understand its meaning and implications. Conceptually, jointness implies synergized use of the resources of the three services in a seamless manner to achieve the best results in the least possible time. The idea is to avoid needless redundancy and to optimally utilize available resources. While jointness is a universally accepted concept in modern-day warfare, the methodology of achieving it varies from nation to nation. The American doctrine for its armed forces illuminates:

Jointness implies cross-service combination wherein the capability of the joint force is understood to be synergistic, with the sum greater than its parts (the capability of individual components). It further states that joint forces require high levels of interoperability and systems that are conceptualized and designed with joint architectures and acquisition strategies. This level of interoperability reduces technical, doctrinal and cultural barriers that limit the ability of joint force commanders to achieve objectives. The goal is to employ joint forces effectively across the range of military operations.¹¹

What does it seek to achieve?

First, based on unity of effort, jointness seeks to focus all the energy of armed forces across the range of military operations, throughout all levels of war, in every environment, towards enhancing the effectiveness of military operations. Second, joint

¹⁰ Prakash Katoch, 'Integrated Theatre Commands', *Indian Defence Review*, Vol. 28, No. 3, July–September 2013, available at <http://www.indiandefencereview.com/news/integrated-theatre-commands/> (accessed on 11 February 2016).

¹¹ *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of United States*, n. 7, pp. 1–2.

forces provide commanders with multidimensional capabilities (land, sea, air, space and special operations) that are more effective than uni-service forces, by providing a wider range of operational and tactical options; and lastly, multiple service capabilities allow an innovative commander to combine joint capabilities in asymmetrical as well as symmetrical ways to produce total military impact [that is] greater than the sum of its parts.¹²

One Indian military analyst enunciates:

True jointness entails integration of individual services to achieve a composite whole. It implies enmeshing the three services together at different levels and placing them under one commander for execution of operational plans. The creation of a dedicated resource is meant to be employed by the commander in the manner he deems appropriate to achieve the best results. It assumes that the theatre commander is well-versed with the operational imperatives of the various dimensions of battle (the land, sea and air) and understands the employment of all three services components functioning under him.¹³

To be truly integrated, the services must take their jointness to a higher level. The coordinating mechanisms must be so designed that an assorted force can be immediately assembled and dispatched to meet various contingencies/scenarios.¹⁴ Integrated forces are premised on the presence of a theatre commander with overriding authority. He is vested with authority and the resources to undertake operational missions, and is alone responsible for the employment of all three services components functioning under him. His orders cut down the response time in developing situations during operations, and exploit fleeting windows of opportunity.

¹² C. Michael Vitale, 'Jointness by Design, Not Accident', *Joint Force Quarterly*, Autumn 1995, p. 27.

¹³ Deepak Kapoor, 'Need for Integrated Theatre Commands', *Centre for Land Warfare Studies Journal*, Summer 2013, pp. 47–49.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 49–50.

STATUS OF JOINTNESS IN THE INDIAN ARMED FORCES

The need for jointness was well appreciated even at the dawn of India's independence. India inherited a command structure for the services which had unity of command, under a Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C). Soon, a Joint Services Wing (JSW) was set up for training officer cadets, which later became the National Defence Academy (NDA), followed by establishment of Defence Services Staff College (DSSC). To these were added, in due course, the College of Defence Management (CDM) at Secunderabad at a more senior level and finally, the National Defence College (NDC) at New Delhi for training officers of the rank of Brigadier and equivalent.¹⁵ This framework for joint training of officers at different levels, and to bring them together again at different stages of their careers, was, therefore, well laid out and continues till now. It has yielded some good results in bringing about inter-service bonhomie; however, optimization in jointness continues to elude the Indian Armed Forces.

As far as operational experience is concerned, immediately after the Partition, Pakistan's military forces, masquerading as freedom fighters, invaded Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). The ensuing conflict in 1947–48 saw an integrated approach in utilization of the army and air force, despite it being in nascent stage with limited resources, and played a substantial role in stalling the Pakistani endeavours in annexing the state of J&K. In the later conflicts, lack of integrated thinking was obvious in the 1962 and 1965 wars; the former was left purely to the army to conduct and the latter saw each service fighting very much their individual wars. In 1962, the army did not carry out joint planning with

¹⁵ P.S. Das, 'Jointness in Indian Military—What it Is and What it Must Be', *Journal of Defence Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2007, p. 4.

the other service involved, namely, the air force. Even the chiefs of the three services, it is reported, never met to discuss the developing situation on the border during the operations. Hence, there was no coordination between the army and the air force and the tasks were projected and carried out on ad hoc basis.¹⁶ The use of air power in 1962 would certainly have significantly boosted the troop morale and stiffened the resistance. It would have conveyed a message to the Chinese about the extent of India's resolve.¹⁷

In the 1965 war, inter-services cooperation was again far from satisfactory. The institutional framework for it was rudimentary, and the situation on ground left much to be desired. The Indian Navy was given a limited role during the war. Army–air force cooperation was primitive and ineffective. Many senior officers had no experience of modern war and a very inadequate appreciation of the potentialities and limitations of air power respectively.¹⁸ Arguably, this was also more than a failure of jointness. It meant that the senior leadership of the air force in 1962, and the navy in 1965, could not adequately convince the political leadership of the utility of their instruments in attainment of policy objectives. The moot point here is: were the single-service plans for such contingencies effective?

The 1971 operations, a resounding success, showed considerable improvement in joint planning, more so due to the personalities involved than to any institutionalized system. Field Marshal S.H.F.J. Manekshaw brought up the case for jointness immediately after 1971 war. Speaking at DSSC in Wellington, he made a telling comment that the area commands in India were dysfunctional and needed to be reduced to joint commands which would operate under a CDS.¹⁹ Inter alia, this

¹⁶ 'Official 1962 War History', *Bharat Rakshak*, p. 418, available at [www.bharat-rakshak.com/LAND-forces/Army/History/1962 war/PDF/](http://www.bharat-rakshak.com/LAND-forces/Army/History/1962%20war/PDF/) (accessed April 1, 2014).

¹⁷ R. Sukumaran, 'The 1962 India–China War and Kargil 1999: Restrictions on the Use of Air Power', *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 27, No. 3, July–September 2003, p. 341.

¹⁸ 'Official 1965 War History', n. 16.

¹⁹ K. Raja Menon, 'Jointness in Strategic Capabilities: Can we Avoid it', *Journal of Defence Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2007, p. 35.

meant that the existence of JSW–NDA, the DSSC and the NDC for several years before 1971 perhaps had not effectively contributed to jointness. Highest leadership is important (as was in 1971) but staff work towards jointness is also vital. The 1971 war, the successful outcome notwithstanding, is replete with examples at the operational/tactical level where jointness of a better quality would have been more effective.

Operation Cactus—the Indian military’s mission to rescue the Maldivian government headed by President Gayoom from a coup d’état launched in November 1988—displayed an exemplary degree of jointness and coordination between the three services. On the same day of Gayoom’s request, the Indian Air force (IAF) airlifted some 300 paratroops from Agra to Male, landing on the nearby island of Hulhule. Additional troops were transported by air and sea from Cochin and the air force Mirages were deployed over Male as a show of force. The navy captured ‘Progress Light’ at sea. They took control of Male within a few hours and President Gayoom was rescued. Fortuitously, the army, air force and navy were meshed in quite well. Small numbers were involved but the strategic outcomes for Male were significant. Regime change in Maldives was prevented. The operation was very well acknowledged world over, and it showcased Indian capability to execute a combined services operation in an efficient and timely manner.

In the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) operations in Sri Lanka, though the Overall Force Commander (OFC) was provided with component commanders subordinated to him from the Eastern Naval Command and the Southern Air Command respectively, the navy and IAF Cs-in-C, responsible for providing forces, declined to delegate command and instead got the component commanders designated as liaison officers with no role other than to act as a via-media between the HQs of the OFC and the Cs-in-C. By the end, the OFC lost credibility and was, in effect, just the commander of land forces with the two other wings cooperating, but independently.²⁰

²⁰ Harkirat Singh, *Intervention in Sri Lanka: The IPKF Experience Retold*, New Delhi: Manohar, 2007, p. 125.

The Kargil conflict, again, highlighted the pitfalls in the national security system. The Kargil Review Committee (KRC), GoM Report on 'Reforming the National Security System' and Standing Committee on Defence noted that it was the lack of synergy among the three services which caused difficulties to the armed forces during the Kargil War.²¹ Modern warfare demands an organization fully responsible for operational control, which should determine the range of equipping of the forces, the type of weaponry, be these of army, navy or air force, and the same being in consonance with the nature of threats, type and scale of operations envisaged, tactics to be employed and future developments in weapons and equipment, etc. The full potential of a unified command and collective application of forces otherwise cannot achieve the desired results.

1.1 Evolution of the Concept of Unified Commands in India

The commonly held view that unified command in the Indian Armed Forces is a recent phenomenon, though accurate, does not adequately acknowledge the impulse to unify, which goes back to nearly four decades. In 1976, when India established the unified 'Fortress Andaman and Nicobar' (FORTAN), it was a 'qualified' acceptance of the basic principles of defence integration. The army placed an infantry battalion, and subsequently a brigade, under the Fortress commander. The IAF, on the other hand, stationed its units under one of the IAF commands on the mainland, with a liaison unit in the Fortress HQ.²²

Establishment of FORTAN under the command of a naval officer underlined the strategic importance of Andaman and Nicobar Islands and was a step towards better integration between the services, especially

²¹ Standing Committee on Defence, *Review of Implementation Status of Group of Ministers Report on Reforming National Security System in Pursuance to Kargil Review Committee Report—A Special Reference to Management of Defence*, Twenty-second Report, New Delhi: Government of India, 2006–07, p. 14.

²² Arun Prakash, 'Evolution of Joint Andaman and Nicobar Command and Defence of our Island Territories', *USI Journal*, No. 551, January–March 2003.

the army and the navy. However, air force continued to keep its unit under one of the air force commands. It was only at a later stage, when it was converted into a theatre/unified command, namely, Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC), that the air resources were placed directly under the ANC.

In the wake of the 1999 Kargil conflict, many former diplomats, military leaders and defence experts called for drastic changes to the existing system.²³ The KRC²⁴ and the GoM report,²⁵ by themselves, brought to light several grave deficiencies in India's security management system and recommended certain measures to be undertaken. The problem with the existing set-up in the management of defence, as brought out by the GoM, is attached as Appendix A.²⁶ Of all the recommendations made by the GoM report, as mentioned earlier, three are most relevant to this subject: integration of the services both with each other and with the MoD; the creation of a CDS; and joint operational commands.²⁷

While there was a lack of consensus on the subject, a pro-forma restructuring of the MoD was undertaken as recommended by the GoM and the appointment of a CDS and adoption of unified command system was the next logical step. The creation of ANC was to evolve, from first principles, and was meant to provide a framework for a unified formation. In the crucible of the new command would be tested the working rules, standard operating procedures and doctrines, which would then be codified for use by future unified commands. The idea was to develop a framework, which could become

²³ Rajesh Basrur, 'Lessons of Kargil as Learned by India', in Peter Lavoy (ed.), *Asymmetric Warfare in South Asia: The Causes and Consequences of the Kargil Conflict*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 318–20.

²⁴ Kargil Review Committee (KRC), *From Surprise to Reckoning: The Kargil Review Committee Report*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2000, p. 259.

²⁵ *Report of the Group of Ministers on National Security*, n. 5, pp. 100–04.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 97–99.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

a template for replication elsewhere.²⁸ The Standing Committee on Defence, in its report, categorically noted that the ANC and Strategic Forces Command (SFC) were set up as India's first integrated commands. Both were meant to exemplify the application of jointness and how the concept could be applied to other tri-service commands.²⁹ Alas, the enabling provision of creating a CDS was not agreed upon, thereby rendering 'unification' a stillborn idea.³⁰

More recently, the recommendation of the Naresh Chandra Committee for appointing a permanent chairman of the COSC faced tremendous bureaucratic opposition from within the MoD.³¹ Under pressure, the defence minister clarified that the issue was yet to be discussed by the Cabinet Committee on Security, but not without revealing the MoD's deeply held biases. Incidentally, Pranab Mukherjee, as Defence Minister, had remarked during a presentation in 2005, at HQ Integrated Defence Staff (IDS), that the government had even decided who the CDS would be but then, there was 'no political consensus'; but he added in the same breath: 'but then there is no political consensus on so many things but they do come through.'³²

In many ways, therefore, it can be argued that India's armed forces have been primed to function as independent entities. The absence of a CDS means the forces lack the command and control structure needed to operationalize unified commands. But the services themselves haven't shown much enthusiasm in embracing the notion of 'unified operations'. The creation of IDS, ANC and SFC was merely a grudging admission of the fact that 'jointness' as a concept, and 'jointmanship' as its product,

²⁸ Prakash, 'Evolution of Joint Andaman and Nicobar Command and Defence of our Island Territories', n. 22; and author's interview with a senior retired army officer and a naval officer.

²⁹ Standing Committee on Defence, *Status of Implementation of Unified Command for Armed Forces*, Thirty-sixth Report, New Delhi: Government of India, 2008–09, p. 2.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

³¹ 'Marching Forward on Reform', *The Hindu*, July 12, 2012.

³² Katoch, 'Integrated Theatre Commands', n. 10.

was an inescapable reality that the defence forces had to adapt to— however unwillingly. It is equally true that among the major armed forces in the world, Indian Armed Forces are the least integrated. Be it strategic or tactical doctrines, training, equipment, procurement or logistics, each service tends to go its way. The stark reality is that the Indian Armed Forces lack an integrated approach, and each service has its own individual doctrine in isolation from the joint doctrine.³³ Joint doctrines, by themselves, amount to little unless they are executable by joint organizations. The latter is absent in the form of unified commands. Without such structures ensuring horizontal and vertical interoperability, true jointness will remain a misnomer.³⁴

If the creation of ANC (SFC is a different case) was a positive step, then why have no further unified commands been established even after a period of one-and-a-half decades (2002–15) since its creation? Was this experimentation required or was ANC just an interim solution which disturbed the status quo the least and yet was hailed as a positive step? The media has reported that the Indian Armed Forces have submitted a proposal for creation of three new tri-service commands³⁵ to include cyber, aerospace and special operations command, with cyber command to get its head on rotational basis from the three services, space command under an air force officer, special forces (SF) command under an army officer and ANC to be headed by a naval officer. This implies reversion to command and control arrangements that existed prior to the creation of ANC. Does it mean that the idea of theatre commands will remain a non-starter and only functional tri-service commands may be raised? To fructify the idea of theatre

³³ Ali Ahmed, 'Military Doctrine: Next Steps', *IDS A Comment*, August 16, 2010, available at http://idsa.in/idsacomments/MilitaryDoctrinesNextsteps_aahmed_160810.html (accessed December 22, 2014).

³⁴ Vinod Anand, 'Integrated Defence Staff: For Jointness in the Armed Forces', *SP3 Military Yearbook*, No. 40, 2011–12, p. 158.

³⁵ Rajat Pandit, 'Govt Gets Cracking on Three New Tri-Service Commands', *The Times of India*, August 20, 2015, available at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Govt-gets-cracking-on-three-new-tri-Service-commands/articleshow/48550424.cms> (accessed on 11 February 2016).

commands, the appointment of a CDS is a mandatory requirement to overcome the resistance from various elements and service parochialism.

