

IMPERATIVES OF SYSTEMATISED FORCE TRANSFORMATION-A DE NOVO APPROACH

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The paper enumerates multidimensional, integrative and dynamic nature of the force transformation process. It is required to take off from the very top – the articulation of national and defence security strategies. Followed by formulation of strategic defence review, defence planning guidelines, capability strategy/plan, technology development plans and finally, as long term integrated perspective plans. The author pitches for using defence cooperation as an instrument of serving national security interests. Most of the aspects lie in the domain of HQ Integrated Defence Staff.

Introduction

Transformation is metamorphosis. It is neither a usually behind time evolution nor budget busting, reactive and radical force restructuring revolution. It is a calibrated and systemic process with two major objectives. *First*– transforming the military to tackle relevant spectrum of security challenges that India anticipates in the short, mid and long term and the

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Second – applying emerging technologies to counter and pre-empt any potential adversary/competitor.

The key challenge for force transformation to take effect is drafting the long term integrated perspective plan (LTIPP). Based on this, the Armed Forces - force structure, equipment profile, training, logistics etc would develop. In India's context HQ Integrated Defence Staff (IDS) is charged with this joint responsibility. This paper takes into account the experience and process in

vogue in the US and other European countries'. Their Quadrennial Review process has been related to imperatives and lessons in the Indian context. An interesting facet to emerge is that China has very closely structured its national security system on the lines of US. The Chinese government has been bringing out white papers and putting them out in the public domain to shape the international and domestic perceptions.

The *aim* of this paper is to establish a link connecting force transformation with integrated National Security Strategy (NSS) and Strategic Defence Review (SDR) for India's security management system.

Challenges

What are the *constraints* in India's existing defence structure? When HQ IDS was established, it was to be headed by the post of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), whose tasks would include ensuring intra and inter – service prioritisation of defence plans and providing a system of jointly coordinated, single channel of military advice to the government. Existing

system, on the contrary is a compilation of perspective plans prepared by individual Services and DRDO. Budgetary allocation is a result of individual Service threat and capability assessment. In the absence of an integrated system, the end product is to an extent proportional to the size of the Service. *Major lessons of India's perspective planning are as follows:-*

- The long term perspective planning in the Armed Forces is a complex process. For it to be effective and realistic, it would necessarily have to be collaborative in its approach, as there would invariably be a number of agencies that would contribute towards the final product.
- The LTIPP should aim to build joint force structure and capabilities that would be relevant for the next 15-20 years and not for the present scenario.
- Starting point in the process of formulating an LTIPP is the articulation of a national security strategy (NSS).
- NSS requires to be followed by articulation of defence/military strategy.
- Strategic Defence Review (SDR) will flow out of the above documents. SDR will relate security strategy (national/defence) to the changes underway and their futuristic context.
- *Raksha Mantri's (RMs)* Defence Planning Guidelines should reflect capability, technology, organisational and doctrinal

transformation needed in near, mid and long term time frame.

- The time frame within which a particular capability is required to be developed needs to be clearly spelt out.
- Once missions have been identified, the capabilities needed to accomplish the mission need to be enumerated. These capabilities are then weighed against existing capabilities and capacity 'Gaps' arrived at. Once the gaps in

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capability are known, it needs to be established whether such gaps can be plugged through doctrinal or tactical means. If not, only then should we resort to material acquisition. Answer to this *query* will form the basis of evolving capability and technology plans.

Integrating National and Military Security Systems

Abinitio, a holistic national security system leading to force development parameters would comprise six major steps in integrating national and military security systems.

- *Firstly* - an exploration of geo-strategic environment through net assessments, bringing out strategic and military balance of power in

comparative terms. This would encompass present and future international security setting and conflictive national interests of global, Asian and South Asian players. Simultaneously also a review needs to be done of the internal scene to identify internal contradictions and identify the need, for providing multifaceted security.

- *Secondly* - outline contours of future threats and challenges encompassing all dimensions emanating from the environmental scan.

- *Thirdly* – formulate national security strategy, its perspective and defence military strategy.

- *Fourthly* – providing politico – military interface (HQ IDS), while responding to tackling non war time crises, strategic deterrence/ operations, and competition or irregular war challenges. This would mean implementing the strategy and its operational derivatives through integrated inter agency (IDS/MoD, MHA, MEA, NSC etc) and joint forces functioning mechanism.

