

Jointness : Call of the Future*
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Introduction

Jointness in the Armed Forces has been a well professed aphorism albeit in theory but least practised or understood by the members of its fraternity or even at the highest political level. It stems from common thinking in doctrinal terms, integrated planning of operations, conjoint training, seamless execution of operations and coordinated logistics for all combat forces. In order to achieve the above, it should be duly supported by empowered organisational structures, systems and smooth interactive processes.

Post-Independence India has fought wars with China and Pakistan, in which higher defence organisation (HDO) has not handled the national security matters with due diligence and astuteness. The civil-military relations continue to be marred with deep mistrust and suspicion. Devoid of institutionalised mechanism, turf wars continue to be exploited by the bureaucracy. Kargil Review Committee has brought out several deficiencies in the defence establishment. Several of its recommendations have been implemented, however, creation of the appointment of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) has been ignored till now. The appointment of CDS is the starting block to set the Armed Forces moving in a concerted manner towards jointness.

The world view on jointness brings out that the USA, as the lead country, adopted it through enactment of various acts of law. Several military failures forced the US polity to affect changes in their military organisations and associated structures. This not only reflects the awareness of the political leadership in the US on matters concerning national security but also brings to fore the limitations of the Armed Forces to affect changes on their own. The political and military leadership in India have to study the issue of jointness holistically so as to understand its nuances and finer aspects.

Aim

The aim of this paper is to ascertain the status and challenges to jointness in the Indian Armed Forces within the context of national security apparatus and to suggest a road map for the future.

Scope

The scope of the paper is as follows:-

- (a) Understanding jointness.
- (b) The US Armed Forces and jointness.
- (c) Existing jointness and recommendations.
- (d) Restructuring and road map.

Understanding Jointness

It is the way of preparing and fighting wherein all elements of a nation state contribute in a concerted manner to achieve the stated aim both, during peace and war. Jointness is an imperative in today's interdependent world. The forces of globalisation, riding the wave of Information Technology revolution, are increasingly interacting and optimising domain specialisations which no single unit can attain independently.

Levels of Jointness. The interdependency or jointness has to be the cornerstone and all-pervading aspect of political and military machinery. There has to be jointness at apex level between political and military leadership, within its institutions, with common goals and objectives. At Ministerial level, it should encompass all departments concerned with national security; and at the Armed Forces level, between the three Services and Headquarters (HQ) Integrated Defence Staff (IDS).

Extent of Jointness. Each level would encompass an organisational structure guided by philosophy of employment through doctrine and enunciated policies. The systems and processes which are routine command and staff functions should ensure smooth functioning of the system. The operational planning, force structuring and associated logistics need to be deliberated at all levels. It also permeates in the realm of training, budgeting and defence support in the form of production, research and development (R&D), procurements etc.

Challenges. At the apex level the bogey of civilian control has flawed the thinking of bureaucrats and politicians alike; and within the Armed Forces, the Indian Navy (IN) and the Indian Air Force (IAF) are weary of losing their identity to the Indian Army (IA).¹ The basis of motivation in the Indian Armed Forces is the unit bonding or regimentation. It is so compulsive that the officer cadre, even after reaching higher ranks, fails to rise above unit/service affiliations to understand the macro perspective. Overall civil-military set-up have not yet grasped the need for jointness, its manifestation from top to bottom and limitations of the Armed Forces to evolve by themselves.

Driving Factors. Basic ingredients of jointness are :-

- (a) **Adopting Right Attitude.** Jointness is all about attitude and grooming.
- (b) **Human Resource Development.** Through proper military education.

- (c) **Systems Approach.** Adopting holistic approach to jointness.
- (d) **Top Driven Impetus.** Need for ruthless implementation of policy decisions.

US Experimentation on Jointness.

