

JOINTMANSHIP – THE IDS WAY

INTRODUCTION

1. **“Jointmanship”** that peculiar terminology employed only within Indian Armed Forces is both a crying need and an ephemeral notion. For five decades post independence, the three arms of our military prowess have continued to chart their lonely furrows, brought together in a very limited sense only when called upon for defence of the Nation. What has been the experience of our armed forces in joint and integrated planning and operations since independence? A study of the four wars that have been fought since independence indicates that though our strategic and geographical imperatives suggest a mutual and joint action of our services in any conflict, our experiences have been rather a mixed one. The conflict with Pakistan in 1947–48 did not offer a scope for large-scale joint operations. It was a limited war and the role of Air Force was restricted to transportation of troops and materials into Kashmir valley.

2. The Bangladesh campaign did exhibit certain amount of jointness and integration among the three services. Lt Gen JFR Jacob writes in his book **‘Surrender at Dacca’**, **“that there is no suitable machinery for direction of war at the highest level”**. **There is no effective Chiefs of Staff Organization, nor a Chief of Defence Staff.** Air Chief Marshal PC Lal in his book, **‘My Years with IAF’** writes **“As defined by the Chiefs of Staff and by each respective Service Chief, the objectives of 1971 war were to gain as much ground as possible in the East to neutralize Pakistani forces there to the extent we could and to establish a base as it were for a possible state in Bangladesh...It was feared that a delay of even two or three weeks would inevitably bring**

the UN Security Council and compel two sides to come to some sort of ceasefire such as Kashmir. With that basic understanding between the three Services, the Army, Navy and the Air Force, they were then left to plan their activities as they thought best.” These remarks are indicative of lack of an agreed strategy or coordinated control of operations by the Chiefs of Staff. The 1971 operations did teach us, especially in the Eastern theatre, the rewards of close cooperation between the Army, Navy and Air Force. Capture of Sylhet was facilitated by heliborne operations. It has to be emphasised that attainment of air-supremacy by the IAF contributed greatly to the conduct of heliborne operations, which would have been almost impossible without it. Army, Naval and Air Force Commands in the East did execute their tasks competently. Our defence forces have also operated together in peace support and peace keeping operations like Somalia and Sri Lanka. However, the opportunities for practicing jointness have not been exploited and their tasks have been confined to their respective Services’ classical roles.

3. Substantial reforms have taken place on this issue in recent years, triggered by the 1999 Kargil Ops. Based on the Kargil Review Committee Report, a Group of Ministers (GOM) was formed to review the entire spectrum of Security apparatus. As partial implementation of GOM recommendations, **Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff (HQ IDS)** under the Chief of Integrated Staff to the Chairman Chief of Staff Committee (CISC) was set up on 23 Oct 2001 as an interim measure till CDS was nominated. The decision to appoint CDS was kept pending for political resolution.

4. Although joint commands like Andaman & Nicobar Command (ANC) and Strategic Forces Command (SFC) and organisations like Defence Satellite Control Centre, DIPAC etc have also been established, it is HQ IDS which is at the crest of the jointmanship wave. Jointness is the *raison - de- etre* for the existence of HQ IDS and is enshrined in its motto of '**Victory through Jointness**'.

THE ROAD TRAVELLED - ACHIEVEMENTS OF HQ IDS

5. Seven years since HQ IDS was set up; it is time to take stock of what has been and what needs to be done. A number of milestones have been achieved in promoting the concept of jointness within the Services. The 'Committee Approach' to deal with a large number of issues common to the Services and headed by HQ IDS is an on going process.

6. **Defence Planning Process** The Defence Planning Process is being strengthened and Draft National Security Strategy and Defence Planning Guidelines have been prepared by HQ IDS and forwarded to Ministry.

7. **Long Term Integrated Perspective Plan (LTIPP)**. A critical task accomplished by HQ IDS is the formulation of Long Term Integrated Perspective Plan (LTIPP). This has resulted in certain important issues like the Joint Conventional Edge, capabilities to be achieved, aspects of commonality of equipment; inter-Service prioritization and indigenization etc to be adequately addressed. For the first time an analysis of DRDO's Plan and an honest endeavour to synchronise it with the Services Defence Plan has been made.

8. **Defence Procurement Procedure.** Defence Procurement Procedure 2008 is a sterling example of inter agency and tri service jointness. HQ IDS has an enhanced role in the procurement process vide DPP-2008. It has also launched a Feasibility Studies to energise the involvement of Indian Industry in procurements under 'Make' category.

9. **Joint Doctrines** Joint Doctrines for Defence Forces and Joint Amphibious Warfare Doctrine have already been released. The Joint Special Forces Doctrine, Joint Psychological Operations Doctrine, Joint Sub-conventional Warfare Doctrine and Joint Space Doctrine are in advance stages of preparation.

10. **Defence Space Vision (DSV) 2020.** Space is the new frontier and applications positioned in this domain affect war fighting capabilities of all the three Services. The DSV-2020 document has been evolved and HQ IDS nominated as the tri Service single window for interaction in space by all agencies including external ones. An Integrated Space Cell has been established to co-ordinate space issues and formulate a Draft Space Doctrine.

11. **Joint Exercises.** A number of joint exercises with other countries have been conducted by HQ IDS. AMPHEX 07 was a major tri service exercise undertaken to validate the Joint Amphibious Doctrine. A UN Peace Support Operations Exercise (UNPSO) 'AMAN SENA' involving 13 countries was successfully conducted in Mar 08.

