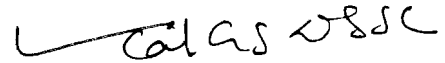


# **CONCEPT OF JOINTNESS AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR ARMED FORCES**

By

COL YVK Mohan, SM



*'Every man of action has a strong dose of egoism, pride, hardness and cunning. But all these things will be regarded as high qualities if he can achieve great ends together with others'.*

- Charles de Gaulle

## **JOINTNESS IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT**

1. The need for a joint approach was well appreciated by our military leadership even the dawn our independence. We had inherited a command structure for the services where we had unity of command, under a Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C). We soon set up a Joint Services Wing (JSW) for training officer cadets, which later became the National Defence Academy (NDA). The Defence Services Staff College (DSSC) continues as a premier joint institution as does the College of Defence Management. In 1964 we set up the National Defence College.
2. Despite this excellent start, more than half a century later, no real progress has been made towards achieving synergy amongst the three services. The situation today is that the three services have become increasingly compartmentalised. The irony is that even the joint structures sought to be created after the Kargil War, were whittled down and diluted to such an extent that they are merely of cosmetic value now. The joint structures under HQ IDS are not very effective due to the attitude of the service headquarters which are hesitant to part with any of their powers which will make such structures functional.
3. At the time of our independence, the service headquarters were down graded and became 'attached offices'. It is ironical that even after over half a century of loyal and selfless service by the Armed Forces to the nation, this misperception still persists. It was only in 2001, as a result of the recommendation of the government that the designation was changed to 'Associated Headquarters' and now are Integrated Headquarters of the MoD. The de facto control by the MoD gave birth to inter-service rivalries, which grew fiercer with time. Within the services, the misplaced fear of the Army dominating the other services brought about a perceived need to guard one's turf. Each Service started viewing war-fighting from its own perspective and

there was no holistic approach to problems of defence. This also had a trickle-down effect. Resultantly, whatever integration was attempted through joint institutions was nullified and remained only at the individual level, based on personal equations. Personalities within the Services, on account of their perceived importance and aggrandisement, also neglected jointness. They got bogged down more in turf battles than in any energetic pursuit of a modern joint higher defence structure.

4. Importance of Joint Operations. Joint operations are more than simply three Services acting in concert; very few modern operations can be carried out by one Service alone. Moreover, although the operational level is almost invariably joint, operations involving more than one Service are not invariably set at the operational level; some joint operations can be tactical, others can be strategic. The essential point of the description is that a successful joint campaign requires a holistic approach so as to maximise the overall operational effect of the joint force, making best use of the complete range of capabilities. It is not simply about separate and stove piped operations organised under a single point of command.

5. The defence of the interests of the Nation is a paramount concern of the Armed Forces. India's National Security Objectives, flowing out of National Interests are:-

- (a) Defence of national territory, resources, maritime interests and air space.
- (b) To maintain a secure internal environment against any threat to its unity and development.
- (c) To strengthen regional stability by cooperation with SAARC countries to promote harmonious relations, consistent with our National aim and interests.
- (d) To promote cooperation and mutual understanding, particularly amongst countries belonging to the Indian Ocean Region and those in the extended neighbourhood, through military diplomacy.
- (e) To work with the UN and friendly countries to address key security challenges before the international community and to promote regional and international stability.

6. Concept of Jointness. The concept of jointness focuses on inter-service cooperation for synchronisation of all components of military power to achieve a common military aim. It is characterised by trust and confidence, mutual respect for each others capability and cooperation rather than competition. It must be appreciated that war and associated operational issues as stated above are primarily the concern of the Armed Forces as a whole and not of

individual Services. War is not, and must not be a zero-sum game amongst the Services, because no individual service by itself can achieve the objectives or be a gainer or loser. The only criteria must be the optimising of the combat potential of the joint force.

### Future Operational Environment

7. Non-Conventional Operations. Even though the primary purpose of nuclear weapons is to deter their use by others, the threat of their use, particularly nuclear escalation in the Indo-Pak context, does need to be factored in at the national level. In the rare event of nuclear weapons being employed, the decision will essentially be guided by political and strategic considerations. Any battlefield employment of nuclear weapons, in our context, is highly unlikely.

8. Conventional Operations. We should be prepared to fight campaigns of considerable movement, complemented by the use of advanced, highly lethal weapons. Fluidity will also characterise operations in rear areas, where enemy commandos, terrorists, militants and fifth columnists will seek to avoid set piece battles and will strike at scattered points of vulnerability. Defending forces will try to pre-empt such hostile acts with patrols and raids in rear areas.