1.2 Geostrategic Environment

India has a unique position in the global scenario and no other country faces such vast and varied threats to its internal and external security as it does. The realm of geostrategic environment and the external and internal threats to India make a compelling case for appointment of a CDS and the creation of unified commands. The restructuring of its armed forces by appointing a CDS and creating unified commands will entail joint organization, joint planning, joint training, joint logistics and joint operations, ensuring a cohesive and synchronized approach and optimizing its capabilities to cater to the existential threats.

- India has two distinct adversaries, each on her northern/eastern and western front, with whom it has fought five wars in the past and territorial disputes with them continue with no foreseeable solution in the near future.³⁶
- Proxy war in J&K by Pakistan has continued unabated and is only likely to intensify in light of the withdrawal of international forces from Afghanistan. The situation in the North East too is not very stable with recent spurt in terrorist attacks.
- Threat to India's widespread island territories and the growing significance of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), especially in view of the Chinese forays into the region, apart from security of sea lanes of communications and non-traditional security threats.

³⁶ A large number of defence and security analysts tend to downplay China threat. However, the growing China-Pak nexus—strategic partnership and collaboration and their concerted efforts to stall India's regional interests—can have serious consequences for India. Further, the planning for national security needs to factor in all kinds of threats, including long-term threats, to the national security so as to be adequately prepared for various contingencies; hence, China threat remains a reality and must be factored in the national security planning.

- Aerospace and cyber threats, especially enhanced Chinese space and IW capabilities.
- India faces threat of Naxalism and spurt in growth of internal terrorist organizations like the Indian Mujahidin which can be exploited by its adversaries.
- Vast frontiers and varied terrain enhance the risk of natural and man-made disasters in the region and its involvement in humanitarian and disaster relief operations will continue to engage the armed forces. Apart from that, Indian role in various United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations is likely to continue.
- Nuclearization of the region.

Some of above-mentioned threats/concerns may exist perennially or may reduce/increase. Irrespective of this, jointness is paramount as a standing requirement to develop better capabilities and use them more effectively; not so much because the threats are increasing. In fact, shrinking threats will imply shrinking defence budgets and therefore, the need for better jointness to achieve better effectiveness.

Economic considerations are very relevant and joint organization and thinking will ensure maximization out of finite resources. This is best encapsulated by the statement made by then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, in his address at the Combined Commanders' Conference, 2013:

We will have to exercise prudence in our defence acquisition plans and cut our coat according to our cloth. While we must take into account the capabilities of our adversaries, we have to plan our long term acquisition on the assumption of limited resource availability. This is an exercise that has to be done with a high degree of priority and urgency.³⁷

³⁷ 'Prime Minister Hints at Trimming Defence Budget', *The New Indian Express*, November 23, 2013, available at <http://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/Prime-minister-hints-at-trimming-defence-budget-says-need-to-cut-our-coat-according-to-our-cloth/2013/11/23/article1905656.ece> (accessed on 11 February 2016).

The financial and resource constraints of defence budget invariably lead to each service vying for a greater pie of the budget share and planning its procurements in isolation. Though HQ IDS is involved in the procurement planning process, the prioritization gets affected without the CDS. Joint organization, with creation of the appointment of CDS catering to procurement and prioritization for all the three services, will ensure economy and optimization of resources.

The Indian defence budget has continued to shrink in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) and the current defence budget, at approximately 1.74 per cent of GDP, is the lowest since the 1960s. The problem gets further complicated with a large complement of defence equipment having outlived its life and the urgent need for defence modernization. To streamline and prioritize defence procurement and ensure timely defence modernization, appointment of CDS will be an enabler to facilitate HQ IDS in discharging its functions.

JOINTNESS IN MAJOR POWERS IN THE WORLD

In addressing the issue of ‘unified war fighting’ in the Indian context, it is useful to look at the experiences of other major powers. In this context, the transformation of the US Armed Forces—one of the most functionally integrated militaries in the world—is most relevant. The United Kingdom (UK) model merits analysis since the Indian Armed Forces are structured based on the UK model, though the UK Armed Forces have undergone significant transformation since then. China, as an aspiring global power and having long-standing territorial disputes with India, has undertaken military transformation in a major way, emphasizing fighting joint operations under the conditions of ‘informationalization’, with a major focus on space, electromagnetic spectrum and cyber domain and undertaking RMA with Chinese characteristics.

2.1 The American Experience

The US experience of joint operations dates back to 1862–63 when the Federal campaign against Vicksburg, as executed by General Ulysses S. Grant and Admiral David D. Porter, showed how joint doctrine principles were applied even before the development of modern communications and the internal combustion engine. The Union Army and naval forces jointly used unity of effort, mass and leverage and seized the initiative.

The US established a Joint Army and Navy Board in 1903 by joint order of the Secretaries of War and Navy for ‘conferring upon, discussing and reaching common conclusions regarding all matters calling for the cooperation of two services. Its main functions were to coordinate strategic planning between the War and Navy Departments and to assist in clarifying service roles and issues.’³⁸

³⁸ L. Steven Reardon, *Council of War: A History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff 1942–1991*, Washington, DC: Joint History Office, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2012, pp. 2–3.

It was, however, not until World War II that the US came around to accepting the stark imperative of integrated operations. When the US declared war on the Axis powers in December 1941, its military establishment consisted of autonomous war and navy departments, each with a subordinate air arm. Command and control were unified only at the top, in the person of President in his constitutional role as the C-in-C. However, the Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS) system established with Britain had a pervasive influence on the American thinking. As the CCS system became more entrenched, it demanded a more focused American response, which only the organizational structure of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) could provide and thus, JCS was created in January 1942 as a corporate body. As the war progressed, the increasing use of unified theatre commands, bringing ground, sea and air forces under one umbrella, occasionally aggravated stresses and strains.³⁹

Operation Overlord marked the culmination of grand strategic planning in the European theatre. Once the troops landed in Normandy on June 6, 1944, it was up to Eisenhower and his Generals to wage the battles that would bring victory in the West. Had it not been for the JCS and their determination to see the matter through, the invasion might have been postponed indefinitely and the results of the war could have been quite different. In a very real sense, the Overlord decision marked the Joint Chiefs' coming of age as a mature and reliable organization. It resulted in a more efficient and effective planning system within the JCS organization and a better appreciation among the chiefs themselves of what they could accomplish by working together. A turning point in the history of World War II, the Overlord decision was a major milestone in the progress and maturity of the JCS.⁴⁰

Command arrangements in the Pacific theatre evolved differently due to the predominant role played by the navy, limited participation of

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 5–6.

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 17–18.

the Combined Chiefs' and decisions taken during the initial stages of the war to split the theatre into two parts. Shortly after Pearl Harbor, General Marshall persuaded Admiral King to endorse the creation of a combined Australian–British–Dutch–American Command (ABDACOM) for the Southwestern Pacific in hopes of mobilizing greater resistance. The Japanese surge continued and ABDACOM soon fell apart, leaving command relationships in the South Pacific in shambles. From this unpleasant experience, King resolved never again to be drawn into a combined or unified command arrangement if he could possibly avoid it. Unity of command, King insisted, was highly overrated and definitely 'not a panacea for all military difficulties'.⁴¹

King's solution to command problems in the Pacific lay in a division of responsibility, approved by the Joint Chiefs with little debate on March 16, 1942, that created two parallel organizations: a Southwest Pacific Area command under General Douglas MacArthur, bringing together a patchwork of the US ground, sea and air forces with the remnants of the ABDACOM; and a Pacific Ocean Area command under Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, composed predominantly of navy and Marine Corps units. In 1944, a third Pacific command emerged, organized around the Twentieth Air Force, which operated under the authority of the JCS, with General Arnold as its executive agent. King would have preferred a single joint command for the Pacific, but he knew that if he pushed for one, it would probably go to MacArthur rather than to a navy officer. MacArthur was practically anathema to the navy, and Nimitz, the leading navy candidate for the post, was junior to MacArthur and still relatively unknown. Unlike the ABDACOM, which had fallen under the CCS, these new commands were the exclusive responsibility of the US and reported directly to the Joint Chiefs, the presence of Australian and other foreign forces under MacArthur notwithstanding. Though joint organizations composed of ground, air and naval forces, they were not, strictly speaking, 'unified' or integrated commands: MacArthur's staff was almost entirely army;

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 30.

Nimitz's was predominantly navy. One by-product of the new command structure was the establishment of the JCS 'executive agent' system, using the service chiefs as go-betweens. Thus, in relaying orders and other communications, Marshall dealt directly with MacArthur and King with Nimitz.⁴² From the outset, the two original commands conducted separate and different types of wars. Had it not been for the atomic bomb, which led to an abrupt surrender by Japan, the situation in Pacific may have been different.

The US experience in World War II provided countless lessons attesting to the importance of military effort achieved through unified command. Interestingly, while the US was able to achieve a degree of unified command in the European theatre during the war, attempts to establish unified command in the Pacific proved impossible due to inter-service rivalry. As it were, the war provided compelling evidence that the US needed an integrated military structure. Following World War II, the US President Harry Truman noted: 'We must never fight another war the way we fought the last two. I have a feeling that if the Army and Navy had fought our enemies as hard as they fought each other, the war would have ended much earlier.'⁴³

2.1.1 National Security Act, 1947

Truman's observation was an indictment of the US military's inability to collaborate effectively in the principal theatre of war. In the next few years, the US Armed Forces were to undertake a firm conceptual turn towards integrated war fighting. The National Security Act, 1947 was a seminal legislation in the US national security arena. It established the NSC and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and created National Military Establishment (NME) consisting of civilian Secretary of Defense who would oversee the military departments. However, the military departments maintained their status as 'individual executive

⁴² Ibid., pp. 30–31.

⁴³ Andrew Feickert, *The Unified Command Plan and Combatant Commands: Background and Issues for Congress*, Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 3 January, 2013, p. 3.

departments’, meaning it left legal authority of Secretary of Defense over them ambiguous. It also made the chiefs the principal military advisors to the President and the Secretary of Defense. However, the Secretary of Defense did not receive assistance from JCS in cutting the budget since the chiefs were ‘dual hatted’. Accordingly a study was ordered and its recommendations implemented in 1949 to include renaming NME as the Department of Defense (DoD) and demoting services to military department contained within DoD. It mandated that the secretary have,

“direction, authority and control” over DoD and become “principal assistant to the President in all matters related to defense. The JCS was altered by creating the position of Chairman of JCS, who took precedence in rank to all other officers. However, Congress, being fearful of creating a single commander presiding over military, forbade him from voting in JCS meetings and precluded him from having command authority over the JCS or the services.”⁴⁴

2.1.2 Department of Defense Reorganization Act, 1958

The Korean War displayed the gaps between the services and necessitated further changes.⁴⁵ By 1958, President Eisenhower, a strong proponent of unified commands, felt that the days of separate land, sea and air warfare were over⁴⁶ and that the complete unification of all military planning and combat forces and commands was a rank essential. He proposed that the Congress enact the Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1958, amending the National Security Act of

⁴⁴ Gordon Nathaniel Lederman, *Reorganizing the Joint Chief of Staff: The Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986*, Westport: Greenwood Press, 1999, p. 16–19.

⁴⁵ Reardon, *Council of War*, n. 38, brings out the inter-service bickering and the problems which persisted in the functioning of the JCS to the extent that they were kept out of the loop by a number of Presidents and Secretary of Defense.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 21. The US President Dwight Eisenhower’s accompanying message, while forwarding the proposal for the Reorganization Act of 1958, stated: ‘Separate ground, sea and air warfare is gone forever. Peacetime preparations and organization activity must conform to that fact. Strategic and tactical planning must be completely united, combat forces organized into unified commands, each equipped with the most efficient weapons that science can develop, singly led and prepared to fight as one, regardless of service.’

1947, authorizing the President, acting through the Secretary of Defense and with the advice of the JCS, to establish unified and specified commands, to assign missions to them and to determine their force structure. He proposed that the chain of command run from the President to the Secretary of Defense and then, to the CINCs⁴⁷ of the unified command and specified commands, eliminating both the service secretaries and the chiefs from the chain of command. The JCS would serve as a staff assisting the Secretary of Defense in commanding the CINCs. It was further recommended giving the chairman a vote in JCS meetings and he was to be first among equals rather than dominant figure in JCS.

2.1.3 Goldwater Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act, 1986

This structure remained consistent till 1984–85 when consistent inter-services squabbling necessitated further reforms. Blue-ribbon panel argued that the chiefs suffered from unbearable load having to serve simultaneously as heads of their services and as JCS members. It recommended that responsibility for the unified command plan be transferred from JCS to a single officer.⁴⁸ The legislative battle continued in 1985–86 till the enactment of Goldwater Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, with President Reagan signing the bill on 1 October 1986.

Based on their experiences, the defence reforms in the US have been continuously evolving with the passage of National Security Act, 1947, followed by Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1958 and the landmark Goldwater Nichols Act, 1986, which was passed by the US Congress as a new vision for joint warfare planning and theatre command concept, which actually ushered in true integration.

The combatant commanders that came about as a result of the Goldwater Nichols Act were immensely successful. The US Armed

⁴⁷ CINC in the case of the United States refers to commanders of unified/specified commands.

⁴⁸ Reardon, *Council of War*, n. 38, pp. 23–24.

Forces operated seamlessly in operations after the Cold War, like JUST CAUSE (Panama), DESERT STORM (Iraq, 1991) and DELIBERATE FORCE (Bosnia).⁴⁹ This stood in stark contrast to the difficulties and inter-service squabbling of Grenada and Lebanon in the early 1980s. The US forces on land, sea and air, now, reinforce and complement each other more than ever. The Goldwater Nichols Act also elevated the chairman to the principal military advisor to the President, the NSC and the Secretary of Defense. It allows the chairman authority and discretion ‘as he considers appropriate’ to consult with the chiefs and the CINCs before rendering his military advice.

One of the major effects of the said act has been to give geographic combatant commanders the responsibility for executing policy for the nation, while taking away forces from the traditional control of the services and the functional commands. The functional commands do not engage in overseas operations themselves, but provide the forces that allow the geographic combatant commands to execute their operations.⁵⁰ It will have to be acknowledged, even if grudgingly, that the US defence organization has evolved over the years based on their experiences in World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War, the Gulf War (Operation Desert Storm), Iraq War and the ongoing Afghanistan War. More importantly, the US Armed Forces have been quick to learn from their mistakes to evolve into a fully integrated military.

2.1.4 Functioning of JCS

The JCS, consisting of the CJCS, the vice chairman of the JCS, the Chief of Staff, US Army, the Chief of Naval Operations, the Chief of Staff, US Air Force, and the Commandant of the Marine Corps, and supported by the Joint Staff under the direction of the CJCS, constitutes the immediate military staff of the Secretary of Defense.

⁴⁹ James Locher, *Victory on the Potomac: The Goldwater-Nichols Act Unifies the Pentagon*, College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2002, pp. 444–47.

⁵⁰ Cynthia. A. Watson, *Combatant Commands: Origins, Structure and Engagements*, Westport: Praeger, 2010, p. 15.