- *Fifthly* – articulating SDR. It will attempt to identify changes which have taken place in political, strategic, military and technology in relation to the conclusions and assumptions driving the NSS/ defence strategy and their implications for the future. This would enable the strategic leadership to *determine the direction in which the Armed Forces need to transform* to fulfil their responsibility to the nation. This would also provide broad guiding parameters

as regards: future defence/military strategy, reviewing strategic capacities, capabilities, force structures and reshaping of defence technology enterprise, fully synergized with national technology cum industrial advancement plans.

- *Sixthly* - RM's defence planning objectives and planning guidelines will flow out of the SDR.

Evolving Integrated National Security Strategy

The *foremost need* is to enunciate a **National Security Strategy** (NSS) or a fundamental strategy based on past experience, current realities and future assessments, with a view to shape the environment to achieve the *national security objectives*. Inter-alia, it will lay down guidelines for the development of the military, diplomatic and economic levers of power, and the mechanism to synergise them. It should be developed by the NSC with inputs from MoD (IDS), MEA, MHA, Economic Ministries, departments of Science and Technology (S&T), Atomic Energy (DAE) and Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

An aspect meriting perceptual clarification is to distinguish between *threats and vulnerabilities*, as emerging

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from integrated perspective analysis. Threats should be viewed as distinct from

vulnerabilities. Former are often identifiable, requiring an understandable response, mostly application of force, covert or overt. Vulnerability is only an indicator, often not clearly identifiable. *Challenge of implementing NSS also lies in preventing vulnerabilities transforming into threats by dexterously employing all instruments of national power, as also shaping them in a positive direction or to our relative advantage.*

The sensitive aspects of NSS will need to be classified. These should essentially cover the following:-

- India's political aims/goals in terms of power projection or promoting/securing strategic/security, economic, technology and environment/bio-diversity interests.
- India's interests in other countries and regions extending from South Asia outwards.

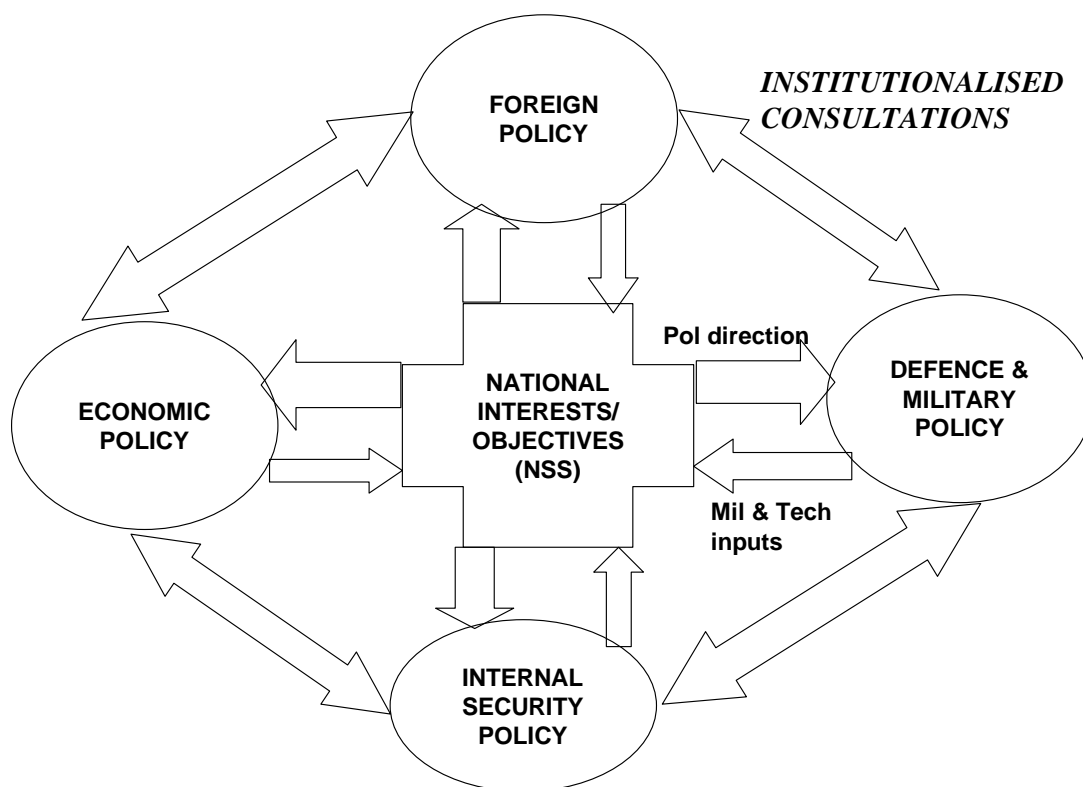


FIGURE 1 INTEGRATED SECURITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

- Interests and relationship matrix with major powers and the UN.
- Threats, challenges and competitors to our interests in respect of above paradigms.
- *Winning the competition* – strategy for staying ahead in competition and challenges, by setting time bound *objectives and engagement plans* in diplomatic, economic, technology and defence/

security fields vis-à-vis the competitors.