9. Low Intensity Conflict (LIC) Operations. LIC is a limited politico-military struggle, waged to achieve political, social, economic or psychological objectives. It is usually protracted and ranges from diplomatic, economic and psychological pressures being exerted through terrorism and insurgency. LIC operations consist of a series of diverse civil-military activities and operations.

### Challenges

10. There appear to be a number of infirmities at the national level in the way we are tackling defence and security issues. There is lack of national direction and the Services are mostly left to evolve their own objectives. There is no unity of command, either at the national or at the Services levels.

11. Our security environment is characterised by insufficient overall directions; too many ad-hoc structures and responses; poor inter-service and inter-agency coordination; shortages of appropriate equipment and material; inappropriate support systems; archaic and cumbersome regulatory systems; serious institutional resistance to change; limited dedicated resources; peace-time oriented security plans and lack of joint training.

12. The preparation for war requires a unified and inter-dependent joint effort between all the services. The Army requires the direct support of the Air Force and at times the Navy, to provide the strategic and tactical lift to deploy and sustain the land forces and to provide firepower support on the battlefield.

13. Logistics is another area, which lacks a joint approach. Control of logistics is essential to control of strategy and tactics. In a given area, or for a given mission, a single authority, identical with the command authority, should be responsible for logistics.

#### Specific Issues of Jointmanship

14. Having broadly highlighted the challenges, it is now intended to focus on certain specific issues of jointmanship. These are enumerated in the succeeding paras.

15. Unity of Command. A start has recently been made by the establishment of the Integrated Defence Staff at the level of the three Service Headquarters. However, the staff is minus its head, as the government has seen it fit not to appoint a Chief of Defence Staff (CDS). In addition, while a joint staff structure, headed by very senior officers, has been created, the individual Service Headquarters have not transferred any powers to the joint staff. Resultantly, they are substantially under-worked. Two integrated tri-service Commands have also been created. While the Andaman and Nicobar Command was set up in late 2001, the Strategic Forces Command has been established only in January 2003. Since these three joint organizations are still new, perhaps more time is needed to make them truly joint and fully functional. However, this will only happen if there is a positive attitudinal change amongst the Service Headquarters.

16. The Chief of Staff Committee (COSC) is the apex forum where the Services come together. Despite marginal strengthening of the COSC since September 2001, by giving it a few enhanced roles and functions, it continues to be plagued by ills which are inherent in a committee. At the level of the Services, it is essential to have a CDS so that a holistic approach to doctrine development, joint military operations, force structuring and budgetary issues concerning the three Services can be taken. This will also facilitate decision-making on nuclear issues. The consensus-driven 'committee system' is archaic and unsuited for quick and decisive action, which is the need of the future.

17. Higher Defence Structure. While the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) meets the requirements of the National Command Authority (NCA) in our context, the inputs it receives for formulation of policy are insufficient. We have created a National Security Council (NSC), but as presently structured, it has a number of anomalies, some of which are as under:-

(a) The role of the Service Chiefs is not fully optimized. Since all the Chiefs are members of the Strategic Policy Group (SPG), their professional advice is likely to be colored by the needs of their Service. In addition, the advice may be diffused on account of three different persons offering it. It would be more appropriate to have a CDS, who should represent and offer the collective views and interests of the three Services.

(b) The National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) is too large and unwieldy. It should be small and the members should have longer tenures, instead of one year, as at present.

(c) Choice of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) providing the secretariat is flawed. It violates the basic principle of separating policy and intelligence evaluation.

18. Ministry of Defence. The world over, mature democracies have integrated Ministries or Departments of Defence, which are staffed by both civilian and military officials. India continues to be a singular exception. Despite recent changes effected in the MoD, as a result of the report of the GoM, the MoD remains largely untouched. In fact, in certain areas, the supra nature of its powers have apparently been enhanced. The anomaly of the Service Headquarters and the MoD being separate entities continues.

19. Integrated Commands. Owing to rapid advances in technology, successful operations can only be conducted if forces on land, at sea and in the air complement and reinforce each other. Forming Integrated Commands, where joint planning and execution can be carried out efficiently, best does this. Integrated Commands, whether bi-Service or tri-Service, must have a headquarters manned by the joint staff.

20. Joint Manning. As more joint structures develop and are put in place, the need for their manning would increase. There is a definite need for each Service to develop a set of 'joint specialists', to be employed in the joint arena. Even with innovations and changes to deeply held traditions, the manning of the joint arena will be difficult to implement, given the shortage of officers, especially in the Army. However, we need to persevere.