The major statutory acts passed by the USA for promoting jointness are:-

- (a) **The US National Security Act 1947 and its Amendment.** Secretary of Defence was created to exercise general authority and control over three separate service departments; and Central Intelligence Agency was also created. The 1949 Amendment merged service departments into Department of Defence (DoD) and created Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS).²
- (b) **DoD Reorganisation Act 1958.** Created Geographic Unified Command, Strategic Air Command and brought in clarity on command and control structure.
- (c) **Goldwater Nichols Act (GNA) 1986.** Vietnam war and other failures forced the US to pass this Act.³ The details are:-
 - (i) Military advice was centralised in the CJCS as opposed to the Service Chiefs. The Chairman was designated as the principal military adviser to the President, National Security Council (NSC) and the Secretary of Defence.
 - (ii) Restructuring afforded a combination of effort, integrated planning, shared procurement and a reduction or elimination in inter-service rivalry.
 - (iii) Officer management made it mandatory for an officer to serve in a joint appointment before being considered for General Cadre promotion.

Analysis of the US Jointness. The victories in Gulf War I and II have been accredited to the GNA-86 Act. However, major observations on jointness are:-

- (a) Doctrinal differences persisted within the Services and degree of jointness was directly proportional to degree of dependence.⁴
- (b) Services capable of semi-autonomous action were inclined to go their own way.
- (c) Jointness has not matured sufficiently to accommodate the cultural differences among the Services.
- (d) Unquantifiable value that service ethos plays in war fighting should be exploited and not suppressed.

Existing Jointness and Recommendations

Broad Observations on Indian War Experience in Jointness. This is illustrated in Figure 1.

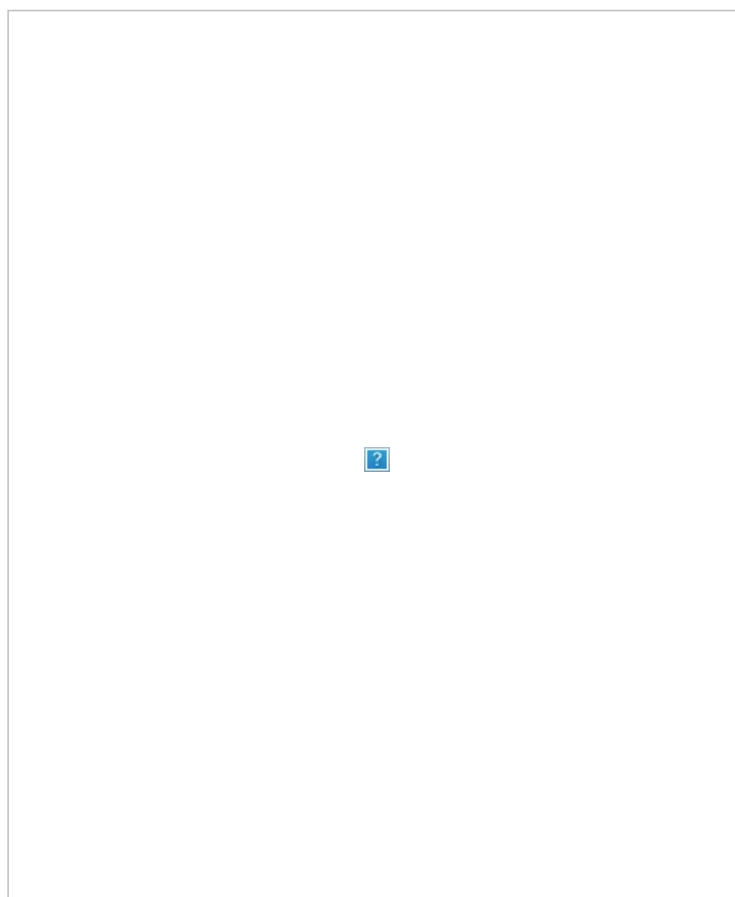


Figure 1

Performance Audit. Foreign, Defence and Home policies were bereft of any joint culture which marred the Indian experience on security matters with more pitfalls than achievements. Lack of strategic thought and joint understanding of operations have resulted in lack of joint effort and non-involvement or late involvement of either service.