- Identify *economic, strategic, military* and *technology leverages*. Inter-se priorities of countries will need to be given out.
- Lay down strategic choices for entering strategic/security partnership in short, mid and long term context.
- Review of internal dynamics of India, its linkages with trans-border threats and challenges will be elaborated. Degree of expected involvement of Armed Forces in the internal dynamics will be enunciated as a policy.

An analysis of the aspects covered above brings out the inter-dependence and inter-play of the various organs of the state. An integrated security management system is illustrated in **Figure 1**. It clearly brings out the overlaps of various ministries which need to be understood and synergized through an integrated, inter active, inter agency and joint operating mechanism.

Articulating Defence Strategy

NSS will serve as framework around which diplomatic, military and economic levers of national power would be orchestrated. Defence strategy will postulate various dimensions of military power and its application in sync with overall national power. Goals, objectives and implementation strategy contained in NSS will form the over arching parameters, from which defence strategy guidelines will flow. *The two documents are inter related and inter dependent. Their review will also need to be*

undertaken in tandem.

Defence strategy could be in two parts as follows:-

- **Defence Strategy** - to cover doctrinal precepts, guiding principles, challenges, defence objectives and implementation guidelines for the entire defence/security enterprise of the country.
- **Military Strategy** - to amplify the military facets as a frame work of our strategic focus. It should enable the Armed Forces to support and implement the NSS and defence strategy in *war* as also during *peace time competition*. It would lay down military implications of defence objectives, conceptual issues, broad operational and capability overview, range of military missions, technology and organizational aspects.

Formulating Strategic Defence Review (SDR)

It will flow out of the NSS and the current defence/military strategy, as also the previous SDR (whenever applicable). However, there must be a projection into the future, an innovation or we would indeed always be fighting yesterday's wars. In order to make it broadly relevant up to next 15 or more years, a mechanism for extrapolating (linear and non linear) *present* into the *future*, has to be incorporated. The suggested *sequential process* to arrive at *future* strategy is as follows:-

- Review of changing strategic environment and the future

scenarios.

- An analysis of present defence/military strategy and the changed goals, if any, set in the NSS.
- Relating emerging technologies and consequent Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA).
- Meshing future conflict spectrum and battle space milieu.
- These when compared with the role and responsibilities of each Service would provide a mosaic to develop joint capability of the Armed Forces to meet future military missions.
- Future military perspective (near, mid and long terms) or joint military vision and military missions would lead to RM's Defence Planning Guideline.

The **SDR** should identify *future* parameters in terms of the following:-

- Adversaries/ countries of security competition, cooperation and friends.
- Comparative evaluation of the nature of threats/ competition.
- Threat from competing strategic/ security alliances.
- Goals and objectives of bilateral/ international defence cooperation.
- Policy on role of Armed Forces in asymmetric threats and internal conflict dynamics.
- Strategy for protection of critical infrastructure from cyber attacks.

- Defence related aspects of perception warfare.
- Degree and nature of military assurance that may be needed for ensuring energy, water and food security.
- Any other parameters considered relevant.

Synergising Defence Cooperation with NSS/ Defence Strategy/ SDR. This requires to be reshaped into a focused and result oriented instrument. In this case ***Defence Diplomacy*** would cover all defence related actions undertaken to further our national aims and objectives, its range would extend from unilateral coercive or armed actions to bilateral/ multilateral security cooperation initiatives with mutual consent. Thus the term ***security cooperation*** would provide the overarching umbrella for all security related cooperation. In conjunct with economic and strategic co-operations, *security cooperation* should be used as an instrument of India's NSS to secure and further our national interests by supporting formal agreements, strategically weakening or denying defence related technologies to those confronting us or future competitors. It should also enhance our prospects for extra regional mobility to secure strategic interests. Such activity would include:-

- ***Military Cooperation Activities*** – military to military engagement like joint operations, joint exercises, training, peace keeping/enforcing operations as part of UN or multinational alliance, fleet reviews and expert exchanges.
- Enhance financial viability of own defence industry and R&D

through defence exports, technology transfer, joint R&D and joint production.