The CJCS is the principal military advisor to the President, the NSC, the Homeland Security Council (HSC) and the Secretary of Defense. Subject to the authority, direction and control of the President and the Secretary of Defense, the duties of the CJCS are very clearly elucidated and given as Appendix B.⁵¹

It can be seen that the US has gone through similar problems as being faced by India in undertaking defence reforms but, ultimately, the political leadership enforced reforms in the US Armed Forces to ensure that they emerge as a well-integrated entity with clearly allocated charter of duties. What may seem to have been a relatively easy victory was far from preordained. Rather, it was the product of a long and complicated process, with antecedents reaching back to the creation of the JCS in World War II. Established in January 1942 to expedite wartime planning and strategic coordination with the British, the Joint Chiefs operated initially under the direct authority and supervision of the President, performing whatever duties he assigned in his capacity as C-in-C. After the war, as part of the 1947 reorganization of the armed services under the National Security Act, the JCS acquired statutory standing with a list of assigned duties and became a corporate advisory body to the President, the Secretary of Defense and the NSC. The corporate nature of the Joint Chiefs' advisory role ended upon passage of the 1986 Goldwater Nichols Act, which transferred the tasks and duties previously performed collectively by the JCS to the chairman. But in retaining the JCS as an organized entity, the new law affirmed that they should continue to hold 'regular' meetings and act as 'military advisors' to the chairman.⁵²

⁵¹ *Functions of the Department of Defense and its Major Components*, US Department of Defense, Directive No. 5100.01, dated 21 December 2010, pp. 14–19, available at www.dtic.mil/directives/corres/pds/510001p.pdf (accessed 5 January 2015). I would like to highlight here that this document is a very exhaustive one, giving the functions of the CJCS in extensive details (see Appendix B).

⁵² Reardon, *Council of War*, n. 38, p. 537.

India needs to undertake serious defence reforms in consonance with its security and strategic environment, though not necessarily akin to the Americans, but reform it must. For that, political impetus is obligatory.

2.2 Jointness in British Armed Forces

The UK was the first country to have a COSC, dating to 1923, to ensure inter-service balance and coordination. Its model was emulated by the US during World War II. The combining of American JCS and British COSC into CCS during the war facilitated the conduct of operations in all theaters except the Pacific. This experience came in handy while setting up North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) command and control structures.

When the British MoD first came into being in 1946, it was essentially a coordinating office for the three single-service ministries. The post-war explosion of weapons technology, acceleration in the rate of military change, with its related defence cost inflation, and the power centres devolving around single-service ministries led to another set of reforms, which resulted in strengthening the appointment of Minister of Defence and appointment of first independent chairman of COSC.

This was enabled by Minister of Defence Duncan Sandys' white paper, 'Central Organisation of Defence', confirming increased powers to Minister of Defence. A new Defence Board was set up under the chairmanship of Minister of Defence, with service ministers, the Chiefs of Staff (COS), PUS and Chief Scientific Advisor (CSA) as members and, at the same time, the Chairman COSC was retitled as CDS.⁵³ Though these reforms appeared substantial, the service ministers still held the real power, with their sovereignty under the Parliament still unimpaired; and the ministers, though no longer in the Cabinet, still

⁵³ Quoted in General Sir William Jackson, Field Marshal Lord Bramal, *The Chiefs*, UK: Brassey's, 1992, p. 322. Sir William Dickson was appointed the first independent Chairman COSC in 1956. He subsequently was re-designated as CDS.

held seats on the Defence Committee of the Cabinet. The Defence Board too became unwieldy and rarely met. The CDS was not given an executive staff and the joint planning staff was responsible to him only as Chairman COSC and not CDS. He could not direct them and each director of plans worked for, was supported by and was loyal to his own chief and service ministry.⁵⁴ The Indian government took up analogous steps in the 1990s and set up the Defence Planning Staff (DPS) under Director General Defence Planning Staff (DGDPS). It had the same problems already experienced and corrected in the UK. In fact, the Indian Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (CIDS) to the COSC today occupies the office of DGDPS.

2.2.1 Mountbatten Era

Mountbatten took over as CDS in 1959 and started looking for levers of power. They were the PUS and CSA. The CDS, PUS and CSA became the triumvirate of co-equal advisors to the Minister of Defence and they were feared by the single-service ministries as an inner cabal. Mountbatten would have liked to pursue his idea of unification of service ministries, and of the services, but he felt that the new CDS structure should be allowed to evolve. He, first, reinforced his personal briefing staff of his own choice and finally, won in getting his own director of plans who would chair Joint Planning Staff Committee meetings, thus reflecting CDS's chairmanship of the chiefs and ensuring his views were fully reflected in their work.⁵⁵

Mountbatten then won agreement to setting up unified commands overseas as part of an evolutionary approach to integration of command at all levels, including Whitehall, once experience had been gained in the working of tri-service headquarters. Accordingly HQs British Forces were established on a tri-service basis in Cyprus in 1960; in Aden in 1961; and in Singapore in 1962, despite fierce resistance from the services.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 322–23.

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 328–29.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

The success of the Kuwait intervention in 1961 was a feather in the cap of the tri-service command structure and it highlighted the inherent efficiencies in mounting quick operations through the Admiralty, War Office and Air Ministry. At the same time, irritating inadequacies were also emerging in weapon procurement due to differing perceptions of the three service ministries. A need was felt to launch a new unification drive and accordingly, Mountbatten was asked to submit a memorandum through the Minister of Defence. His paper discarded the Canadian concept of unification⁵⁷ and then outlined proposal for unified ministry. It stated:

There would be one Secretary of State assisted by Ministers of State with functional rather than single-service responsibilities. The Naval, General and Air Staffs would be integrated into a Defence Staff responsible to the CDS, who would be advised by the single-services Chiefs of Staff on sea, land and air matters as the heads of their sections of the overall Defence Staff. The CDS would have clear paramountcy over them, not just as their chairman, but in his own right; and the service chiefs would lose their status as the professional heads of their services, which would be taken over by the C-in-C or Inspector Generals of the Navy, Army and Air Force, who would act as the Principal Personnel Officers of their own services, responsible for their general 'well-being', taken to mean their management, training, morale and operational efficiency.⁵⁸

This paper was counter-attacked by the single-service chiefs with a paper of their own that accepted the principal of unified commands overseas, but was adamantly opposed to any downgrading of their corporate responsibilities as military advisors to the government or as professional heads of their own services.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ The Canadian unification model was based on combined armed forces with no separate segregation into individual services. It took the Canadians several decades to realize its pitfalls and as such, it was only in the last few years that many of the 'unification reforms' were undone. The matter of single-service culture is usually a strength that can sometimes become a weakness.

⁵⁸ General Sir William Jackson, Field Marshal Lord Bramal, *The Chiefs*, n. 53, , p. 336.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 337.

Faced with this vitriolic reaction, Prime Minister Macmillan commissioned an independent inquiry on these conflicting views, with Lord Ismay and Sir Ian Jacob, both Churchill's trusted wartime staff officers, as his inquisitors. They put forward three alternatives for Cabinet consideration and recommended the second option for implementation in 1964. This included:⁶⁰

- Co-location of Ministry of Defence, Admiralty, War Office and Air Ministry in one building.
- Minister of Defence became Secretary of State for Defence in a unified structure and service ministers were reduced in status to that of departments of the new Ministry of Defence.
- The board of Admiralty, Army Council and Air Council subordinated to a new Defence Council becoming the Admiralty, Army and Air Boards.
- Defence Council to be chaired by the Secretary of State with the three Ministers of Defence, CDS, the COS, PUS and CSA as members.
- Chiefs would retain their corporate responsibilities and remain the professional heads of their services.

The new ministry was organized to be 'Joint' rather than on 'Integrated' or 'Functional' basis as Mountbatten had envisaged. Thus, sections of naval, army and air staffs, with similar responsibilities, remained within their separate departments brought together by joint committees. However, co-location turned out to be an enormous asset and streamlined the way work was done. The chiefs and their staffs could, and increasingly did, walk into each other's offices' to settle issues by direct contact instead of over the telephone or by interminable correspondence.⁶¹ In the Indian context, it is not so simplistic. South Block already holds army, navy and civilians in the MoD and Vayu Bhavan is nearby. Yet, in the Indian context, it has not fructified to the desired extent.

⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 337–39.

⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 340–41.

2.2.2 Lewin and Nott Reforms

The CDS, however, remained Chief of Defence Staff only in name. He controlled and directed the defence staff on behalf of the Chiefs of Staff as a body and then, only after terms of reference had been agreed by them. In 1982, Lewin, the then CDS, proposed to his colleagues that he should recommend to the Secretary of State a strengthening of the powers of the CDS to make him the pre-eminent member of the COSC. In this initiative, he was supported in varying degrees by the other chiefs, and his five new important principles were agreed by Nott (Secretary of State) and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and implemented in January 1982. These were as follows:⁶²

- CDS was to be the principal military advisor to the Government in his own right, and not just as Chairman COSC.
- The committee was to be the forum from which he would draw single-Service advice, but it would also lose its collective responsibility for the military advice tendered by CDS to the Government.
- The Chiefs were to remain the professional heads of their Services, responsible for their efficiency and morale, and for tendering single-Service advice to CDS.
- The Central operational and military policy staffs were made responsible to CDS rather than the COSC. He would take the initiative and give them direction for their studies, the results of which would be put subsequently to his colleagues for endorsement or criticism. This would allow a more positive approach in tendering advice to Ministers and speedier dispatch of operational business.
- A Senior Appointments Committee was set up to oversee the promotion and appointments of all three- and four-star officers.

⁶² Ibid., pp. 399–400.

The efficacy of these reforms was soon put to test in the Falklands War. The success of this model was validated in that campaign, which turned out to be one of the rare episodes in history which ended with the politicians and the military enjoying mutual respect for each other's contribution to victory.⁶³

2.2.3 Helestone Reforms

After the Falklands War, Helestone took over as Secretary of State for Defence and continued the reform process. However, he did not consult the CDS or Chiefs of Staff and produced his own paper setting out what he intended to achieve:⁶⁴

- Functionalization of the Defence Staff.
- Weakening of the influence of the service departments, particularly the power of single-service chiefs.
- Creation of a new and largely civil Office of Management and Budget, reporting direct to him through 2nd PUS, and responsible for deciding the shape and size of the forces.

His proposals centred upon clipping the wings of the single-service chiefs by removing their vice chiefs of staff and cutting down their executive staff. Instead, four new functional sections of the new Defence Staff, as Deputy Chiefs of Defence Staff 'Commitments', 'Systems' and 'Programmes and Personnel' (the fourth being 'Policy' under a three-star civil servant), were created. All four appointments were to report to CDS through a four-star Vice Chief of the Defence Staff (VCDS). The single-service chiefs were left with two-star Assistant Chiefs of Staff advised by one-star directors.⁶⁵ Under the Heseltine reforms, the CDS and PUS became the principal advisors to the Secretary of State for Defence. The respective service chiefs had very

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 418–19.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 430.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

little role in policy formulation. However, they had the privilege of direct access to the Prime Minister.⁶⁶

The UK established a Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ) in 1996, in which there is a very high level of integration within the MoD and people in uniform and their civilian counterparts. It commands joint and combined military operations and provides politically aware advice to the MoD. Until establishment of PJHQ, the responsibility for the planning and conduct of any UK-led or joint overseas operation had been handed to one of the single services.⁶⁷

2.2.4 Levene Reforms

The Defence Reform Review led by Lord Levene, in a report published in June 2011, recommended further reforms. It recommended creation of Joint Forces Command (JFC) to manage and deliver specific capabilities and to take the lead on joint warfare development, drawing on lessons and experimentation to advice on how the armed forces should conduct joint operations in the future.

Commander of Joint Operations (CJO) and the PJHQ command forces deploy on joint operations overseas. The single services remain responsible for specific maritime operations (including the deterrent), security of the UK's airspace and the UK resilience. The PJHQ commanded by the CJO is the national operational-level command. The CJO is responsible for the planning and execution of joint, or potentially joint, national and UK-led multinational operations conducted outside the UK. He reports direct to CDS for contingency planning and advice on the conduct and resourcing of current operations or standing commitments, other than for routine running of the Permanent Joint Operating Bases, which is the responsibility of Commander JFC.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Lord Levene et al., *Defence Reform: An Independent Report into the Structure and Management of the Ministry of Defence (MOD)*, June 2011, available at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/27408/defence_reform_report_struct_mgt_mod_27june2011.pdf (accessed April 4, 2014).

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ UK MoD, *The New Operating Model: How the Defence Works*, available at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/attachment_data/file/302409/20140409-how-defence-works.pdf (accessed April 5, 2014).

2.2.5 Current UK DoD Structure

In the current structure, the Secretary of State for Defence and his two principal military advisors, CDS and PUS, are supported in their direction and management of defence by a number of top-level boards and committees:⁶⁹

- The Secretary of State chairs the Defence Council and its delegated service boards (the Admiralty Board, the Army Board and the Air Force Board), as well as the Defence Ministerial Committee.
- The CDS and PUS chair the COSC and Defence Board respectively.

Both of them work together in an integrated head office of civilian and military staff, functioning as both the centre of the Department of State and a strategic military HQ. The core responsibilities of the CDS, who is responsible to the Secretary of the State, are as follows:⁷⁰

- Leading defence, with PUS.
- Planning, direction and conduct of all military operations as Strategic Military Commander.
- Professional head of the armed forces.
- Military advice, including single-service views, to ministries, wider government and the board.
- Together with PUS, setting strategy for defence.

The service chiefs are accountable to CDS and are responsible for the following:⁷¹

- Leadership and long-term health of their service, including professional standards, reputation, ethos, welfare and morale (accountable to the Secretary of State).

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Levene et al., *Defence Reform*, n. 666, p. 74.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 75.

- Developing and generation of forces.
- Managing Top Level Budget (TLB) to deliver the command plan with delegated budget and corporate framework (accountable to the CDS/PUS).
- Commissioning Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S) for equipment and support outputs (accountable to the CDS/PUS).
- Advice to CDS and ministers on the operational employment of the service.
- Contribute to CDS's formulation of strategic military advice.

Commander JFC is accountable to the CDS and responsible for the following:⁷²

- Command of JFC with responsibility for the development and generation of allocated capabilities.
- Managing TLB to deliver command plan within delegated budget and corporate framework (accountable to PUS/CDS).
- Commissioning DE&S for equipment and support outputs relating to allocated capabilities (accountable to PUS).
- Advice on the operational employment of allocated capabilities.
- Integrating, championing and supporting the development of enabling capabilities held within the single services.
- Joint warfare development to ensure the effective delivery of joint operational capability.

As one analyzes the British defence reforms, it demonstrates the emphasis placed by the political leadership on national security and how well enmeshed the civil–military structures have emerged in the

⁷² Ibid., p. 76.

UK. Besides the US and the UK, there are other countries that have unified commands (either functional and/or theatre/regional commands). Nations like the UK and France, that have an established power projection capability, are more likely to set up unified commands, but some other commonwealth countries that are active in defence matters, like Australia and Canada, have also embraced the concept.

What clearly emerges from the analyses of the US and the UK defence reforms is the necessity of political impetus and creation of structures to suit the peculiar security and strategic requirements of India.