Existing Jointness and Recommendations

Depth of Jointness

- (a) **Doctrinal and Policy Aspects.** At the apex level Union War Book gives out broad guidelines and a few policies.¹¹ It needs to be updated to cater for infrastructure development, changing nature of warfare, technology advances and consequent war philosophies. At Ministry of Defence (MoD) level National Security Doctrine needs to be enunciated; and Joint Doctrine for the Armed Forces should translate into tangible structures, forms and practices by the Services.
- (b) **Organisational Structures.** Cabinet Committee of Security (CCS), NSC, MoD, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and three Services are the premier structures existing for resolving matters on national security. It is observed that CCS and NSC have overlapping members performing same charter of duties and responsibilities. Central Police Forces (CPOs) are under MHA. However, during war they are placed under command of the Armed Forces; and in peace time, they are either independent or under operational control of the Armed Forces. This anomaly needs to be corrected. Services and CPO HQ are virtually subordinate/attached offices of the MoD and MHA respectively. The establishment of HQ IDS, without a CDS, is the first step towards jointness. There is an urgent need to restructure the security set-up at all levels so as to bring all agencies dealing with security under one umbrella organisation with all resources and forces to further jointness. Higher defence management at the apex level needs a major overhaul.
- (c) **Systems and Processes.** NSC and other organisations are functional; however, systems and processes are still not honed to handle challenges and crisis situations like Mumbai attacks. Within the MoD there is requirement to re-engineer the systems and processes as they are mired in red tape as well as bureaucratic delays and cost escalations. A proposal initiated by a Service is perused thrice by different agencies before it is even seen by the Defence Minister. HQ IDS still remains an organisation which is maturing its systems and processes. Currently, there are no institutionalised systems for interaction between the three Services at operational or tactical levels except for few courses and exercises. A few measures like cross postings on staff and as instructors (for common subjects), observers on exercises and more vacancies on selected courses would enhance jointness. These are elaborated in the subsequent paras.

Training. National Defence Academy is the first military institution where cadets of all Services are trained together during their three years stay. Thereafter, the first professional interaction between the selected officers happens at approximately 10-12 years of service at Defence Services Staff College; at 16-20 years during Higher Command or equivalent course and next at 24-25 years during National Defence College. It is recommended that all these military institutions be brought under the proposed Indian National Defence University which in turn could come under newly formed Joint Training Command (JTC) under IDS/Armed Forces Staff (AFS).

It is recommended that JTC be formed by merging part or whole of existing Training Commands of the three Services. There is also a need to holistically review the jointness through courses wherein a new course may be introduced between 6-8 years of service and the content of existing courses be reviewed for better understanding on jointness. As a pilot project JTC can have content which is common to all three Services like training of engineers, logistics, administration, law, clerks, drivers, police etc. Later, aspect of centralised joint warfare training through dedicated courses and joint exercises can be considered.

Operational Aspects.

(a) Force Structures

- (i) **Integrated Theatre Commands (ITC).** Integrated organisation for combat is an important aspect for success of operations at strategic, operational and tactical levels. Active Commands of three Services and Integrated Theatre Commands (ITC) like Andaman and Nicobar Command and Strategic Forces Command (SFC) are the main stake holders for jointness. There are a total of 17 Commands (14 active);¹² seven of IA, seven of IAF and three of IN, including Training (two) and Maintenance Command (one) all with different geographical areas, duplication of assets and varied command and control structures.¹³ There is a requirement to merge these into ITC for furthering jointness. No service Chief or even the CDS would be able to achieve the same unless it is pushed ruthlessly at the apex level by constituting a statutory body for executing the formation of Theatre Commands.
- (ii) **Joint Force Multiplier Commands (JFMC).** Aerospace, Air Defence, Expeditionary, Communication, Cyber, Information Warfare and Special Forces are the new vistas for formation of new Joint Commands which need to be expedited.

(b) Evolution and Evaluation of Plans. As per historical precedence, all the Services have evolved individual service plans and these were coordinated through Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) and joint meetings with MoD. Personalities played a vital role and no institutionalised systems existed. HQ IDS's first year review of performance states, 'Management of warfighting is left to active Commands and is not within the purview of HQ IDS'.¹⁴ Hence, it is recommended that a four star Chief of Armed Forces Wing (AFW) be introduced who should be made responsible for joint evolution of plans. For evaluation of plans, it is imperative to establish a National Wargaming Centre (NWC) with state of the art wargaming engine to customise need specific wargames.