12. **Joint Training** HQ IDS has carried out a review of the Tri Service Institutions and brought about changes in their training curriculum to bring in aspects enhancing jointness within the services. The process of establishing joint Armed Forces Training Institutes (AFTI) with the focus to enhance jointmanship and optimise resources is underway.

13. **Think Tank Organisation** A Centre for Joint Warfare Studies (CENJOWS) was established by HQ IDS in 2007. The think tank organisation functioning under HQ IDS is primarily chartered for conduct of studies & research work in Joint War-fighting and promotion of Jointmanship amongst Services, Ministries and Intelligence Agencies involved in National Security.

14. **INDU.** An Indian National Defence University is being set up to increase jointness in strategic thinking, joint resource management, besides educating civilian officials on strategic aspects.

15. **Disaster Management.** HQ IDS is responsible to ensure a coordinated response for all disaster relief both within and outside the country. This integrates the efforts of the Services and other allied agencies at crucial junctures of disaster management thus bringing timely succour to the affected populace. Shining examples of the quality of efforts are relief operations post Tsunami, cyclone 'Sidr' in Bangladesh and recent floods in Bihar.

THE ROAD AHEAD - FOSTERING JOINTNESS

16. Despite the commendable efforts put in by HQ IDS and achievements towards jointness in the Armed Forces, choke points do exist, that hamper true integration from being achieved in the desired manner. The major ones, those that should essentially be addressed on priority and with an open mind are enumerated in following part.

17. **Fixation of Mindsets.** There is a great value in separate identities and distinct characteristics of the Army, Navy and Air Force as the future wars would still require the specialist skills and ethos of each Service. However, for too long have we been burdened by the compulsions of colouring our perspective through Service tinted prisms of olive green, white or blue. Even each Service is afflicted by the malaise of 'separate identities' within as portrayed in 'Regimental' and 'Corps' loyalties, 'fighter' vs 'transport' vs 'helicopter' aviators, 'aviators' vs 'the rest', 'submariners' vs 'surfaceceers' vs 'aviators' and so on and so forth. The essence of true jointmanship lies not in merely setting up additional operational structures but in ***breaking established mindsets***. This is in fact the preliminary but the most difficult part of achieving jointness.

18. **Role of HQ IDS.** The creation of HQ IDS and other joint organisations should not result in establishing another layer of bureaucracy that denigrates Service HQs, inhibits competent decision making and hinders effective war fighting. One often sees that the Ministry of Defence (MoD) views HQ IDS as an overarching extension of the Service HQs, and to be used as a buffer between the two. HQ IDS is neither an information gathering agency nor merely rubber stamping

proposals emanating from Service HQs. It needs to be clearly understood that it is to do an in depth analysis of issues referred and otherwise in its charter and give cogent views on them. The functional relationship between MoD, HQ IDS and the Service HQs should be clearly defined.

19. **Joint Training**. While joint operational planning and training are mandatory requirements, it does not imply dilution of present core competence of each Service but harmonizing to achieve synergy. The real essence of integrating the three Services is the conduct of efficient training. Obviously a great deal of training occurs at single service level. **HQ IDS has done yeoman service by infusing a very large element of jointmanship in the training curriculum of the premier tri service institute Defence Services Staff College (DSSC)**. However, at the ground level there is a requirement of holding periodic joint exercises where the entire planning and conduct is carried out centrally by a core group of planners from the three Services. These joint exercises should not be an **overlay of singly appreciated plans by individual services as is the case now**, but should originate from a jointly appreciated threat leading to the formulation of a joint plan. Significant emphasis should be placed on spending time formulating the strategic decision and evolving a joint plan rather than focusing on battle field tactics alone.

20. **Quality Offrs**. Presently the Services in major part are loath to post quality offrs to joint organisations. If jointness is the path to the future and the way to go, this will have to change. **There is a need that Services post high calibre career officers in joint organisations or tri-service appointments**. MS & SD Dte at HQ IDS needs to be strengthened and mandated to act as the nodal agency for interaction

with the three Services on posting of offrs to HQ IDS, joint commands and organisations. In the US, the flag rank selectees are required to attend a special "capstone" course and it is mandated that to be eligible to become Service chief, the officer must have considerable joint exposure. Joint courses, such as DSSC Staff course, Higher Command Courses and NDC should be considered mandatory for the career progression to flag ranks and thereafter to hold senior appointments in the three Services.

CONCLUSION

21. Jointmanship can be imposed physically while integration commences in the mind and this is where our problem lies. The keystone to jointmanship is synergetic thinking. ***'The Whole is greater than the sum of its parts'***. Synergy is achieved by understanding the raison-de-etre of common objectives for war, each other's strengths and limitations and placing National Interests and consequently war objectives above individual Service requirements. Unfortunately, integration in our country is related more to ownership. We need to first change this mindset from ownership to trust which is based on the knowledge that one will get the support that one needs at the right time.

22. Structures can only facilitate enforced development of cooperation and synergy, they cannot remove established mindsets. The first priority should therefore be to institute processes that assist in dismantling mindsets, only then would joint structures become meaningful and true jointmanship achieved. It would be apt to conclude with a quote of Victor Hugo ***"There is nothing so powerful as an idea whose time has come."***