2.3 China

Though China embarked on its modernization drive in the late 1970s as ‘four modernizations’,⁷³ it is only over the past two decades that China has embarked on a comprehensive military modernization programme. China has been secretive about its military modernization and defence expenditure; however, its defence white papers do give a fair idea as to the direction in which the reforms are proceeding. At the same time, China has given an impetus to joint operations and informationization. China’s concerted efforts to modernize and transform its military are being facilitated by the phenomenal increase in Chinese military expenditure, which has grown from \$10 billion in 1997 to \$145 billion in 2015.⁷⁴ China’s defence white paper in 2013, *Diversified Employment of China’s Armed Forces*, enunciates:⁷⁵

It is a strategic task of China’s modernization drive as well as a strong guarantee for China’s peaceful development to build a

⁷³ Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, W.W. Norton & Company, 1999, pp. 609, 618–24. The four modernizations were modernization of agriculture, industry, national defence and science and technology.

⁷⁴ See ‘Chapter Six: Asia, the Military Balance’, in *The Military Balance 2014*, London: Routledge, February 2014, pp. 209–10; and ‘China’s Defense Budget’, available at www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/china/budget.htm (accessed April 8, 2015).

⁷⁵ *The Diversified Employment of China’s Armed forces*, Beijing: Information Office of the State Council, People’s Republic of China, April 2013, available at http://www.china.org.cn/government/whitepaper/node_7181425.htm (accessed on July 21, 2015).

strong national defense and powerful armed forces which are commensurate with China's international standing and meet the needs of its security and development interests. China's armed forces act to meet the new requirements of China's national development and security strategies, follow the theoretical guidance of the Scientific Outlook on Development, speed up the transformation of the generating mode of combat effectiveness, build a system of modern military forces with Chinese characteristics, enhance military strategic guidance and diversify the ways of employing armed forces as the times require. China's armed forces provide a security guarantee and strategic support for national development, and make due contributions to the maintenance of world peace and regional stability.

2.3.1 People's Liberation Army (PLA) Organization

China's ability to project combat power depends on coordination across all domains—air, land, sea, space, cyber and electromagnetic—of military power, and the PLA recognizes that it must enact organizational and training reforms to achieve the level of joint operational capability to which it aspires.⁷⁶

China officially described its overall command structure and military decision-making process in its 2006 defence white paper.⁷⁷ The state exercises unified leadership over national defence activities. China's armed forces are under the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC). The Central Military Commission (CMC) of the CPC and that of the People's Republic of China (PRC) are completely the same in their composition and in their function of exercising leadership over the armed forces. The responsibilities of the CMC encompass

⁷⁶ Michael S. Chase et al., *China's Incomplete Military Transformation: Assessing the Weaknesses of People's Liberation Army*, Santa Monica: RAND, 2015, p. 140, http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR800/RR893/RAND_RR893.pdf (accessed on April 4, 2015).

⁷⁷ *China's National Defense in 2006*, Beijing: Information Office of the State Council, People's Republic of China, December 29, 2006.

operational command over all of China's armed forces and its branches, military doctrine development, logistics and civil–military relations.

Apart from the chairman, CMC also has two vice chairmen and eight members. The members include: Minister of National Defense; directors of General Staff Department (GSD), General Political Department, General Logistics Department and General Armaments Department; and commanders of PLA Navy (PLAN), PLA Air Force (PLAAF) and PLA Second Artillery Force (PLASAF). Till 2004, CMC did not have any member from PLAN, PLAAF and PLASAF; and it is only since 2004 that the service chiefs have been made members of the CMC. It was the first time in 2012 that an air force General was made a vice chairman of the CMC.

The 2013 defence white paper provides substantial information on Chinese Armed Forces and the direction in which they are moving.⁷⁸

PLA Army (PLAA): The army has reoriented from regional defence to trans-regional mobility, and is improving its capabilities in air–ground operations, long-distance manoeuvres, rapid assaults and special operations. The focus is on development of army aviation troops, light mechanized units and special operations forces (SOFs), and enhancing building of digitalized units, gradually making its units small, modular and multifunctional in organization. The PLAA is organized into 18 combined corps (group armies) under the seven military area commands (MACs).

PLAN: The navy is accelerating modernization of its forces for comprehensive offshore operations by developing advanced submarines, destroyers and frigates, and improving integrated electronic and information systems. It is developing blue-water capabilities to conduct mobile operations and enhancing its capabilities of strategic deterrence and counter-attack and to counter non-traditional security threats. It has three fleets: the Beihai Fleet, the Donghai Fleet and the

⁷⁸ *The Diversified Employment of China's Armed Forces*, n. 75.

Nanhai Fleet. In September 2012, it commissioned its first aircraft carrier, *Liaoning*, into the PLAN. China's development of an aircraft carrier has had a profound impact on building a strong PLAN and safeguarding maritime security.

PLAAF: The air force is speeding up its transition from territorial air defence to both offensive and defensive operations. It is developing new generation fighters and new types of ground-to-air missiles and radar systems, thereby improving its strategic early warning, strategic deterrence and long-distance air strike capabilities. It has an air command in each of the seven MACs and has one airborne corps. A significant departure was made when the PLAAF General, Xu Qiliang, Deputy Chief of the GSD, was given the high-profile job of Joint Force Commander for the deployed PLA units of Peace Mission 2007.⁷⁹

PLASAF: It mainly comprises nuclear and conventional missile forces, primarily responsible for deterring other countries from using nuclear weapons against China and to carry out nuclear counter-attacks and precision strikes with conventional missiles. It is steadily enhancing its capabilities of strategic deterrence, nuclear counter-attack and conventional precision strike.

The PLA has seven military regions (MRs) or MACs. At the level of MR command, the air force command is integrated into the MR and it has a deputy commander at each MR command. Navy has deputy command slots in the coastal Shenyang, Nanjing and Guangzhou MRs. The MR also provides a useful basis on which to promote joint training and joint logistics. Since the logistics reforms of 1998, the PLA has also taken measures to combine logistics functions across the services.

The US lesson of Persian Gulf and Balkans, that air power can win wars or compel adversaries if backed by use of credible threat of ground invasion, has had considerable impact on Chinese thinking. To make military suasion credible against Taiwan, India or potential Central

⁷⁹ Peace Mission 2007 was a joint exercise carried out in conjunction with Russia.

Asian targets, the PLA has been strengthening its airborne, amphibious and SF strike capabilities. All these specialized troops have become increasingly mechanized during the last decade, and regular army units have been made more mobile and lethal by developing new families of wheeled armour, armoured personnel carrier, air support and logistics support vehicles to enable creation of light mechanized units.⁸⁰ The PLA's 15th Airborne Army has three divisions and a major effort is underway to build up airborne units into mechanized formations similar to those of the Russian airborne forces.⁸¹ Special operation forces or SOFs are 'an integral element of ground force modernization'. Each MR has a special operations unit, though there are reports that SOF make up division-size units in the Chengdu, Lanzhou and Shenyang MRs.⁸² The PLA has invested heavily in expanding the size, training and specialized equipment for the SOFs. There are reports of it experimenting with a 'mechanized' SF unit in the Chengdu MR equipped with new lightweight all-terrain vehicles designed to be transported by helicopters. This would give it capability to secure an airfield/port to enable subsequent build-up of airborne or amphibious forces.⁸³

2.3.2 The Evolution of PLAs Operational Doctrine

The PLA, since its inception, has been focused on 'people's war' and 'active defence'. As the Soviet threat build up in the 1960s, it was guided by Mao's notion of 'early, total and nuclear war'.⁸⁴ Due to decline in Soviet threat, the scope of war was considered limited in duration, confined to China's territory with focus on 'active defence'. By the mid-1980s, Deng Xiaoping put his own stamp on strategy, giving the

⁸⁰ Richard D. Fisher Jr, *China's Military Modernization: Building for Regional and Global Reach*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010, pp. 157–58.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 160–61.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

⁸⁴ Nan Li, 'New Developments in PLAs Operational Doctrines and Strategies', 2006, available at <http://www.comw.org/cmp/fulltext/0612li.pdf> (accessed January 15, 2015).

moniker, 'Local War under Modern Conditions'. However, till mid–late 1990s, there was little consideration of joint operations, a concept evolving in the West.

The 1991 Gulf War and the 1996 Taiwan Strait crisis convinced PLA strategists that a likely war scenario for which the PLA should be prepared to deter or fight is a medium-sized local war, comparable to a PLA war zone campaign (WZC). However, unlike past PLA campaigns, which were dominated by ground forces such as the combined arms group armies, a WZC would be joint services operations-based campaign, where each service conducts relatively independent sub-campaigns. Because a war zone has one strategic direction with several campaign fronts and multidimensional space, sub-campaigns may include information operations, missile operations, air operations, sea operations, amphibious landing operations and land operations.⁸⁵ This resulted in need for giving equal emphasis to all the four services and inter-service coordination; especially technology-intensive services that were historically marginalized needed to be strengthened.

By late 1997, PLA modernization largely focused on mechanization, or acquiring more advanced operational platforms, and the concept of joint operations was articulated and endorsed to make operational sense of these new platforms or 'elite forces and sharp arms'. However, more advanced militaries, which had already completed mechanization, were concentrating on informationization. To avoid the technological gap, CMC, in late 2002, articulated a new policy to guide PLA transformation: 'strive to accomplish the dual-historical task of mechanization and informationization'.⁸⁶

2.3.3 Chinese Definition of Joint Operations

In January 1999, the CMC of the Chinese PLA promulgated the Principles of Joint Operations (PJO), which marked a decisive move

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

towards jointness, providing and institutionalizing new ways of thinking and fighting shared by all services for future operations.⁸⁷ Academy of Military Science defines joint operations as ‘operations under unified command and executed by two or more services at the level of the corps’.⁸⁸ Scholars and researchers of the National Defense University (NDU) define joint operations as ‘operations undertaken by the corps from two or more services under unified command’.⁸⁹ Although they define and interpret joint operations narrowly, the definitions show three major characteristics: unified command; two or more services at the level of the corps (group armies, navy bases, air force armies and second artillery bases); and equal partnership among the services.

In *The Science of Campaigns*, quoted by Mulvenon and Finkelstein in *China’s Revolution in Doctrinal Affairs*, the PLA lays out the importance of the campaign level of war. While the book initially details the various service campaigns, the final, third part of the book is focused on joint campaigns. This clearly emphasizes that for the PLA, joint campaigns are a primary form of future warfare, representing a major change in how wars will be conducted. Chinese conceptions of jointness are at the operational level of war. It considers joint campaigns as a subtype of campaigns, and is subject to many of the principles that apply to campaigns, even as they also have their own unique attributes. It defines joint campaigns as those campaigns involving two or more services, each contributing campaign-level military units, that is, fleets, MR air forces or group armies. In a joint campaign, all of these forces operate under a joint command structure and implement a single, integrated plan for a single campaign.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Jianxiang Bi, “Thinking about the PLA’s “Revolution in Doctrinal Affairs””, in James Mulvenon and David M. Finkelstein (eds), *China’s Revolution in Doctrinal Affairs: Emerging Trends in the Operational Art of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army*, Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analysis, 2005, p. 29.

⁸⁸ Ibid., pp. 32–33.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 33.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 101.

2.3.4 Concept of Integrated Joint Operations (IJO)

In the 2000s, PLA began to incorporate the lessons learned from successive American campaigns during the 1990s and 2000s, and realized the benefits of organizational change and the more widespread usage of information technologies. Whereas joint operations placed emphasis on individual service divisions, IJO began to accept that service divisions do not matter when command chains can be ‘flat’ due to the levelling power of digital command, control and sensor systems. Instead of units in individual services marching according to a plan, it is possible to allow group of forces to achieve ad hoc coordination based on the tactical needs of the moment. This is also made possible by the PLA’s development of new sensors on unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and aircraft, plus precision-guided missiles and bombs; these tools give front-line officers the ability to call in limited but lethal strikes in a short period and produce near-immediate damage assessments to guide further decisions.⁹¹

The primary actor of IJO is an integrated system that comprises operating units (land, sea, air, space and electronic warfare) and essential operational elements. These elements include:⁹²

- information, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) providing battlefield transparency, leading to precision of decisions and operations;
- command, control, communications and computer (C4) connecting the highest command and the lowest individual platform, and soldiers and units of both front and rear;
- kill (K), or digitized and interconnected weapons platforms constituting a network of superior firepower capable of non-contact, non-linear and asymmetrical strikes; and

⁹¹ Fisher, *China’s Military Modernization*, n. 80, p. 71.

⁹² Nan Li, ‘New Developments in PLAs Operational Doctrines and Strategies’, n. 84, p. 8.

- integrated logistics—the technical platform that glues operating units and essential elements together is the unified information networks enabling smooth communications and real-time information transmission through data link.

In IJO, service boundaries and identities may become blurred due to the following reasons:⁹³

- One service, unit or platform may be capable of multiple functions (such as information, mobility, firepower and protection) in different spatial domains.
- Different services, units or platforms may have similar functions (such as long-range precision munitions launched from land, naval and air platforms and monitored and adjusted by surveillance and command and control), thus reducing the need for physical massing of services-based forces and arms for joint operations.

The degree of PLA success in meeting this level of integrated ‘jointness’ cannot yet be determined from open sources, but the move towards IJO was reflected by the PLA to make the commanders of the navy, air force and second artillery permanent members of the CMC’s high command. For a period of time, the main operational command, GSD, included both a navy and an air force deputy commander.

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⁹³ Ibid., p. 9.

⁹⁴ Dennis J. Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today: Tradition and Transformation for the 21st Century*, New York: Routledge, 2012, p. 183.

2.3.5 Training for Joint Operations

The PLA has made significant progress in its efforts to train its forces for joint operations. The PLA did not conduct truly joint operations during the 1980s and 1990s, as formations from different services carried out tasks in proximity to one another, rather than truly coordinated actions under a single, unified HQ. However, by the middle of the first decade of the 21st century, the PLA was reportedly conducting joint training exercises with forces that were operating far from their garrison locations.⁹⁴ The PLA has created several ‘professional blue forces’ to serve as enemy units in confrontational training exercises in joint-and single-service exercises, as well as mock combat between services, with the aim of exposing problems so that they can be overcome in future operations.⁹⁵

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In a multi-service military exercise, Joint Action 2010, formations at the group army level conducted air–land operations, especially long-

⁹⁵ Dennis J. Blasko, ‘Ten Reasons Why China will have Trouble Fighting a Modern War’, February 18, 2015, available at <http://warontherocks.com/2015/02/ten-reasons-why-china-will-have-trouble-fighting-a-modern-war/?singlepage=1> (accessed April 13, 2015).

distance mobilization. The PLA has also been carrying out trans-MAC exercises⁹⁶ to develop rapid response and joint operation capabilities in unfamiliar environments and complex conditions. In 2009, the Shenyang, Lanzhou, Jinan and Guangzhou MACs each sent one division to join long-distance manoeuvres and confrontational drills. Since 2010, a series of campaign-level exercises and drills, code-named 'Mission Action', for trans-MAC manoeuvres has been carried out and in 2010, Beijing, Lanzhou and Chengdu MACs each sent one division (brigade) led by corps HQs, together with some PLAAF units, to participate in the exercise. In 2011, Chengdu and Jinan MACs organized and carried out the exercise in plateau areas. In 2012, Chengdu, Jinan and Lanzhou MACs and relevant PLAAF troops organized and carried out the exercise in southwestern China.

The PLA has been conducting military exercises to demonstrate advances in information technology and information integration of its military forces. Reportedly, a number of annual exercise series have increased required integration and full reliance on information technology for command of complex operations. In 2012, there was an increasing emphasis on PLA command academies participating in joint exercises using command information technologies, which indicates proficiency on such platforms is now a requirement for graduation to higher command positions.⁹⁷ However, the realism in integrated training remains questionable as it will require additional funds, particularly for fuel and maintenance expenses, better training areas and simulators.

