

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERHAUL – THE STRUCTURE OF INDIA’S SECURITY AGENCIES

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This Project is currently under consideration to be published as a book.

The Republic of India, since its conception in 1947 has been faced with one security challenge or the another. Peace and prosperity in our times is something that has been the dream of every administration, yet to achieve; a very heavy price is regularly paid – through blood, sweat, grit and tears. The honourable institutions that continue to pay this price on our behalf have done so since, and are continuing to do so today. While the risk that comes with the job has not changed, the evolution of technology and the onset of the modern battlefield has forced the evolution of these institutions. The research and development of modern technology has enabled new means – more efficient and more effective – in achieving determined ends.

New Delhi has over the years been engaged in the establishment of strategic partnerships that complement both its foreign as well as defence policies. In its neighbourhood, India has attempted to further bolster ties with its key neighbours such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Maldives and Sri Lanka. In West Asia, old friends such as Oman continue to support Indian ambitions and requirements, while new partners emerge in Iran, Israel, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Southeast Asian cooperation and outlook have only increased since the introduction of policies such as the Look East and the Act East policy, while the sun continues to shine bright over the strengthening ties between India and Japan, and the Republic of Korea. India’s oldest friend Russia continues to remain the single largest source of Indian defence equipment and platforms, a relationship that will continue its path despite the warming ties between New Delhi and Washington.

Over the years, the nature of threats that India has begun to face has also changed. This includes the constant threat of asymmetrical warfare propagated by Rawalpindi on India, specifically in the fragile Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir. Radical Islamic terrorism has ravaged the region over decades, but in recent years has been brought under control thanks to the relentless efforts of the Indian Army, the Central Armed Police Forces and the Jammu & Kashmir Police Force. However, this threat is now being replaced by the resurfacing of a greater, much more serious threat. Beijing has since 2013 begun to act aggressively, earning itself the title of the ‘regional bully’. In June 2020, 20 soldiers of the Indian Army’s Bihar Regiment were killed in action, taking with them about 35 personnel of the People’s Liberation Army, when the latter engaged in aggression at the Galwan Valley, UT Ladakh.

Several scholars, experts and practitioners in the field of warfare had previously predicted the end of symmetric warfare. However, with the rise of China and the decline of global engagement in the war on terror, it can be said that symmetric modes of warfare might just have resurfaced. As such, the Indian Armed Forces – the Army, Navy and the Air Force – which

have already been engaging in fleet modernisation have now begun to dramatically increase expenditure – given the Chinese threat. New Delhi also faces the massive challenge posed by a potential two-front war with both of India's nuclear-capable neighbours in the North and the West. This is now the key objective of all fleet and structural modernisation efforts of India's prestigious defence services – ensuring the defence and integrity of the nation in a two-front war.

To this extent, several efforts have been taken up, including the establishment of the post of the Chief of Defence Staff, operating from the newly set up Department of Military Affairs of the Ministry of Defence. The main objective of the CDS would be to further sharpen coordination and improve synergy among the three services. Given the increasing complexity of security challenges in the arena of modern warfare, there was an identified need for integrating an approach towards formulating an Indian defence strategy.

In order to meet the challenges of modern warfare in the 21st century, the synergisation of existing capabilities will not be enough. Threats are rising in the cyber and space domains, and this combined with land, air and maritime power will determine the battlefield of tomorrow. Furthermore, as learned from history, logistics and support structures will also play a crucial, centric role in supporting combat operations. A combat force can only go so far as it can be supplied. The modernisation of the combat arm – the teeth of the fighting force – is indeed implied. But the modernisation of the rear and support lines – the tail of the force – is also of crucial importance. Revolution in Military Affairs has brought about the importance of the maintenance of an optimal teeth-to-tail ratio, as well as highlighting lessons learnt from the past.

The optimal utilisation of all available resources in a battlefield, ranging from Artillery to Infantry, Armour to Aircraft, alongside the support of the defence industry, supply and logistics, in joint synergy will determine the victor of tomorrow. Whether it is on the land, in the air or on the waves of the high seas, unity in command and an all-round awareness of the battlefield is of utmost importance. To further this, the Ministry of Defence has over the years undertaken the development and implementation of the Integrated Theatre Command system – which will aim to unify the present 17 service-specific commands in India, each of which share complex geographical overlaps. A theatre command is an organisational structure that is designed to control all the assets of the Army, Air Force and Navy in a particular theatre of war and is under the operational control of a three-star general. The first of the integrated commands, and currently the only such operating command, was set up back in 2001 – the Andaman & Nicobar Command (ANC).

Meanwhile, the role of the Central Armed Police Forces in the maintenance of peace and internal stability continues to play an important, yet underappreciated role. While Pakistan and China make their moves at our borders, the scourge of radical Islamic terrorism, left-wing extremism and separatism continue to bruise law and order. Another underrated threat that India faces is that of illegal immigration and the illicit activities of cross-border criminal syndicates. The CAPFs under the whelm of the Ministry of Home Affairs are also tasked as being the primary institutions that safeguard India's borders. For instance, the Border Security Force guards India's frontiers with Bangladesh in the East and Pakistan in the West. The

modernisation of the military is indeed critical, but so is the case for India's guards and peacekeepers. Modern Battlefield Management Systems must be implemented in the military, but internal security systems such as the Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System for the border guards must be treated as being of equal importance. Modernisation of the paramilitary will require modernisation of its fleet and arsenal of weapons, but also the integration of high-tech surveillance devices, an efficient and dedicated communication network, and the establishment of a command-and-control centre to which the data will be transmitted in order to appraise the senior commanders about the happenings on the ground and thus providing a composite picture of the international border.

While looking inward – restructuring existing defence and security apparatus, New Delhi has also been looking outward. India has begun to cement its claims as being a regional power through expanding its military presence well beyond its own borders. India's military presence overseas can be felt through Indian Air Force and Navy deployments. In Tajikistan, the Indian Air Force operates with the Tajik Air Force at Farkhor Air Base, which giving it eyes and ears in Central Asia, specifically Afghanistan. A coast surveillance radar system has been established in Mauritius and listening posts in Madagascar, Seychelles and Oman. India's sole overseas army base has been established in Bhutan, by the name of the Indian Military Training Team (IMTRAT). However, for the most part, India's overseas military presence is scantily dotted on the world map. Apart from permanent military posts, India has also signed memorandums of understanding with several key strategic partners such as Singapore, Australia, Oman etc. which enable the military to access logistical support from these countries during operations. India is also conducting joint military exercises with key partners such as Indonesia and QUAD in a bid to contain the Chinese threat. All this will help India establish itself as a key security player in the international arena, while also helping it attain other national interests.

The chapters of this publication will attempt to be the manifestation of these discussions and more.