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LEVEL OF JOINTMANSHIP : INDIAN ARMY

"Victory in World War II was a triumph for the concept of the complete integration of the three dimensions of war – ground, sea and air, and, the great lesson for the future is that success depends on a complete integration of the Services."

_ General Douglas MacArthur

INTRODUCTION

1. 'Co-operation' among the three services has long been accepted as a principle of war by the Indian Armed Forces. Jointmanship is a progression of this principle which aims at all the three Services working together in a complementary way to achieve the overall national security objectives. The term 'Synergy' has been used to describe joint operations. This means that the joint effort is greater than the sum of the single Service parts.
2. Military thought the world over now accepts as a truism, that modern wars must be fought by all the three services acting together as one under a single commander. The old ideas of separate co-operation being affected by three equal and independent Service commanders acting in concert has been discarded as impracticable by all great military powers. The attendant disadvantages of such a system which one normally must expect when there is no central unitary control and direction completely preclude its retention. In essence, tri-Service jointmanship has become a stark reality that presents itself as a 'fait – accompli' to armed forces the world over, and India is no exception. The only question is what brand of jointmanship does India need for her Armed Forces?
3. In the past, the different constituents of the nations armed forces developed independently and during war, inter service coordination was somehow achieved, though with considerable difficulty. This was not so much due to the reluctance of one or the other Services to come to the aid of the other, but due to the organisational concepts, which were not conducive, both psychologically and operationally for modern wars.

AIM

4. The aim of this paper is to examine the relevance of tri Service jointmanship in the Indian context and recommend a viable degree of jointness most suitable at the present juncture.

RELEVANCE OF JOINTMANSHIP IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT

Requirement of Joint Force

5. In the decades to come when the world's strategic mineral resources get depleted, the world would be looking at the Indian Ocean region for their resources. Our island territories can provide a strategic foothold for dominance and exploitation of the region. It is essential that we have a viable joint military force for safeguarding our national interests.

6. This force must be able to reach the theatre of operation, self-contained in combat, poised with matching mobility, command, control, communication, intelligence and have the flexibility for deployment by land, sea, air or a combination of all these in the shortest possible time. Establishing of this joint force would act not only as a viable deterrent against adventurism and instability in our immediate neighbourhood but also demonstrate our capability to safeguard our own national interest.

PHILOSOPHY OF JOINTMANSHIP IN ARMED FORCES

7. Jointmanship is an involved word in military parlance and its deep connotation implies any of the several stages leading to the ultimate goal of unification of the three services. In order therefore, to determine to what degree and up to what stage and level of command should jointmanship in the Indian Armed Forces be considered, it is necessary at first, to examine the governing philosophy of jointmanship in the armed forces, in general.

The Unification Mystique

8. Unification is the ultimate goal of jointmanship. It implies that the three conventional Service elements would surrender their autonomous status and be converted into a single Service commanded and controlled by a common superior and served by a common staff. This single Service armed force it is envisaged would develop its own esprit-de-corps and traditions. Such a system even provides for a common cadre of inter- changeable personnel.

9. Although countries like erstwhile Yugoslavia, Israel and Burma had attempted unifying their armed forces on a single Service pattern, the Canadian experiment has been one of total unification. Within a span of six years the process of unification was successfully completed and what seemed initially a radical step, established itself as a workable formula. Improved economy and enhanced efficiency are the obvious benefits of the system. The question is, whether the Canadian model can be universally applied.

The Joint Theatre Concept

10. One stage removed from total unification is the process of integrating the three armed forces at the Theatre or Command level. Perhaps this concept is best exemplified by the organisation of the United States military commands. For instance, the US Pacific Command or PACOM is a unified command with a four star Admiral as the C-in-C Pacific. The C-in-C Pacific exercises operational command of all major component forces in the Pacific Theatre, through the three service component commanders.

11. Joint Planning. The keynote of the joint theatre concept is joint planning. Operational planning for tactical deployment is done by joint staff teams working under the unified commander. The execution of plans and lower echelon planning is however parcelled out to individual Services or task forces as the case may be.

12. Command Structure. Although unified command at the apex is the essential feature, parallel chains of command for the three Service commanders at lower levels in the organisation are necessary. This system ensures efficient planning and execution of inter-related Army, Navy and Air Force tasks.

13. Battle Management. Unlike unification, where economy was a major consideration, the emphasis in the case of the joint theatre concept is on efficient battle management. The primary objective is to produce peak operational efficiency by a concerted effort of all three services. All effort is oriented or subordinated to conform to the mission of the unified commander.

Task Force Philosophy

14. A task force has been defined as a composite force equipped to accomplish a specific mission and organised in a manner that facilitates execution of its task. It is a mission-oriented force, which is specifically trained, equipped and deployed for this purpose. In concept therefore, a task force may lack operational flexibility, being restricted to the narrow field of specialised operations concerning its mission. On the other hand, a task force can provide the inherent capability of lightening response—a crucial aspect in a limited war,

when time and timing are of the essence and the aim is to win the first battle of the war.