2.3.6 Training of Officers in Joint Operations

Although officers at middle and upper level are being trained in commanding joint operations, problems persist in translating training in the theory of joint operations to actual operational effectiveness. Unreliable and non-standardized C3I (command, control, communications and intelligence) platforms make training for joint

⁹⁶ *The Diversified Employment of China's Armed Forces*, n. 75.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 56–57.

operations difficult. After a 2012 Lanzhou MR exercise, the chief of the GSD training department stated that further development and research was required to ‘formalize and standardize the equipment that has been fielded and to solve problems encountered using it in training’.⁹⁸

The decision to make air force General and Deputy Chief of the GSD, Xu Qiliang, the commander of the deployed force for the August 2007 ‘Peace Mission 2007’ exercises in Russia affirmed the PLAA’s increasing willingness to defer to leadership from its high-tech sister services, as well as implementing the PLA’s doctrinal emphasis on ‘jointness’.⁹⁹

2.3.7 Current Status on Creation of Joint Operations Command

The Third Plenary Session of the 18th Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in November 2013 proposed to reform joint operational command structure, including establishing theatre (MR) joint operations commands. This will be difficult to implement since it challenges the dominance of the ground forces and the current MR structure. It was reported that joint commands would be created in Jinan, Nanjing and Guangzhou MRs over a five-year period, followed by consolidation of the remaining four MRs into two joint commands. However, Chinese Ministry of National Defense denied this. Its spokesman stated that establishing joint operations command system was necessary to meet the requirements of modern warfare and PLA was conducting research into joint operations command system with Chinese characteristics.¹⁰⁰ What is of significance is that President Xi Jinping has associated himself with a high-profile campaign for military reform, prioritizing

⁹⁸ Roy Kamphausen, David Lai and Travis Tanner, *Assessing the People’s Liberation Army in the Hu Jintao Era*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute and US Army War College Press, 2014, pp. 188–89.

⁹⁹ Fisher, *China’s Military Modernization*, n. 80, pp. 20–21.

¹⁰⁰ Kelvin McCauley, ‘PLA Joint Operations Developments and Military Reform’, *China Brief*, Vol. 14, No. 7, April 9, 2014.

implementing system-of-systems operations, IJO and other new operational methods.¹⁰¹

Xi Jinping, at the start of 2014, issued a call to improve 'national defense and army-building' and his concept of the 'China Dream' emphasizes China's growing strength and calls for a military that befits its status as a global player:

The China Dream impels new military thinking: The process of military strengthening must be adapted to the Great Revival of the Chinese Nation, correctly settling questions of military strategy and establishing a military strategy that protects national development and supports the achievement of major power status.¹⁰²

Since then information-centric warfare and joint command structures have been receiving significant attention.

Many of the reform areas announced by the Third Plenary Session have been a focus of discussion in PLA publications during the past few years to support the implementation of joint and system-of-systems operations capabilities that could significantly increase PLA war-fighting capabilities. The development of an integrated command information system and creation of a joint command structure are required to support these theoretical developments. The PLA is slowly developing a modern command information system for joint command (C4ISR), and there have been calls to create theatre joint operational commands to replace the current MR HQs, which are dominated by the ground forces. Several different command structures have been proposed, including functional-based and organization-based systems.¹⁰³ The Chinese understand that developing a joint operations command

¹⁰¹ Kelvin McCauley, 'Quality over Quantity: A New PLA Modernization Methodology', *China Brief*, Vol. 14, No. 14, July 17, 2014.

¹⁰² David Cohen, 'China Examines Military Strategy', *China Brief*, Vol. 14, No. 3, February 7, 2014.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

structure would be a major step towards achieving integration within the PLA and fighting 'locals war under the conditions of informationization'.

However, parochial interests of the services, outmoded command structures and institutional conflicts within the PLA continue to constrain transformational efforts.¹⁰⁴ Overcoming them would require a bold initiative to alter the PLA's command and institutional structure, which currently gives the army a dominant role. Since many of the newly announced reforms have been modernization areas for the past decade, the proposal could indicate that previous efforts have fallen short of the mark, and require adjustments and reinforcements.

2.3.8 Limitations: PLA's Adaptation to Joint Operations

- China's desire for joint operations and joint commands has been hampered by the parochial interests of various services, especially PLAA, which does not want to let go of its eminent status. Currently in the CMC, army occupies six of the 10 seats, whereas air force has two seats and the navy and PLASAF have only one seat each. Further, the PLA's GSD also serves as PLAA staff HQs. Similarly, the MRs have only been commanded by army officers. These are constraining factors to establishment of joint commands. Probably, China will also have to enforce organizational changes as adopted by developed countries like the US and the UK.
- China lacks combat experience since it last fought a major campaign in 1979, which predominantly involved army. It virtually has no experience in joint operations except amphibious landing to capture Yijiangshan Island from Kuomintang forces in 1955.
- Though China has a large quantity of different types of equipment, it has limited new generation equipment. Further,

¹⁰⁴ Kelvin McCauley, 'Third Plenary Session Calls for PLA Reform and Restructuring', *China Brief*, Vol. 13, No. 23, November 20, 2013.

units and services are equipped with multiple generations of weapons and systems. This complicates its training, tactics and repair and maintenance.

- Though China has an airborne corps under the PLA AF, it lacks in heavy-lift capability and hence, its utility for the time being is constrained. However, China is making efforts to procure heavy-lift aircrafts and has also undertaken indigenous development of the same.
- Political commissar system prevalent in the PLA has its inherent problem as the commanding officers have to share their responsibility with them. Its efficacy has not been tested under the modern combat conditions and remains suspect.
- Though China has embarked on building professional non-commissioned officer (NCO) corps, they are primarily being employed in technical capacities and not for small unit leadership. This hampers their ability to execute joint operations, which advocate 'mission-oriented tasking' and directive style of command with a major role for junior leaders. Constriction and high rate of turnover of its personnel also questions its human resource potential for executing joint operations.

China's modernization drive has resulted in its growing military prowess and emergence as a global economic power. It is extensively analyzing the future of military operations and has undertaken RMA with Chinese characteristics, and accordingly identified fighting 'local war under the conditions of informationization' as its strategy, with focus on joint operations. It has prompted China towards undertaking reforms to conduct IJO and establish joint commands, prioritize technology-intensive services and enhanced focus on space, including cyberspace and electromagnetic spectrum. Though, presently, PLA's capability to conduct joint operations is yet to be fully optimized, China's adaptation and optimization of joint operations is a foregone conclusion due to the fact that the top political and military leader of the country is intimately involved in military reforms.

CASE FOR CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF

During the India Today Conclave 2015, Union Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar stated that integration of the three services is a must and he is working out a mechanism for the creation of a post of CDS with a fixed tenure. 'Integration has to be there and CDS is a must. How do you work it out? Give me some time and I will work out because the three forces' integration does not exist in the present structure'. He further said that it is important to move away from the thinking of 'we' and 'they' between the MoD and the three services.¹⁰⁵

It was reported in the media in March 2015 that the defence minister has decided to bifurcate the job of Secretary (Defence Research and Development Organization [DRDO]) and the Scientific Advisor (SA) to the minister, with the latter now expected to oversee research and development (R&D) and push DRDO to a world-class level for military technologies. As per reports, one senior official said,

How can SA to Defence Minister and DRDO chief be the same person? The job of the former was to keep an eye on the latter working. This is perhaps why the DRDO has lagged behind in developing world class defence technologies and all its major programmes are behind schedule.¹⁰⁶

This has now been implemented and in the last week of May 2015, the government appointed a new DRDO chief and a separate SA to the

¹⁰⁵ 'Manohar Parikar for Integration of Three Services, Creation of Chief of Defence Staff', *Indian Defence News*, March 13, 2015, available at www.indiandefencenews.in/2015/03/manohar-parrikar-for-integration-of.html (accessed May 30, 2015); and 'Chief of Defence Staff is a Must: Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar', available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qCbuJWhsZ40> (accessed May 30, 2015).

¹⁰⁶ 'Parrikar to Separate Roles of DRDO Chief and Scientific Advisor', *Hindustan Times*, March 21, 2015, available at www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/parrikar-to-separate-roles-of-drdo-dhief-and-scientific-advisor/article1-1328895.aspx (accessed May 30, 2015).

defence minister. This decision was appreciated by the officials and one senior scientist said, 'the role of SA must extend beyond the DRDO. There are other departments like ordnance factories which also need to be focused upon. However the two will have to work in close coordination and a new structure is now expected to evolve.'¹⁰⁷

How is the issue of different SA and DRDO chief relevant here? Though there is no similarity between the CDS and SA, but at the same time, one cannot have a service chief performing the duties of chief of his service and also Chairman COSC. There is a need to have a separate appointment of a CDS who is the Chairman COSC and military advisor to the defence minister. The need for CDS has been well appreciated and this is something which has been debated in India for the more than four decades, but no concrete results have been forthcoming.

3.1 CDS Debate in India

In a United Service Institution (USI) National Security Lecture held on 13–14 January 1971, General J.N. Chaudhari stated that

the greatest fault in our present system is that despite their title of chiefs, each of the three incumbents actually combine two important functions in one. They are responsible for tendering their advice individually and collectively to the Defence minister. In addition, they function as C-in-Cs of their own services. He further said based on his experience as Chief of Army Staff (COAS) in the 1965 war that had there been a CDS, he would have taken on the advice role and left the army chief to concentrate wholly on operations, logistics and alternative planning for the future.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ 'New DRDO Chief Takes Over, Scientists Hail Appointment', *The New Indian Express*, May 29, 2015, available at www.newindianexpress.com/nation/New-DRDO-chief-Takes-Over-Scientists-Hail-Appointment/2015/05/29/article2839179.ece (accessed May 30, 2015).

¹⁰⁸ General J.N. Chaudhari, *India's Problems of National Security in the Seventies*, New Delhi: USI, 1973, pp. 48–50.

However, while advocating the appointment of CDS, he stated:

In any defence problem concerning India, the Army or ground forces will always play a major role. A CDS from another service, unless he was militarily brilliant and had the full confidence of the Army, would find himself handicapped in the execution of his function.¹⁰⁹

In my view, it is this statement which probably was interpreted as indirectly suggesting that CDS should be from the army, which prompted Air Chief Marshal P.C. Lal, in another National Security Lecture at USI, to overwhelmingly oppose General Chaudhari's view of CDS as principle military advisor to the government.¹¹⁰ The viewpoint got further strengthened by the neglect of air force in the planning process in 1962 and 1965 wars. He supported his case with the following arguments:¹¹¹

- Single point contact would amount to separation of advice from action, which would cut at the very roots of responsible planning
- CDS will evaluate military problems based on his experience and specialized knowledge, possibly influencing and almost certainly coloring the views of the chiefs to some extent.
- CDS may be expected to carry Government with him and also have the last word in dealing with the services. He will exercise high degree of control over the armed forces while bearing no direct responsibility to them.
- Powers with overseas interests need CDS since commanders in distant theatres of war would have to deal with only one personality for all their problems whereas control by several service chiefs might cause confusion.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 51.

¹¹⁰ Air Chief Marshal P.C. Lal, *Some Problems of Defence*, New Delhi: USI, 1977, pp. 39–40.

¹¹¹ Ibid., pp. 40–45.

- He negated the logic of having independent person to adjudicate in the event of disputes and deadlocks in COSC with the argument that if three good men with collective responsibility for performance of military machine cannot resolve their disputes, how can fourth person help.
- Appointment of CDS would slow-down rather than speed up decision-making process and defeat the avowed purpose of the office as it will require creation of new secretariat and introduce a new obstacle between the service chiefs and their HQs on one hand and MoD and Government on the other.

This contradicts another statement made by him in the same lecture:

There are fairly grey areas in inter-service planning on which services concerned are reluctant to shed light. These doubts and uncertainties will disappear only when the services, and this means in effect the service chiefs, realize that it is in their own and the national interest to remove them. A change of this kind must come from within, from a better understanding of the nature of military planning and joint operations, it cannot be brought about forcibly or by an outside party.¹¹²

I feel that this has been one of the main reasons for reluctance of the services to come on board with regard to the appointment of the CDS.

In another National Security Lecture at USI in 1990, Lieutenant General (Lt Gen) S.K. Sinha brought out that India was the only major country in the world which had not adopted this system. He articulated the reasons for not adopting the system as follows: politicians' fear of a man on horseback; bureaucratic opposition to any change which will lessen their grip over the armed forces, service; and the chiefs feeling that it will erode their position of professional pre-eminence.¹¹³ The

¹¹² Ibid., p. 13.

¹¹³ Lt Gen S.K. Sinha, *Higher Defence Organisation*, New Delhi: USI, 1991, pp. 40–41.

arguments against CDS by those who oppose it and its fallacy are as follows:¹¹⁴

- *It will erode civilian supremacy over the military and will lead to concentration of too much authority in a man in uniform, with attendant risk of military coup.* The CDS will not be the supreme commander of the armed forces but will be an inter-service professional advisor and coordinator, with individual service chiefs having the right to direct access to the government. In the present set-up, defence secretary, a civilian officer, is already virtually carrying out the functions of CDS.¹¹⁵
- *Adequate professional coordination is being provided by the COSC and introduction of CDS would not improve matters.* A part-time Chairman COSC with unspecified tenure (based on his tenure left as chief) is not in a position to ensure effective coordination between the services as a CDS would do. At present, there is a tendency in the CSOC to sweep controversial issues under the carpet and they are not able to resolve serious differences.¹¹⁶
- *Present system has worked well in the past and during wars fought since independence, so there is no need to change the system.* This is again flawed, except for 1971 war where there was a very high degree of professionalism and adequate time available for preparation, which was further facilitated by the personality of the three chiefs at that time. In all other cases, there have been serious differences between the services. A CDS could have ensured proper planning and coordination, and thus better execution of the operations.
- *CDS is necessary for nations with global commitments. India's military interests are confined to vicinity of its borders and thus do not need this system.* This is a misconception propagated by vested interests and is not in the realism domain. The system is required because of the nature of modern-day war fighting and likely trends

¹¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 41–45.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 42.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 42–43.

of future warfare in keeping with the technological advancements which have/are taking place. Most nations who have adopted this system do not have global commitments.

- *Fear that this will lead to domination by the army of the other two services.* Even countries which have large armies compared to other services, like Russia, Egypt and Iraq, have adopted this system and it is functioning well. This could as such be resolved by having a rotational appointment between the three services.

Two erstwhile Chiefs, Field Marshal Manekshaw and Admiral Chatterjee, ex-Defence Secretary V. Shankar, ex-Financial Advisor G.C. Katoch and eminent civil servant and doyen of Indian strategic thinking, K. Subrahmanyam, have been proponents of this idea; and Air Chief Marshal P.C. Lal and ex-Defence Secretary P.V.R. Rao have been opposed to it. Yet, P.V.R. Rao, in his National Security Lecture at USI on 29–30 March 1973, stated that ‘1971 was practically the first occasion when the COSC worked as a joint team in any operational matter’.¹¹⁷ He himself felt so and yet, he opposed the idea of CDS; this is quite contradictory. The situation in 1971 worked because of the personalities of the chiefs at that time and requisite preparatory period, but the situation may not be similar next time, as it happened in Kargil War or OP PAWAN, so why not adopt a system which ensures smooth planning, coordination and conduct of joint operations.