- Improve own defence capability in areas of defence equipment through acquisitions, technology transfers and joint industrial production.
- Cooperative R&D, foreign comparative testing, and host nation support.
- Assist friendly foreign countries in developing their defence capability without impinging on India's security.
- *Degree and range of security cooperation with various countries should be in synergy with our security/military strategy.* This should also examine the stratagems for weaning away an important country from our competitors.
- Creation of additional overseas sources of supply to improve offshore logistic responsiveness and the in country mobilization base.
- Defence cooperation should open avenues for more efficient market for trade in defence technologies, goods and services for India.
- Overall our approach must minimize vulnerabilities/threats and maximize opportunities.

Defence Planning Guidelines and LTIPP

The ongoing system based analysis would allow the articulation of an all encompassing **Defence Planning Guidelines (DPG)**. It would emphasize

joint military vision and force development imperatives, to include the required capabilities and broad commitments of financial resources likely to be made available. This would also include technology requirements for the DRDO. Next sequential step will be enunciation of **defence capability strategy** followed by **defence capability plan**.

The **LTIPP** would now emerge from the above multistage inter active process. The LTIPP so formulated will be based on integrated system dynamics and force development imperatives. *The key drivers will be jointness and inter agency – these need to be internalized. In tomorrow's spectrum of conflict/ violence/ destruction, there would be nothing, which will not be joint /interagency.*

Drawing from the LTIPP, respective HQs will formulate programmes, projects and life cycle support required for the emerging, equipment profile.

Way Ahead

A *critical imperative* is to document the NSS:-

- A core group may be formed coordinated by NSCS. Representatives of all major ministries and HQ IDS are to be included. This must be at two layers- staff and deputies.
- Papers available with MEA, MHA, HQ IDS, Service HQs, other government agencies and think tanks could be used to frame a draft NSS. Draft policy guideline assumptions on NSS and Defence Strategy prepared by HQ IDS (Net

Assessment office) could serve as initial draft.

- Initial draft must be circulated to concerned agencies for comments and further updating. However, it should carry authenticity as policy guidelines for all other agencies, so as to avoid delay in applying the concepts into practice.

For preparing **SDR**, it is suggested that :-

- Initial draft is prepared by HQ IDS. It should then be reviewed by a joint working group, along with representatives NSCS, MEA and MHA. The endeavour should be to solicit best ideas from outside MoD, Armed Forces and government agencies.

- Defence policy guidelines for force transformation and technology development capability strategy/ plans to be finalized by HQ IDS.

- DRDO to concurrently develop defence technology plan.

- Defence capability and technology plans should emerge as a function of joint interactive mechanism incorporating HQ IDS, Service HQs, DRDO and civil industry.

The draft **LTIPP** could then be finalised by:-

- HQ IDS in consultation with Service HQs.

- The existing draft to be reconciled with initial draft of NSS and SDR.

- Implementation of macro

policy aspects to commence after due consensus or as authorized by competent authority.

Transformation Continuum

The Quadrennial Defence Review (QDR) examples of nations of consequence and its success so far, bring out the challenges and imperatives for Indian defence planners. No sooner had the cold war ended that the US had within a year or two revised its NSS and QDR, which led to transformational processes in place.

As part of American QDR 2001 process, a concept paper titled *Asymmetric Threats and the Next QDR* was prepared by US National Defence University in year 2000. After the 9/11 experience, required strategy, organizational and equipment changes suggested were incorporated. Reorganized Special Forces were even fielded in operations in Afghanistan and Iraq from 2002 onwards. It was an example of creating capability and applying it in the operational realm, all in real time.

China also has reorganized a large number of its infantry divisions into *counter terrorist formations*, to lead in high intensity counter insurgency contingencies. Such formations are charged with responsibility for various military districts/ regions and are located to provide quick response. Although China's extremist concerns are broadly centred in Xingjian and Tibet. Interspersing the entire country with Special Forces is indeed a preventive/ deterrence driven transformational response.

Clearly, there is a need to realize that transformation is not a one time phenomenon. *It is changing with the 'change' at the pace of 'change'*. It requires mental, physical and process agility at individual and collective levels. The multi-tiered mechanism discussed in the paper needs to be put in place expeditiously. Next step will be the

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promulgation of output documents and their adoption to user responses. Follow up action will again have to absorb newer changes in geo-political environment and so on. The cycle will continue. Successful transformation therefore, is a resonant/synergized continuum requiring indulgence of entire strategic enterprise.

There is an urgency for security planners to comprehend the need to revamp functioning and organization of the national security apparatus. This is essential for generating effect based response to extremely complex security dynamics of the coming new global order. Our competitors are not going to wait. We have to learn and apply faster. ***The Americans and other evolved major powers believe and practice that countries, Armed Forces and systems, which show a markedly superior learning dominance, move ahead and stay ahead. It is a point meriting deeper reflection.***

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