21. Interoperability. Service inter-operability will enable us to achieve optimum results from the commitment of a military force in any operation. We need to bring about a fusion of procedures at the tactical as well as operational levels. The methods and techniques of each component must permeate the other's standing operating procedures (SOPs). A joint systems architecture can help identify these critical nodes of inter-operability. The dynamics of the military profession and the constantly shifting ground situation dictate that such procedures are refined continuously.

22. Joint Training. All specialized training would obviously be a single service responsibility. However, there are many areas which are common to more than one service. These need to be identified, so that economies of scale can be exercised and unnecessary duplication avoided. The training at the NDA, DSSC, CDM and the NDC is joint. However, present, training at the higher command level is being conducted by all the Services separately. Although, a joint session of approximately eight weeks exists, this is one level where it would be beneficial to have only one joint course.

23. Force Structuring. The resource crunch and budgetary constraints will always force us to prioritise. The Services must not fall prey to inter-service rivalry for the share of the budgetary cake. Force structuring should be a deliberate and well-conceived activity. It must be based on joint doctrinal requirements and not on perceived individual Service requirements. A dedicated and non-parochial joint staff can only do this. Acquisitions of weapons, platforms and war-like equipment should also be examined jointly and debated extensively, so that the total combat power of the Armed Forces is maximised. It is better to examine acquisitions from the joint point of view at an early stage of the acquisition process and applied prudently.

24. Joint Intelligence. There has been a sea change in the perception of what constitutes our 'national space', the definition is much broader now and issues (such as economics, media, science) that were for some time considered removed from the realm of intelligence targeting are now indivisible parts of it. At the very least concepts such as 'Economic-Warfare', 'Cyber-Warfare' and 'Media-Offensive' etc... have served to increase intelligence targeting needs. Increased nuclear and missile technology proliferation to India's hostile neighbours has imposed more demanding requirements on all three aspects of intelligence targeting, i.e. collection, collation and dissemination.

25. Joint Operational Logistics. Joint structures already exist in a number of areas like the Medical Services, Works Services, Postal Services, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Quality Assurance (QA), Defence Lands and Cantonments, Canteen Services and provision of stationary and forms. However, possibilities of bringing many more areas within the joint fold do exist and need to be exploited.

26. Communications. Future wars would entail total coordination between all agencies. Decision-making would warrant cohesion and necessitate very close involvement of relevant ministries, agencies and service headquarters. A tri-Service Defence Communication Agency needs to be set up. It would provide the network to meet strategic level communication requirements of the country. In short war scenarios, unless integrated information-sharing systems between the three Services are in place in peacetime, information will not flow smoothly during the execution stage. There is a need to establish a

fully integrated Joint Services Operational Centre (JSOC) of all Services, with a corresponding Joint Services Information Center (JSIC).

27. Information Warfare (IW). There are a number of cells and task forces in the Army, the Navy and the Air Force, which are working at information technology (IT) solutions, which will enable them to field systems for employment in the automated battlefield of the future. These are various types of Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence and Interoperability (C4I2) systems, which will provide the winning edge.

28. Network Centric Warfare. Effect based operations (EBO) are a set of coordinated actions directed at shaping the behavior of friends, foes and neutrals in peace, crises and war. This implies timely, appropriate and skillful use of all or selected elements of national power which include political/diplomatic, economic, technological, social, psychological, information/ media and military among others. Timely sharing of information and intelligence results in increased speed of command, higher tempo of operations, greater lethality and increased survivability. In essence therefore, Network Centric Warfare advocates and enables integration and 'jointmanship' in which the three services are lagging behind.

### CONCLUSION

29. Joint efforts in military operations are coming into increasingly sharper focus because of technological advances and the future battlefield milieu. The battlefield of tomorrow is certain to be more complex than it is today, and for success to be guaranteed the entire edifice of the current decision-making process shall have to be upgraded; at present it is structured in order to conduct World War II type operations. The Armed Forces have to move in the direction of jointmanship and would have to sacrifice some of their parochial service interests. We are still largely thinking and acting in a single-service mode. We need to reflect both on organizational and doctrinal issues. The recently set up Integrated Defence Staff needs to have a head appointed at the earliest and its functioning needs to be streamlined. We need to move forward towards integrating our field commands and set up additional joint structures.

30. Joint doctrine is the first step and the basis of working out joint training procedures as well as joint techniques. Selected war fighting functions such as intelligence, information management, doctrine, training and combat development; tactical air operations, and manoeuvre need to be viewed holistically to develop complementarily, rather than duplicate capabilities. We also need to venture into additional joint areas like automation, communications, resource mobilization, and transportation and so on. In due course, nearly every action will have to be joint. It is only then that we will be able to maximize combat potential. In this process, no one Service is likely to be the dominant partner: a lesson that needs to be learnt at the earliest.