Jointness at operational and tactical levels is adhoc, incidental and not institutionalised.

(c) Logistics. Currently, there is no synergy and jointness on logistics aspects; including infrastructure, supply chain, communication, transportation resources etc. There is a requirement to form Joint Logistics Command to coordinate all logistics aspects as part of JFMC.

Analysis

Jointness is a top driven phenomenon. It is imperative to restructure the Apex level organisations so that all security related organisations could be placed under one umbrella organisation for initiating jointness in the environment. Jointness would then automatically flow into the realms of the Armed Forces as a natural after effect.

Restructuring Initiatives and Road Map. This is illustrated in Figure 2.

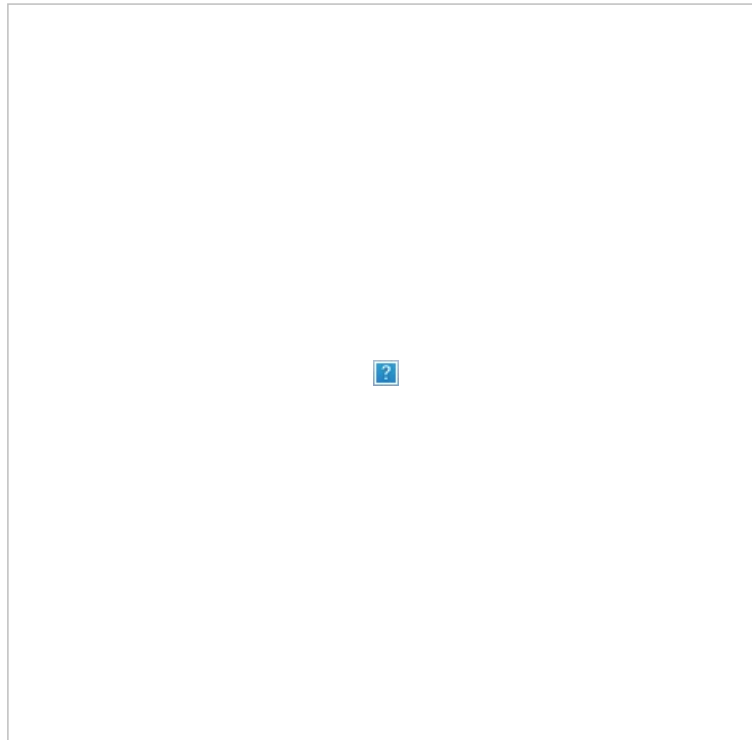


Figure 2

Apex Level Initiative. Please refer to Figure 2.

- (a) **National Security and Defence Council (NSDC).** A tectonic shake up is mandatory for the seed of joint culture to germinate into a giant tree. The hierarchical top structure should be wholesome to initiate and support jointness in the Services. The suggested apex agency should be chaired by the PM with two streams of members, i.e. ministerial and non-ministerial for two point advice. Keeping in view the Indian experience in war, representation of non-ministerial members is imperative for domain expert advice in decision making. It is felt that there is a requirement of forming a special ministry for Border Area Development as border areas are underdeveloped.
- (b) **Restructuring Monitoring Bureau (RMB).** This would be statutory/regulatory body headed by NSA for all aspects related to restructuring, jointness and integration. All reviews, studies, projects and issues of national security specifically in creation of ITC, Joint Commands and other joint structures would be monitored by this body. RMB would directly report to the PM and NSDC on timely execution of policy decisions and orders both in peace and war. Deputy Chiefs of all wings of MNSD would form part of this group.
- (c) **National Security Review Bureau (NSRB).** It should be headed by Cabinet Secretary level officer with experience on matters of national security. The main task of this team would be to carry out periodic review of all types of threats to national security. It can have members from varied fields of expertise related to national security.
- (d) **Strategic Wing** [Headed by Strategic Forces Command (SFC)].
 - (i) **SFC.** All nuclear and other strategic assets would be controlled by SFC. It should also have members like Deputy CDS, R&AW, representative from Nuclear Energy Commission and Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) to assist NSA for continuous situation assessment, review and decision making.
 - (ii) **Strategic Non Military Threat Assessment Bureau (SNMTAB).** Threats to National Security and Defence have proliferated into domains like food, energy, power, water, environment etc. which need to be viewed in holistic manner at the apex level. Deputy NSA should head this bureau with secretaries from important ministries.