K. Subrahmanyam writes that¹¹⁸

In India, the Chiefs of Staff are not an integral part of the government set-up and are not functioning as Chiefs of Staff to either the President or the Defence Minister. This is part of historical legacy. When the designations were changed from Cs-in-C to COS and the Army, Navy and Air Force Acts were amended, if the amendment had replaced Central Government for Cs-in-C it would have made the COS staff officers to the

¹¹⁷ P.V.R. Rao, *India's Defence Policy and Organisation since Independence*, New Delhi: USI, 1977, p. 23.

¹¹⁸ K. Subrahmanyam, *Perspectives of Defence Planning*, New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1972, p. 121.

President and the Defence Minister. On the other hand, their individual identities were preserved by mentioning them separately in the Acts. This has resulted in their being treated as heads of organization outside the Central Government secretariat and the service headquarters functioning like headquarters of Service departments. It is because of this present position there is opposition from certain people to the creation of Joint COSC which will not be part of the Central Government set-up as it is other countries, but will have an identity of its own.

Though he advocates the creation of Joint COS, he states that to have Joint COS will be of little use without joint staff.¹¹⁹ Fortunately, the creation of HQ IDS has provided that joint staff, but without CDS, it remains a headless organization whose functioning gets stymied due to parochial interests.

3.2 Post-Kargil War

It stands out very clearly from above that the debate on CDS has been going on for very long and its necessity has been by and large accepted. What has been lacking is the political impetus to take it to its logical conclusion. The latest statement of defence minister on appointment of CDS is a welcome step which raises hope that it will result in fructification of the appointment of CDS. It was the centrepiece of the GoM report on defence, chaired by Mr Arun Singh, constituted after submission of KRC report which recommended that a CDS should be appointed to represent the collective views of the three services and provide a single-point advice to the political leadership.¹²⁰ The GoM report observed:

the functioning of the COSC has, to date, revealed serious weaknesses in its ability to provide single point military advice

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 122.

¹²⁰ *Reforming the National Security System: Report of the Group of Ministers on National Security*, n. 5. The GoM appointed four task forces on national security to include intelligence apparatus, internal security, border management and task force on management of defence, under Arun Singh, who had vast experience in handling matters related to defence as Minister of State, Defence.

to the government, and resolve substantive inter-service doctrinal, planning, policy and operational issues adequately. This institution needs to be appropriately revamped to discharge its responsibilities efficiently and effectively, including the facilitation of ‘jointness’ and synergy among the Defence Services.¹²¹

Accordingly, it recommended that the COSC be strengthened by the addition of CDS and a VCDS and stated that creation of a CDS would promote greater ‘jointness’ in the armed forces. It enumerated the following tasks of the CDS:¹²²

- To provide single-point military advice to the government.
- To administer the strategic forces.
- To enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning process through intra- and inter-service prioritization.
- To ensure the required ‘jointness’ in the armed forces.

Though almost a decade-and-a-half has passed since the GoM submitted its report, major recommendations have not been implemented. This point has also been reiterated a number of times by the various standing committees on defence. In 2008–09, the standing committee stated that:

Creation of additional post of CDS to act as chairman of the CoSC is essential to ensure optimum level of jointness among the different wings of the Armed Forces and to provide single-point military advice to the Government. It even recommended that the incumbent so selected for the post may be a four-star officer drawn from the services in rotation and be appointed for a tenure of not less than two years.¹²³

¹²¹ Ibid., pp. 97–98.

¹²² Ibid., pp. 100–01.

¹²³ Standing Committee on Defence, *Status of Implementation of Unified Commands for Armed Forces*, n. 29.

Again, a 14-member Naresh Chandra Task Force (NCTF) reviewed the gaps in defence reforms and submitted a report to the government in August 2012. Though the report has not been made public, but as per media reports, the NCTF has recommended creation of permanent chairman of the COSC, which is a much diluted version of the CDS recommended by the GoM report of 2001, which was again based on inputs provided by the KRC.¹²⁴ Further, it was reported that a proposal for the creation of the post of 'Permanent Chairman COSC' is being sent to the CCS in the wake of three service chiefs agreeing to the establishment of the post of permanent chairman COSC. What is glaring is that, earlier, the lack of consensus amongst the three services was cited as the reason for the non-implantation of this important recommendation of the GoM report. Now, when the three service chiefs are on board for this proposal, the MoD appears to have put a spoke in it.

Before independence, India had a single C-in-C for all the three services. In 1947, this arrangement was discarded and each service came to have its own C-in-C, independent of each other.¹²⁵ What finally emerged was a modified version of the British pattern. Though the Cs-in-C were redesignated as COS, they continued to perform the role they earlier had. Unlike in Britain, they were not merged with the MoD and did not become principal advisors to the defence minister. They continued to exercise executive responsibilities as respective heads of services and the service HQs and, instead of becoming a secretariat to the defence minister, remained outside the government set-up. The secretariat of the defence ministry was manned entirely by civilians. There has been regular debates in the country whether the service HQs should continue to remain as independent organizations outside the

¹²⁴ Brigadier Vinod Anand (Retd) 'Urgent Defence Reforms including CDS Need of the Hour', Vivekananda International Foundation, available at www.vifindia.org/article/2013/october/25/urgent-defence-reforms-including-cds-need-of-the-hour (accessed May 2015).

¹²⁵ S.K. Sinha, 'The Chief of Defence Staff', *Journal of Defence Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2007, p. 134.

government and whether they should be merged with the secretariat. But the organizational pattern evolved in the early 1950s has continued without any significant modification.¹²⁶

The non-appointment of CDS has resulted in defence modernization lagging behind by more than a generation, planning being conducted as single-service instead of joint plans and a civil servant being the arbiter of inter-service issues, with impact on defence preparedness. What is more glaring is that even a simple measure like cross-posting of officers between the MoD and service HQs to bridge the civil–military disconnect has been rejected because of bureaucratic hurdles. The adhocism in the defence planning process and its concomitant adverse impact on the modernization programme of the armed forces continues. Dark suspicions are voiced in the services that the civilian bureaucracy has perpetuated this situation to keep the services divided and unable to jointly represent the armed forces.¹²⁷

General V.P. Malik, COAS during the Kargil War, has enunciated his views on Indian higher defence structure as follows:

Instead of working jointly with the service headquarters and then issuing directions, the MoD has become an exclusively higher civilian headquarters controlling the three armed forces. This enabled the civil bureaucracy to acquire stifling control over the armed forces. Gradually the committee system was undermined and the military got more and more isolated from policy planning and decision making processes, leading to increasing suspicion and friction between the civilian bureaucrats in the ministry and the service headquarters. It began to affect the military psyche, ethos and ability to interact, advice and perform. As described by late K. Subrahmanyam, India's civil–military structure became one where 'politicians enjoy power without any responsibility,

¹²⁶ K. Subrahmanyam, *India's Defence*, New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, November 1972, pp. 12–13.

¹²⁷ P.R. Chari, 'Need for a Chief of Defence Staff: It is Unavoidable under the Present Circumstances', *IDS Comment*, June 5, 2011.

bureaucrats wield power without any accountability, and the military assumes responsibility without any direction'. The lack of political involvement in the defence planning process led to the growth of armed forces without a national strategic vision.¹²⁸

3.3 CDS: Envisaged Role in the Indian Context

Having established the necessity of undertaking defence reforms to enable better and more cohesive functioning of the MoD and services, and to enhance jointness and integration within the armed forces and between the civilian bureaucracy and the military, appointment of a CDS is a must.

So, what benefits would accrue by appointing a CDS?

- Provision of single-point military advice to the defence minister and the government.
- Enable reduction in the growing schism in the civil–military relations (civil here refers to the civil servants in the MoD). To emphasize further, in every nation, the civil part means politicians and not bureaucracy. The political is supreme and the military–bureaucracy is subordinate. The government needs a CDS for better effectiveness of the armed forces.
- Strengthen the IDS' ability to execute their mandated tasks.
- Development of joint doctrine for the armed forces from which should flow the individual service doctrines.
- Prepare military strategy for achievement of national objectives.
- Facilitate optimum utilization of the defence budget by prioritization of individual service requirements and evolution of long-term integrated perspective plans, thereby enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning process, and achieve the required synergy amongst the three services.

¹²⁸ V.P. Malik, *India's Military Conflicts and Diplomacy: An Inside View of Decision Making*, New Delhi: Harper Collins, 2013, p. 258.

- Cut down on functional overlaps and reduce wasteful duplications and redundancies.
- Enhance efficacy of existing tri-service commands.
- Facilitate reorganization of existing commands into theatre commands and creation of new functional commands.
- Evolution of joint plans instead of single-service approach to planning to execute their mandate.
- Exercise administrative control of the strategic forces.
- Enable better integration with the MoD. This will be first step to ensure service HQs and IDS become integral part of the MoD/government and not function outside the government as existing today.¹²⁹

What could be the role of the CDS in the Indian context? The following is proposed:¹³⁰

1. He will function as ‘principal military advisor’ to the defence minister and provide single-point military advice to the defence

¹²⁹ Various papers written by some of the retired service chiefs and other senior military officers have expressed their anguish at service HQs not being part of the government and treated as mere attached offices. This was also brought out by K. Subrahmanyam in *Perspectives in Defence Planning*, n. 116. Views of General V.P. Malik, Admiral Arun Parkash and Air Marshal B.D. Jayal on the same have been expressed in IDSA Monograph No. 6, July 2012, V.P. Malik, Arun Prakash, Anit Mukherjee and B.D. Jayal, *A Call for Change: Higher Defence Management in India*, available at <http://idsa.in/monograph/ACallforChangeHigherDefenceManagementinIndia>.

¹³⁰ *Reforming the National Security System: Report of the Group of Ministers on National Security*, n. 5, pp. 100–03. Certain guidelines to the role envisaged for the CDS have been given in the GoM report, which also states that the precise role and function of the CDS and his relationships with other key actors in the defence set-up, particularly the service chiefs, would need to be worked out keeping in view the broad guidelines. The introduction of major structural changes in the field of defence have to be carefully planned and executed to ensure that there is no disruption of defence capabilities in the process. In order that the transition from the existing to the proposed structures is smooth, a detailed framework for the introduction and sequencing of the new structures will need to be drawn up, inclusive of the CDS’s precise role, functions and inter-se relationships. It has proposed to entrust this task to the COSC who should make their recommendations to the government. Similarly, Cabinet Secretary should make recommendations in relation to the CDS’s relationship with key civilian personnel in the MoD and elsewhere.

minister and the government. Before presenting his advice, he will consult the service chiefs and will inform government of the range of military advice and opinion with respect to the subject in hand. Individual service chiefs will have the right to present their own view, where it is at variance with the CDS's views.

2. He will exercise administrative control over the strategic forces, as distinct from operational military control over these strategic forces. He will also be the channel of communication between the government and the strategic forces commander.
3. The commander of the ANC may report to the CDS.
4. In order to support the CDS in the optimal exploitation of his role and functions, a VCDS will be appointed. The VCDS should be equivalent of a service vice chief and be drawn from the army whenever the CDS is from the air force or the navy. This restriction may, however, be waived for a maximum period of three months to provide an orderly transition of officers appointed to these posts. The VCDS should serve a minimum tenure of two years in the post. The VCDS will be responsible for the Defence Staff and report to the CDS. Inter alia, the VCDS may perform the following functions:¹³¹
 - To render general assistance to the CDS, in his work.
 - To chair the Defence Crisis Management Group (DCMG) made up of offices and intelligence representatives of service HQs and MoD representatives. The DCMG will be entrusted the task of preparing contingency plans and assessments for consideration of CDS and defence secretary.
 - To supervise the Defence Staff, which shall be the Secretariat for the CDS.

¹³¹ Ibid., p. 102. It states that the above list is only indicative and the precise role and functions of VCDS will need to be laid down in detail by the defence minister in consultation with CDS and defence secretary.

- To control a mechanism to be established whereby no capital scheme is cleared for inclusion in the service HQs budget unless there is reasonable assurance that the necessary formalities in respect of technical and commercial evaluations leading to contract and initial payment could be concluded within that year.
 - To monitor intra-service and inter-service prioritization of capital schemes in terms of expenditure during a financial year.
5. He will facilitate efficiency and effectiveness of the planning/ budgeting process to ensure the optimal and efficient use of available resources. This could be carried out through intra-service and inter-service prioritization of acquisitions and projects.
 6. Advise and assist the defence minister and the government in reorganization of existing commands into theatre commands and in creation of new functional commands.
 7. Advise and assist the defence minister and government in providing strategic direction for the armed forces, including the theatre/unified commands.
 8. Assist the defence minister in command of the unified commands. In doing so, he will consult and seek advice of members of the COSC and theatre/unified command commanders.
 9. Responsible to the defence minister for preparing strategic plans in conformation with planned/allocated resource levels.
 10. Responsible for preparing military strategy and assessment of the associated risks.
 11. Advise and assist the defence minister on development of policy guidance for preparation and review of operational and contingency plans.
 12. Advise the defence minister on critical deficiencies and force capabilities.
 13. Advise and assist the defence minister with development of annual policy guidance for the various components of the armed forces.

14. Develop and establish doctrine for all aspects of joint employment of the armed forces.
15. Responsible for planning of joint training. Formulate policies and procedures for joint training and exercises.
16. Provide guidance on joint concept development to the theatre commands and the services.
17. Formulate policies for coordinating military education and training (professional military education) of members of the armed forces.
18. He should be a member of the NSC, which must finalize and promulgate the National Security Doctrine within a specified time frame, on the basis of which integrated threat assessment can be made. Based on the National Security Doctrine, he must review and promulgate a joint doctrine which covers all aspects of integrated operations. The individual service doctrines must flow out of the joint doctrine. All these documents must be reviewed every five years and sanitized versions made available in the form of a white paper.
19. He must participate in all meetings of the CCS along with the defence secretary where, earlier, only the defence secretary used to participate.
20. The CDS:
 - May be a 4-star officer drawn from one of the three services in rotation.
 - He will function as a permanent chairman of the COSC with the VCDS as member-secretary.
 - He will rank *primus inter pares* in the COSC.
 - His tenure may be fixed at three years.
 - He should have served as a COS or a theatre commander.
 - It is essential that no CDS reverts to his original service after tenure as CDS.

I do not claim expertise to suggest role for such an important subject but merely put forth suggestions based on my interpretations of the recommendations of the KRC, GoM, writings by retired military professionals and civil servants, and based on analyses of defence reforms undertaken by the US and the UK

UNIFIED COMMANDS FOR INDIA

4.1 An Unsuccessful Transition

So, why have the Indian Armed Forces not succeeded in making a successful switch from service-oriented operations to unified war fighting? India's real problem has been the clash of cultural practices and operational ethos of each of its defence services. Beyond the issues of organizational turf and jostling over resources, each service has a distinctive method of operations and is deeply uncomfortable with another service guiding its operations. The air force, for instance, strongly believes in the primacy of 'indivisible air power' and centralizing its assets in order to effectively use them in wartime.¹³² This makes the air force hostile to the idea of parcelling out assets to dedicated theatre commands. The navy, on the other hand, is an ardent proponent of the idea of more jointness and the creation of unified commands. Some of this may have to do with the fact that the navy needs to operate in a maritime–littoral environment and project power from the sea to land—operations that involve cooperation with the other services. This also has to do with the navy's interest in non-traditional security issues in the IOR, which call for greater inter-service cooperation.¹³³ The army lies between the two extremes and is divided into two camps. One group of reformist officers takes a line similar to the navy's and calls for increased jointness and the creation of both

¹³² Jasjit Singh, 'Indivisible Air Power', in N.S. Sisodia and Sujit Dutta (eds), *India and the World: Selected Articles from IDSA Journal, Vol. 1: Strategic Thought: The Formative Years, 1965–1985*, Delhi: Promilla & Co., 2005. A passage reads: 'While some gains may accrue from integrating elements of air power with, say land forces, the division and fragmentation of air power can only result, at best, in confusion and sub-optimal exploitation, and at its worst, in military disaster' (ibid., p. 185).