15. There are two problems that arise in a peacetime, defence-oriented environment. How does one positively specify an operational mission of the future and what time span does one allocate? Is it operationally feasible and economically viable to maintain task forces at a high pitch of operational readiness, poised for instant action to meet a specific contingency plan of the future? The United States strike command and the amphibious task forces of the sixth / seventh fleets are examples of strategic task forces. The point that remains fundamental is whether India needs such task forces.

WHAT INDIA NEEDS

16. All forms of jointmanship aim at achieving a degree of co-ordination between the three service elements, whilst unification, which is the ultimate aim of jointmanship, eliminates the very need for co-ordination - all services being one. Obviously therefore, the aim of any armed force of a country, should be unification, but the question that arises is at what stage of a military generation should unification be implemented.

17. Another important issue concerns the delicate period of transition. It took six years for Canada to complete the unification process. During this period the United States stood by as her guarantor. The Canadian Armed Forces are barely one tenth the size of ours; consider the time frame that would be involved in our case. Does the present political climate permit the licence to leave her armed forces vulnerable for such a protracted period, is therefore a question that must be examined first.

18. On the other hand, the efficacy of the joint theatre concept does not create any psychological upheavals caused by impinging on the sensibilities of individual Services. For India, at the present juncture, the joint theatre concept is the most desirable form of jointmanship for its armed forces, with unification no doubt as its future objective.

19. As to whether or not India needs to pattern its joint forces on the task force concept raises a fundamental question; can we afford the cost? It is true that task forces enhance the operational readiness of the armed forces. In addition the mere existence of such quick reaction forces has a deterrent value in peacetime.

20. To briefly conclude, what India needs at the present stage, is firstly, the joint theatre system with a unified commander and secondly, a tactical task force within perhaps only the maritime theatre of operations. In order to rationally

implement these schemes it is necessary to review the existing command and control system of the three Services.

EXISTING SET-UP

21 Operational Commands The present system of Commands was created and developed by individual Services in isolation and based essentially on single Service imperatives. The glaring anomalies of the existing system, which seriously detract from effective, inter Service co-ordination are as follows:-

(a) The geographical zones of responsibilities of various Commands of the three Services have no apparent commonality. In most cases the Command of one Service overlaps or is linked with two or three Commands of the other two Services.

(b) None of the regional Command headquarters of the three Services are co-located. This problem has been partly overcome by the Army and the Air Force by co-locating the 'Advance Headquarters' of Air Force Commands with the headquarters of Army Commands. However, between the Navy and the Army, there are no headquarters links at the Command level and between the Navy and the Air Force an extremely tenuous link exists between the Central and Southern Air Commands and the three Naval Commands.

(c) Irrespective of the physical proximity of one Service Command to that of another Service, practically all co-ordination has to be done at the level of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and involves a laborious and time consuming process.

Operational Environment

22. The strategic environment in which our armed forces operate can be analysed without designating potential adversaries or allies, the following conclusions can be made:-

(a) The land frontiers being in direct contact with neighbouring nations are inherently sensitive areas from a military point of view.

(b) The 700 to 800 mile physical separation of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands from the mainland render them potentially insecure. The security of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, as well as the Lakshadweep islands is significant in relation to the Exclusive Economic Zones and security of sea lines of communications.

23. Based on the strategic environment, the operational environment of the Indian sub-continent can be divided into four regions. The regions being as follows:-

- (a) Northern Region. The region contains the border with Pakistan, China and Nepal, a purely land –air warfare environment
- (b) Western Region. The region includes the border with Pakistan from the Jammu, across the plains and the desert wastes, up to the maritime interface. Though it is a land warfare environment largely, the maritime imperative predicates a tri-Service responsibility.
- (c) Eastern Region. The region includes the border with China, Burma and Bangladesh and in view of the maritime considerations it affirms a tri-Service involvement.
- (d) Southern Region. This region includes the coastal belt of the mainland and the Island Territories. It is essentially a maritime environment that dictates a Navy-Air Force involvement with the Army playing a comparatively lesser role.

REORGANISED JOINT COMMANDS

24. A comparison of the operational environment of the Country with the existing operational Commands indicates an apparent mismatch. In order to remove this anomaly it is necessary to restructure the Commands and make them compatible with their environment. The answer lies in reorganising the Service Commands to conform to the four regions that constitute the operational environment of India. The four regions that comprise the operational environment are in effect the natural divisions of the country into military theatres, each with its own character. It would accordingly be ideal to create operational Commands to conform to these regions.