Ministry and Armed Forces Level Initiative. Please refer to Figure 3. Currently, agencies responsible for security

are distributed under MoD and MHA with complex command and control structures. It is important to place all of them under one umbrella organisation. Apart from security forces all intelligence agencies also need to be centralised under chief of intelligence for optimising of resources and intelligence. All wings have similar equipment and weapon requirements, hence planning, budgeting, production, procurement and R&D can be done centrally, optimally, economically and speedily. The major restructuring initiatives recommended at the Armed Forces level are as follows:-

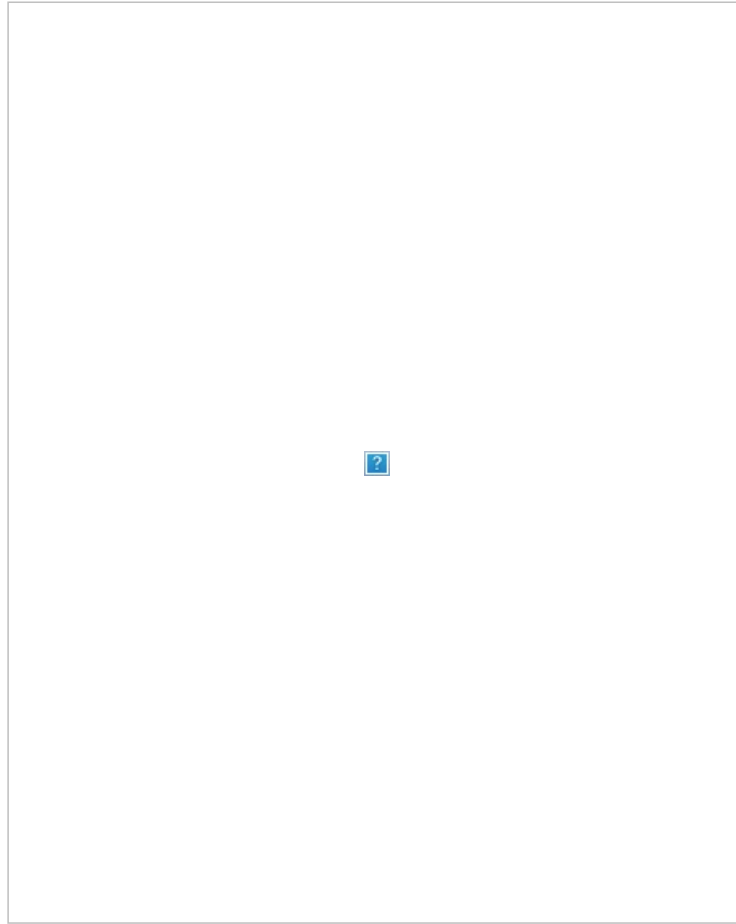


Figure -3

- (a) **JFMC.** JFMC to be established directly under AFS.
- (b) **Initial Restructuring ITC.** The first step for establishment of ITC is to align the geographical boundaries of the three Services including state territories and co-location of all three Headquarters. No change in command and control arrangements is recommended; respective Chiefs to continue leading their service. Every ITC would have a designated Joint Rapid Action Force (JRAF), trained in conjunction with Special Forces for quick actions on any security related incidence.
- (c) **Permanent ITC.** The next step is to train and create senior cadres who should have held a staff appointment in two other Services and attended a dedicated tri-service course (newly planned) for leading ITC. Respective chiefs would then be only responsible for administration of individual services.