¹³³ Patrick Bratton, 'The Creation of Indian Integrated Commands: Organisational Learning and the Andaman and Nicobar Command', *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 36, No. 3, May–June 2012, p. 443.

a CDS and unified commands. On the other side are officers who are concerned about border conflicts and internal insurgencies and feel unified commands are unsuited for India.¹³⁴

4.2 Unified Commands for the Indian Armed Forces

In India, expert opinion on unified commands has been mixed with many critics rejecting its relevance for the national armed forces. The late Air Commodore Jasjit Singh (Retd), in a compelling piece a few years ago, argued that the concept of theatre commands was neither relevant nor suitable for India as such unified commands are normally established for operations away from the home country.¹³⁵ He added, for good measure, that the age of specialization enjoined upon the services the responsibility to retain their independent status, while working very closely with each other. In his view, if the services could not work jointly in the present set-up, bringing them into a theatre command concept could only reduce the potential for corrective action where decisions are taken with less than adequate knowledge of the specificity of the other service. However, there are many others like late General K.V. Krishna Rao, former COAS, who recommended theatre commands more than three decades ago.¹³⁶

The argument and counter-arguments against unified commands are as follows:

- *The paucity of air resources demand that they be kept centralized.* The air resources possess strategic mobility and can be moved from one theatre to other as per requirement. Existing organization has five operational air commands. In the proposed reorganization, five theatre commands are recommended with

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 444.

¹³⁵ Jasjit Singh, *India's Defence Spending: Assessing Future Needs*, New Delhi: Knowledge World and IDSA, 2000, pp. 76–77.

¹³⁶ Rao, *Prepare or Perish*, n. 3, pp. 414, 491.

concentration of air power against major adversaries. Thus, effectively, there is no change in centralization of air resources.

- *Unified commands are required only for countries with global aspirations.* This argument is flawed since unified commands are required for better planning, coordination and conduct of operations, at the same time ensuring economy of effort. Also, in view of the changing geostrategic environment and technological advancements, all future conflicts will be multi-service.
- *Specialization is paramount.* There is no denying that specialization is of utmost importance. But at the higher levels, it is the ability to think and plan strategically and operationally which has more relevance. Military history is replete with examples where despite tactical successes, the national aim could not be achieved, resulting in stalemate or strategic failures. The component commanders are the specialists to advise the theatre commanders. The case in point is the Kargil conflict in 1999; differing perceptions and bickering amongst services could have been avoided if it was a unified command where all stakeholders would have been involved in joint planning and execution since inception.

But this is not a phenomenon characteristic of India alone. A similar situation existed in other countries like the US and the UK, where reforms were enforced on the services. The traditional explanation for this is that military innovation mostly emerges from an external threat or problem that causes the civilian leadership to force change on a reluctant military, ever resistant to change.¹³⁷ In like-fashion to the US and the UK, however, India's main option is to adopt a top-down model of integration.

4.3 Current Structure in India

India has a total of 19 commands: seven army commands (six operational); seven air force commands (five operational); three naval commands (two operational); and two joint commands. None of them

¹³⁷ Barry Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine*, New York: Cornell University Press, 1984, p. 5.

are co-located and their geographical zones of responsibilities have little commonality. In most cases, the command of one service overlaps or is linked with two or more commands of sister services. In contrast, the US, which has a global role, has a total of nine combatant commands to include three functional combatant commands: Special Operations Command, Strategic Command and Transportation Command; and six geographic combatant commands: Africa Command, Central Command, European Command, Northern Command, Pacific Command and Southern Command.¹³⁸

The navy has its own complement of air power, including fighters. However, in the case of the army, integral air resources are limited to utility helicopters and though medium-lift helicopters, attack helicopters and transport aircraft have a predominant role with the army, they are held by the air force. As far as the air component is concerned, the air force has its advance HQs with each army command and maritime air operations with the navy. At the level of corps HQs, the air force has a tactical air centre allocated to each corps. However, these were meant to be incremental steps before achievement of full integration. This organization precludes complete integration and cohesion between the services and can be overcome by adopting the concept of unified commands. Unified commands would remove additional layers and improve interface between the commanders, resulting in flatter structures facilitating better planning, speedier decision making and execution.

4.4 Adoption of Integrated System

It is imperative to shift from service-specific approach to an integrated system which avoids duplication; ensures unity of command and effort; enables optimization of resources; and ensures greater integration and jointness. To achieve this, unified commands fit well into the scheme of things. It aims to put all resources of the three services at the disposal of a theatre commander who will carry out the task in consonance with the overall national plan approved by the political leadership and given to the CDS for implementation.

¹³⁸ Feickert, *The Unified Command Plan and Combatant Commands*, n. 44, pp. 2–3.

The critics of unified commands often point out that global powers like the US have global interests that demand a unified structure of military operations. For a benign power like India, which is focused on its territorial integrity, there is no need for the integrated theatre command system. Integration, however, is aimed at a speedy, effective and synergetic response to an evolving crisis. More importantly, it takes into consideration force multipliers in determining the outcome of conflicts. The tools of modern warfare—satellite and surveillance assets, cyber systems, drones, space-based weapons, etc.—can be better exploited for advantage in an integrated command structure than in any other organization. It gives a commander a clear idea of his capabilities and limitations, thus ensuring instantaneous employment to exploit fleeting opportunities in the noise and din of a battle, resulting in greater possibility of success.

Central to an effective structure of integrated commands is the issue of the acquisition of domain knowledge of other services and their integrated application. Not only the commanders, but the staffs must get used to integrated functioning. The services will need to give much greater emphasis on joint training, as against specific service training that has been the norm so far. Officers from all three services would need to attend courses at service-specific training institutions to gain knowledge and insight into services other than their own.

4.5 Unified Command: Models for India

The need for unified commands is well established. Most models propagated by various Indian military strategists advocate creation of theatre and functional commands.¹³⁹ In keeping with the above-

¹³⁹ For various options suggested for unified commands, see Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS), *Threats, Challenges and Capabilities—2050*, New Delhi: CLAWS, 2009, p. 48. Also, see Gurmeet Kanwal, *Indian Army Vision 2020*, New Delhi: HarperCollins, 2008, pp. 274–76; A.P. Revi, *Restructuring India's Military Out of Box Option*, New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 2012, pp. 195–98; Rao, *Prepare or Perish*, n. 3, pp. 414, 491; Vice Admiral A.K. Singh, 'Cracking the CDS and NWM Riddle', *Synergy*, September 2008, pp. 9–11; A.S. Bahal, 'Theatre Commands', *Indian Defence Review*, Vol. 21, No. 1, January–March 2006, pp.75–81; Vishal Nigam, 'Unified Commands—The Road Ahead', *In Focus*, October 2013, Centre for Air Power Studies.

mentioned considerations, the options available to India could be based on four different models:

- Model I: Creation of additional functional commands.
- Model II: Geographical theatre commands catering to the envisaged threats to the country supported by functional commands.
- Model III: Creation of a JFC to undertake OOAC tasks.
- Model IV: Theatre commands specific to offensive and defensive role akin to the existing pivot and strike corps.

Each model has its merits and demerits. However, in ideal circumstances, any model adopted should involve minimum turbulence yet achieve the desired integration of the armed forces to fight a future war.

4.5.1 Model I: Creation of Additional Functional Commands

Last year, media reported that the Indian Armed Forces have submitted the proposal for creation of three new tri-service commands to include cyber command, aerospace command and special operations command. As per the plans, the special operations command will be headed by an army officer and the space command by an IAF officer, while the cyber command will get its head on rotational basis from the three services. The ANC, now headed by officers from the three services on a rotational basis, will be under a navy vice admiral.¹⁴⁰ This indeed is a step in the right direction. However, there is also a need for joint logistics and joint training commands. The argument for raising these commands is given in the succeeding paragraphs.

- *Joint Logistics Command:* In the existing system, each service plans its own logistics, following its own planning, provisioning, transportation and delivery model. This has resulted in

¹⁴⁰ 'Separate Commands for Special Operations, Cyber Security, Space: NAK Browne, Chief, IAF', *The Economic Times*, October 2, 2013, available at http://articles.economicstimes.indiatimes.com/2013-10-02/news/42617512_1_cyber-security-iaf-chief-nak-browne-cyber-command (accessed April 11, 2014).

tremendous amount of duplication, long inventories and colossal waste of precious resources against the very ethos of efficient economy. It is imperative that the logistics organizations of the three services are integrated into one, thereby enabling optimization of resources. The UK Chief of Defence Materiel, the US Defence Logistics Agency and Chinese Integrated Logistics System have functioned very efficiently and India, too, needs to create a joint logistics command.

- *Joint Training Command:* There are few organizational structures in place which can meaningfully formulate or impart the desired level of joint training. The essential ingredients of a joint training system (joint training philosophy, joint training infrastructure and joint training processes) need to be implemented. Therefore, to give impetus to jointness and promote synergy amongst the three services, there is a need to start training officers together from junior command and equivalent course onwards. Integration of the three higher command courses into one curriculum would be the next logical step, akin to Higher Defence Management Course and NDC. The role of IDS should be extended from promulgating joint doctrine and joint military strategy, from which should flow the individual service doctrines to being fully integrated in planning and conduct of joint exercises and the validation of the joint doctrine and military strategy. This necessitates creation of an integrated joint training command under which all training establishments function.
- *Joint Cyber and IW Command:* The future operations will be conducted in the backdrop of cyber warfare, information dominance and high-tech conditions and this necessitates synchronization of all resources for better synergy and utilization. The necessity of cyber command has already been accepted by the services. A common communication grid for the services will enhance joint operability and facilitate joint operations.
- *SF Command:* The SF are a very potent asset and their employment needs to be synergized, and thus merits creating an integrated SF command. The US' recent engagements in

Afghanistan and Iraq have also boosted the significance and use of SF, which are by design organized into small and highly trained units. The SF are usually assigned close combat missions, in short bursts of intense activity. Now, with the availability of precision guided munitions (PGM), SF can deliver overwhelming force to targets deep within enemy territory, usually by using laser target identification and secure communications.¹⁴¹ Its necessity has also been accepted by the services. The time has come for enhancing the number of SF units and creation of SF command.

- *Aerospace Command:* In 2008, an Integrated Space Cell under HQ IDS was established for integration between the military, the Department of Space and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). The logic behind the creation of a joint aerospace command is abundantly clear. First, as India's requirements for space increase, it becomes important to have a single agency coordinating such different activities. Second, the presence of a single entity will allow India to better promote its national interests in outer space as this becomes increasingly crowded and contested. Though its necessity has been accepted by the services, one needs to look at the US model where it has merged its space command into strategic command, which now looks after both the nuclear and space realms.

4.5.2 Model II: Geographical Theatre Commands

In this option, the unified command structure would be based on geographical theatres catering to the envisaged threats, duly supported by the functional commands (less SF command which is proposed to be part of reserve command), as recommended in Model I. It will specifically cater for threats from Pakistan, China, IOR, internal security and OOAC tasks. The necessity of establishing tri-service command

¹⁴¹ Gary Chapman, 'An Introduction to the Revolution in Military Affairs', XV Conference on Problems in Global Security, Helsinki, Finland, September 2003.

for OOAC tasks has been deliberated upon by a study carried out by IDSA.¹⁴² The structure would include northern theatre, western theatre, eastern theatre, IOR theatre and strategic reserves.

- *Northern Theatre:* It will comprise the existing Northern Command and some elements of Western Air Command, primarily to look after the state of J&K and the ongoing counter-terrorism operations there. This region mandates a separate theatre in view of the likelihood of further spurt in terrorism as a consequence of withdrawal of the US forces from Afghanistan and Pakistan's policy of use of non-state actors in sponsoring proxy war.
- *Western Theatre:* It will comprise the existing Western Command, South Western command, Southern Command, Western Air Command and South Western Air Command, primarily oriented towards Pakistan. Suitable naval complement also needs to be allocated to this theatre.
- *Eastern Theatre:* It will comprise Eastern Command and Eastern Air Command and will be predominantly aligned to Chinese threat. It will need to cater for borders with China in Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and all northeastern states. Accordingly, the forces will need to be regrouped.
- *IOR Theatre:* IOR needs to be a separate theatre in view of the growing importance of the IOR and maritime threats, as well as non-traditional security threats. It could be a single theatre or encompass two separate theatres, IOR (West) and IOR (East). It will include elements of Southern Command, Southern Air Command, Western Naval Command, Eastern Naval Command and ANC, aligned to undertake operations in the IOR and cater for maritime threat.
- *Strategic Command:* The primary role of this command would be to cater for OOAC tasks and would comprise elements of Central Command, Central Air Command and Southern Naval

¹⁴² IDSA Task Force Report, *Net Security Provider: India's Out-of-Area Contingency Operations*, New Delhi: Magnum Books Pvt. Ltd, 2012, p. 43.

Command. It will also encompass a strike corps, air mobile or airborne division and amphibious elements suitably restructured from the existing resources. The SF command will be part of reserve command in this model. They would also function as strategic reserves.

The major merits and demerits of this organization are as follows:

- Each theatre looks after a specific threat under a single theatre commander, with one command available as strategic reserves, which also caters for OOAC tasks.
- In the existing system, taking the case of, say, conventional operations against western adversary, effectively eight different commands will be involved in operations, with no single commander controlling the operations. This, in effect, is not a synergized application of force and is against the very basic principle of unity of command and ethos of war fighting. Instead, one theatre command encompassing service components under one theatre commander would result in seamless orchestration of the forces, facilitating concentrated application of force and resulting in decisive victory and not merely limited tactical gains.
- This model will also cater for the ongoing low-intensity conflict.
- This model also caters for a two-front threat.
- Availability of dedicated reserves.
- The drawback of this model includes one theatre handling threat from Pakistan or China in J&K.

4.5.3 Model III: Creation of JFC for OOAC Tasks

In this case, it is proposed to have the above-recommended functional commands with a JFC, which could be based on Central Command, Central Air Command, elements from Eastern Naval Command and ANC, primarily to cater for OOAC tasks and act as reserve for application in case of any eventuality. Additional resources could be provided from functional commands or other commands not involved in operations. This model is based on the argument that India does not need theatre commands and instead, needs to have one joint command

for OOAC tasks. The merits and demerits of this organization are as follows:

- It caters for a specific force for OOAC tasks, thus enabling better planning and preparation for the same.
- Availability of reserve for any eventuality.
- This model does not adequately cater for the envisaged threats to India and prevents true integration of the services.

4.5.4 Model IV: Theatre Commands Specific to Offensive and Defensive Role Akin to the Existing Pivot and Strike Corps

This model is based on organizing separate theatres for conduct of offensive and defensive operations. It will encompass the following:

- *Western Theatre:* It will encompass the entire border with Pakistan and include J&K, Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat. It will constitute the formations of Northern, Western and South Western Commands (less their strike corps) and Western Air Command. It will be responsible to ensure the territorial integrity of the country against any threat from Pakistan.
- *Eastern Theatre:* It will comprise the Eastern Command and the Eastern Air Command and will cater for threat from China.
- *Strike Force I:* It will be responsible for conduct of offensive operations in the west and will comprise two strike corps, one each from the Western and South Western Commands. It will also include South Western Air Command.
- *Strike Force II:* It will be responsible for offensive operations in the east, predominantly against China, and will constitute strike corps from Southern Command and the newly raised mountain strike corps for Eastern Command. It will also have Central Air Command as part of it.
- *IOR Theatre:* It will encompass Southern Command (less strike corps), Southern Air Command, Western Naval Command, Eastern Naval Command, Southern Naval Command and ANC. The option of dividing it into two theatres catering for the west and east can also be considered.

The merits and demerits of this model are as follows:

- Dedicated forces for each adversary.
- Requirement for greater coordination between the defensive and offensive forces and therefore, an additional HQs will have to be superimposed on top of them.

4.6 Proposed Model for Implementation

The reorganization of existing commands into unified commands would require a massive restructuring exercise. But the moot question is: is India ready for it? Probably not. It will have to follow an incremental approach instead of a revolutionary approach. Otherwise, it might shake the very foundations of the Indian defence structure. India already has a model for theatre command in terms of ANC, and SFC as functional command, and same could be used for raising new functional and theatre commands. Keeping in view the likely threat scenarios for India, Model II is recommended for implementation. The restructuring will have to be carried in a phased manner within specified timelines. Appropriate time frame can be worked out after the proposal is approved. What merits consideration is that even the US took five decades to evolve into the present system and is still undergoing transformation. India, taking the experience of others into account, could achieve the same in a comparatively lesser time frame. The recommended model, that is, Model II, may be implemented as under:

- *Phase I:* The first phase would include the appointment of CDS and raising additional functional commands under the CDS.
- *Phase II:* In the next phase, a western theatre command could be established. The argument for selection of the western theatre is that in other theatres, the army is involved in fighting terrorism/insurgency, whereas western theatre has a conventional role, hence the transition will be least turbulent.
- *Phase III:* In the third phase, IOR theatre command and eastern theatre command could be established by recommended reorganization.
- *Phase IV:* In the last phase, northern theatre command could be established. The second command could be strategic command, which will function as strategic reserves.

Given the scarcity of air resources, the CDS, with the advice of the Chief of Air Staff, has the option of allocating resources from the dormant theatre/functional command in keeping with the strategic mobility available to the air resources. In the envisaged restructuring, the chiefs will be responsible for training, equipping and administration of their service and will predominantly play the role of COS, and theatre commanders will be operational commanders. The theatre commanders will be directly responsible to the prime minister/defence minister/CCS through the CDS, who will be the principal military advisor and coordinator.

Another argument put forth by some military analysts regarding the rank structuring and individual aspirations gets negated by having four-star theatre commanders with three-star component commanders (equivalent to present Cs-in-C). The functional commands would be commanded by three-star ranking officers (equivalent to present Cs-in-C). The issue of who should head these commands can be resolved by basing the appointment on merit and professional competence or rotational. However, service-specific Cs-in-C, based on predominant service, could also be considered, with IOR theatre headed by a naval officer, northern theatre by an army officer, eastern and western theatre by army/air force C-in-C and strategic command by army/navy/air force C-in-C. The comparative analysis of rank structuring based on existing and proposed model is given in Table 1.

Table 1 Existing and Proposed Model Rank Restructuring

S. No.	Rank Structure	Existing Organization	Proposed Organization		Remarks
			Functional Commands	Theatre Commands	
1.	4 Star	3	-	9 (5 theatre commanders, 3 COS of the three services, CDS)	Increase by 6
2.	3 Star (C-in-C equivalent)	23(17 C-in-C army, navy and IAF commands; 3 vice chiefs, CIDS, SFC and ANC C-in-C)	5	16(5 COS theatre commands, 3 vice chiefs of services, VCDS, 7 component commanders based on service component)	Decrease by 2(other component commanders could be 3-star ranks)

Overall, there will be a major reduction in the staff since 19 commands are being restructured into five theatre commands and five functional commands. The staff authorized to the component commanders will be much lesser due to availability of staff at theatre level. This will result in significant equipment and manpower savings, apart from better planning, coordination and conduct of operations.

CONCLUSION

This monograph has made an attempt to argue the case for the appointment of CDS and creation of unified commands for India. The structure which India inherited from the British continues to exist, with no major changes having been undertaken despite the changing nature of modern war fighting and geostrategic situation, except for cosmetic renaming of the service HQs as Integrated HQs of MoD and creation of HQ IDS, but without its head, and raising of ANC and SFC. There were other changes like raising of additional commands which have been service specific with no common areas of responsibilities, but by and large, the higher defence organization continues to function in archaic mode. Most retired military officers have expressed their grouse at service HQs not being part of the government, and also that as per Government of India Business Rules, the responsibility for defence of India is entrusted to the defence secretary and service chiefs find no mention of their role.

Jointness and integration of the military is an inevitable requirement for the modern-day battlefield. The principles underlying these features are inter-service cooperation and economy of effort, both of which are crucial to war fighting. Appointment of the CDS and creation of unified commands that comes about as a consequence of the said principles would provide synergy to military endeavours. But integration and jointness are contingent upon the presence of an effective higher defence organization. The lack of strategic thinking within the politico-bureaucratic establishment in India has, however, resulted in a higher defence structure which excludes the services from the process of defence decision making. The services too have not been united in their views on the appointment of a CDS or creation of unified commands.

In the backdrop of RMA and varied threats existing to India, it needs to expeditiously undertake restructuring of its defence organization to appoint a CDS and establish unified commands. It will enable better joint planning and coordination, quicker decision making based on

appropriate advice from the specialists and optimal utilization of technology and other resources. Any further delay will only be at the peril of its national security.

The need to retain 'operational' control over their respective services has led the services to withhold their full support to unified operations. Despite the acknowledgement of the tremendous operational and administrative benefits that would accrue by having a CDS and unified commands, they have not come through. The biggest challenge to jointness is to bring about an attitudinal shift by turning the sense of insecurity and mutual suspicion into a sense of belongingness amongst the services as well as the politico-bureaucratic establishment. The change will need to be implemented top-down for it to take root and be effective. This would necessitate a strong political will and the political leadership will have to enforce the necessary reforms by enacting the required legislation. The national interest should be supreme and not compromised due to service parochialism and politico-bureaucratic hurdles.

APPENDIX A

Report of the Group of Ministers on National Security: Problems with the Existing Set-up¹⁴³

There is a marked difference in the perception of civil and military officials regarding their respective roles and functions. There has also been, on occasions, a visible lack of synchronization among and between the three departments in the MoD, including the relevant elements of Defence Finance. The concept of ‘attached offices’ as applied to Services Headquarters; problems of inter-se relativities; multiple duplicated and complex procedures governing the exercise of administrative and financial powers; and the concept of ‘advice’ to the Minister, have all contributed to problems in the management of Defence. This situation requires to be rectified, to promote improved understanding and efficient functioning of the Ministry.

The functioning of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) has, to date, revealed serious weaknesses in its ability to provide single point military advice to the government, and resolve substantive inter-Service doctrinal, planning, policy and operational issues adequately. This institution needs to be appropriately revamped to discharge its responsibilities efficiently and effectively, including the facilitation of ‘jointness’ and synergy among the Defence Services.

The present system governing Defence acquisitions suffers from a lack of integrated planning; weaknesses in linkages between Plans and Budgets; cumbersome administrative, technical and financial evaluation procedures; and an absence of a dedicated, professionally equipped procurement structure within the MoD.

¹⁴³ Refer to Note 5 above. This is the extract from the *Report of Group of Ministers on National Security* covering the problems within the existing set-up of defence as identified by them.

Ideally, the Government's national security objectives should lead to a formulation of defence objectives, which, in turn, define defence policy and the directives of the Defence Minister. This is not the case at present. The preparation, and subsequent implementation, of defence objectives and missions should result from an interactive process, in which the desired military capability, required technologies and industrial skills and capacities, and fiscal resources, are identified.

The defence planning process is greatly handicapped by the absence of a national security doctrine, and commitment of funds beyond the financial year. It also suffers from a lack of inter-service prioritization, as well as the requisite flexibility. It is of prime importance that this process is optimally managed to produce the most effective force posture based on a carefully worked out long term plan, in the most cost-effective manner.

In equipment development, there is a visible dysfunction between technological planning and development and in the interface between R&D, production agencies and users, particularly in the critical linkages between Services Perspective Plans and the Defence R&D Budget. The potential for rapid movement to re-engineering technologies and production processes have also been undervalued in PAs as has the need to synergize Ordnance Factories Board/Defence Public Sector Undertakings/private sector institutions to impact maximally on both Service users and Defence R&D. The procedures, systems and methods to manage all these complex interactions require substantive re-examination.

Military capability cannot exist in isolation from broader societal trends and many of the factors that buttress the military ethos are at odds with trends in civilian society. As transparency increases and an active media highlights the business of military life, the ability to maintain a different but acceptable military ethos has come under strain. Finding, identifying, educating, motivating and retaining quality manpower has become difficult and steps need to be taken to optimize the attractiveness of a Service career. Matters relating to promotions, appointments, training, education, ages of retirement, command, tenures, Short Service, Colour Service, manpower classifications, defence-civilian cadres, Armed Forces Headquarters cadre, Territorial Army, ex-servicemen and Defence Security Corps all require examination and attention.

There is also no synergy between academic research and Government's requirements. Whereas academic research is carried out more or less in a policy vacuum, official agencies undertake their policy making tasks in the absence of the wealth of information available with the academic community. There is a need to ensure that the Government's policy and decision making processes are informed by the findings of rigorous analyses and research.

A whole gamut of measures relating to cost efficiencies and effectiveness have been examined before by the Committee on Defence Expenditure and require methodical review. A very large portion of costs are manpower related and manning patterns/force levels should be critically reviewed.

APPENDIX B

Functions of Chairman, Vice Chairman and Members of JCS¹⁴⁴

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) is the principal military advisor to the President, the NSC, the Homeland Security Council (HSC), and the Secretary of Defense. Subject to the authority, direction, and control of the President and the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff carries out the following:¹⁴⁵

- Advise and assist the President and the Secretary of Defense in performing their command function.
- Attend and participate in meetings of the NSC and HSC subject to the direction of the President.
- In carrying out assigned functions, duties, and responsibilities transmit communications between the President or the Secretary of Defense and the Commanders of the Combatant Commands and consult with and seek the advice, of the other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Commanders of the Combatant Commands.
- Advise and assist the President and the Secretary of Defense in providing strategic direction to the Armed Forces, including the direction of operations conducted by the Commanders of the Combatant Commands.
- Be responsible for preparing strategic plans, including plans that conform to resource levels projected by the Secretary of Defense, to be available for the period of time for which the plans are to be effective.

¹⁴⁴ Refer to *Functions of the Department of Defense and its Major Components*, n. 49.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

- Prepare military strategy and assessments of associated risks.
- Upon the completion of each Quadrennial Defense Review, prepare and submit to the Secretary of Defense an assessment of the assignment of functions (or roles and missions) of the Armed Forces, together with any recommendations for changes in assignment that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff considers necessary to achieve maximum effectiveness and efficiency of the Armed Forces.
- Prepare and submit to the Secretary of Defense, for information and consideration, general strategic guidance for the development of industrial and manpower mobilization programs.
- Assess military requirements for DOD acquisition programs.
- Advise and assist the Secretary of Defense on the development of policy guidance for the preparation and review of contingency and campaign plans.
- Advise and assist the Secretary of Defense with the development of annual policy guidance for the Heads of the DOD Components for the preparation and review of program recommendations and budget proposals.
- Advise and assist the Secretary of Defense on joint personnel matters:
- Assess joint military requirements for command, control, and communications; recommend improvements; and provide guidance on aspects that relate to the conduct of joint operations.
- Provide guidance on joint concept development and experimentation activities to the Combatant Commands and Military Services.
- Advise and assist the President and the Secretary of Defense with establishing Combatant Commands to perform military missions and on prescribing the force structure of those commands. Oversee the activities of the Combatant Commands and after consultation with the Commanders of

the Combatant Commands, establish and maintain a uniform system for evaluating the preparedness of each Combatant Command to carry out missions assigned to the command.

- Coordinate requests for forces and capabilities to support Combatant Commands, US Government departments and agencies, State and local governments, and international partners, as required.
- Develop and establish doctrine for all aspects of the joint employment of the Armed Forces and formulate policies for coordinating the military education and training of members of the Military Services.

The other members of the JCS are military advisers to the President, the NSC, the HSC, and the Secretary of Defense, as follows:¹⁴⁶

- A member of the JCS may submit to the CJCS advice or an opinion in disagreement with, or in addition to, the advice or opinion presented by the CJCS. If a member submits such advice or opinion, the CJCS shall present that advice or opinion to the President, NSC, HSC, or Secretary of Defense at the same time that he or she presents his or her own advice. The CJCS shall also, as he or she considers appropriate, inform the President, the NSC, the HSC, or the Secretary of Defense of the range of military advice and opinion with respect to any matter.
- The members of the JCS, individually or collectively, in their capacity as military advisers, shall provide advice to the President, the NSC, the HSC, or the Secretary of Defense on a particular matter when the President, the NSC, the HSC, or the Secretary of Defense requests such advice.
- The Vice Chairman of the JCS shall perform such duties as may be prescribed by the CJCS with the approval of the

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 19.

Secretary of Defense. When there is a vacancy in the position of the CJCS, or in the absence or disability of the CJCS, the Vice Chairman of the JCS shall act as CJCS and shall perform the duties of the CJCS until a successor is appointed or the absence or disability ceases.

Jointness and integration of the military is an inevitable requirement for the modern-day battlefield. The principles underlying these features are inter-service cooperation and economy of effort, both of which are crucial to war fighting. The lack of jointness and integration in the Indian armed forces received an impetus post Kargil. The Kargil Review Committee and Group of Ministers on National Security highlighted the pitfalls in the existing system and made a number of recommendations. Of these, the three most important ones were: appointment of a Chief of Defence Staff (CDS); creation of unified commands; and integration of the service headquarters (HQ) with the Ministry of Defence (MoD). Though integration of the service HQ with MoD has been carried out, it is almost entirely superficial/cosmetic. The other two recommendations have not been implemented. Apart from appointing the CDS, a reorganization of the military to form unified commands would serve to integrate operations and bring greater synergy to the military effort. The appointment of CDS remains imperative and in the long-term perspective, unified commands will have to be planned and raised as well. This monograph analyses status of jointness in Indian armed forces by examining the evolution of jointness in the armed forces of USA, UK and China. It attempts to establish the necessity of appointing a CDS and unified commands to enhance jointness and integration at the strategic and operational levels, so as to conduct future wars in the framework of integrated operations. While dwelling on the essential arguments for and against CDS and unified commands, the narrative outlines various options available to India for appointing a CDS and establishing unified commands.

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