Appraisal: Restructuring Initiatives

- (a) **NSDC.** The current CCS be dissolved as its charter and members are overlapping with NSC and it doesn't have representation of executives. NSAB being too unwieldy, its secretariat should also be dissolved. There is a need for creation of a four star CDS for centralised inputs on the Armed Forces, Border and Internal Security Wings who would act purely in advisory role. Newly formed NSRB on the basis of current Strategic Policy Group would provide the Strategic Policy Guidance to the MNSD.
- (b) **MNSD.** The current MoD be designated as MNSD. Post of Defence Secretary to be removed and five wings as recommended above be placed under MNSD removing the stigma of attached or subordinate offices. The erstwhile staff of MoD can provide the staff for the new ministry. All security and defence related agencies from MHA to be placed centrally under MNSD. Creation of post of Chiefs of Border Security to function in coordination with Ministry of Border Area Development (newly created). The Chiefs of Internal Security, Intelligence, Finance and Support should head their respective forces and departments. Clubbing of all intelligence inputs under Chief of Intelligence would give accessibility to respective Chiefs in review and formulation of their assessments and plans. The empowered MNSD would have all the wherewithal, from intelligence to forces and resources, under one umbrella organisation to deal with any crisis situation. This would drastically improve the reaction capability to any natural disaster or crisis situation.
- (c) **AFW.** It would be headed by a four star officer as overall commander of the Armed Forces. AFS to replace the existing IDS. The formation of JFMC and ITC in phases would be a major effort towards enhancing jointness.

Road Ahead

- (a) **Restructuring of National Security Apparatus.**
 - (i) **Phase I.** Appoint NSRB to study all aspects holistically (Time Period – 3 years).
 - (ii) **Phase II.** Promulgate restructuring by enactment of a law (Time Period – 1 year).
 - (iii) **Phase III.** Formulate NSDC (including appointment of CDS). Designate RMB as a statutory body to implement restructuring (Time Period – 6 years).
- (b) **Ministry and Armed Forces Level Initiatives.**
 - (i) **Phase I.**
 - (aa) Bring all five wings related to security under MNSD. Designate respective Chiefs. Establishment of JFMC under AFS (Time Period : 3-5 years).
 - (ab) Establishing ITC without a joint commander (Time Period: 3 years).
 - (ac) Review doctrinal and training content (Time Period: 1-2 years).
 - (ii) **Phase II.** Establishment of ITC with joint commanders (Overall period – 10 years).

Conclusion

The current state of jointness between civil-military, within three Services and even within components of the single Service, is non-existent except for a few organisations, courses and publications. The politico-military establishment has not been able to comprehend the changing nature of warfare, geostrategic dynamics within the neighbourhood, global trends and aspirations of India as a regional power.

There is an urgent need to adopt a top-down driven approach for restructuring the organisational set-up so as to facilitate jointness at all levels. The Armed Forces owing to strong biases and service grooming are incapable of affecting any changes towards joint warfare. There is a requirement of forming Restructuring Board for studying the national security apparatus holistically. Thereafter, a statutory body may be created to affect changes in the Armed Forces. The overarching philosophy should be – Train as a Team, Fight as a Team and Win as a Team!

Endnotes

- 1 Air Chief Marshal PC Lal, My Years with IAF, (New Delhi, Lancers International Publications, 1986), pp 327.
- 2 Rear Admiral AP Revi, Restructuring Indian Military (New Delhi, Gyan Publishing House, 2012), pp 45.
- 3 Gold Water Nichols Act, <http://en.wikipedia.org> accessed on 24 Aug 2014.
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- 5 Wing Commander R Venkatraman, India's Higher Defence Organisation and Management (New Delhi, KW Publishers, 2011) pp 87.
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- 11 Govt Revises Union War Book <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Govt-revises-Union-War-Book-to-meet-current-situation/articleshow/6554663.cms> accessed on 25 Aug 2014.
- 12 Commands at <http://indianarmy.nic.in>, <http://indianavy.nic.in>, <http://indianairforce.nic.in> accessed on 06 Sep 2014.
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*This is an edited text of the essay which won the First Prize in USI Gold Medal Essay Competition 2014 in Group A.

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