Location

25. However since efficient battle management is the main theme of the joint theatre concept, strategic and tactical considerations dictate that the northern region be further divided. Accordingly, it is felt that India should be divided into five operational Commands structured on the joint theatre concept. Keeping in view operational necessities, physical process of housing the headquarters staff and to obviate heavy expenditure on this account, the following locations are

recommended for the headquarters:-

Sr No	Command	Place
a	Northern	Chandigarh
b	Central	Lucknow
c	Western	Ahmedabad
d	Eastern	Calcutta
e	Southern	Bangalore

Force Levels

26. Normally in the joint theatre system, forces are permanently allocated to various commands and are usually adequate to accomplish the mission of the theatre commander. However at the present juncture this will not be possible in our case, for although the Army can reasonably provide the required force levels for the five theatres, the paucity of air and naval forces pose a problem. As a result, it will not be possible to allocate air and naval forces to the various commands on a permanent basis. The allocation of naval and air forces can hence be made centrally on as required basis to each Command. Later, when adequate resources are available they could be sub allocated to each Command on a more permanent basis.

Amphibious Task Force

27. In our context, amphibious operations involving up to Brigade strength are envisaged. The brigade group allocated for this purpose would require to be an integral part of the Amphibious Task Force. Therefore, this landing force would have to be positioned on a permanent basis under the C-in-C Southern Command under whom the Amphibious Task Force would be operating.

REORGANISED STAFF STRUCTURE

28. The formulation of the staff structure that would functionally blend with the joint theatre system has to be based on three assumptions as follows:-

- (a) There will still be as many 'single Service' problems to be solved as there are likely to be 'joint' problems.
- (b) The single Service specialist officer will still be the most suitable man to tackle, in detail, the problems exclusive to his Service. Accordingly any joint staff organisation must be such that this single Service specialist ability can be readily available to the commander.

(c) There are several aspects of staff work, which do not demand single Service experience and could be handled by officers of any Service. This would be true in the fields of logistics, administration, intelligence and medicine.

29. The problem is to forge a staff instrument capable of being used in both a joint and single Service capacity with greatest economy. It is envisaged that such a system would constitute the following components:-

(a) The Command Group. This would function as a composite unit and would comprise of individuals having separate joint and single Service responsibilities.

(b) The Staff Group. This would comprise a balanced selection of staff officers, the nature of balance being determined by the character of the Command namely, whether it was primarily a land or maritime environment. To ensure smooth functioning, the major single Service specialisations would have to be included in the staff teams.

(c) The Combined Secretariat The primary function of this unit would be to ensure that the joint and single Service problems are correctly channelled through the joint staff.

30. The recommended Command and Staff structure required to match the joint theatre system for our armed forces is placed at Appendix A

Functioning of the Organisation

31. The recommended organisation envisages a C-in-C who is himself part and supported by a Command Group containing two/three single Service deputies (each responsible directly to him for single Service matters) and one Chief of Staff (responsible directly to him for joint matters). One joint staff consisting of a number of joint staff teams, whose members are capable of acting in a single Service capacity if so directed, serves this Command Group. Each staff team is led by an Assistant Chief of Staff and the work of these teams is co-ordinated by a small number (two or three) of Deputy Chiefs of Staff. Both the Command and Staff Groups are served by a Combined Secretariat.

32. The staff structure outlined above will provide a basis which would require minimum changes for it to move from peace time planning to wartime execution of plans. In this staff structure certain staff responsibilities would be delegated for single Service matters in peace and in addition certain command functions in single Service sphere in war to the three deputies. The overall responsibility for command will be retained by the C-in-C.

Lower Formation

33. Joint staff groups would also be required for lower formations. These could be patterned on similar lines as for the Command headquarters but proportionately scaled down. The character of a lower formation staff group would depend on its immediate operational environment. The selection of a balanced tri-Service staff would be a crucial consideration. For instance in an area where air defence is more vital than ground or naval considerations, it would be pertinent for the staff group to be structured around the Air Force staff.

CONCLUSION

34. Whether it is along our land frontiers or in assistance to our immediate neighbours in the Indian Ocean region or a futuristic Out of Area Contingency, it is universally accepted that modern wars must be fought by all the three services acting together as one, under a single commander.

35. The emphasis in this paper has been primarily focussed on whether jointmanship is relevant and viable in the Indian context. The recent global conflicts have proved beyond doubt the need for a joint theatre concept. While in the avenues of training and administration our armed forces have made reasonable headway towards jointmanship, the vital field of operations has been gravely neglected. The operational environment has been analysed to rationalise the degree of jointmanship. The Indian Armed Forces are unprepared at this juncture for the ultimate goal of jointmanship that is unification. This is evident from the psychology of the Indian Armed Forces.

36. To place all the emphasis on the magic catchword ' jointmanship ' and ignore the good in each Service would be incorrect. Although unification should be the ultimate goal, its implementation should be commenced at the right time and phased. However for the present the best solution would be to go in for the joint theatre concept which would entail restructuring of the existing armed forces commands into five joint commands based on combined tri-Service imperatives served by a joint staff.

37. The proposal does present problems, however none of them are insurmountable. With tact and forbearance, which are important attributes of a staff, the greatest fear, which would be psychological, as a result of change in military values, could be overcome. When military fundamentals are constantly changing, such matters as the function of a Service, the extent of its autonomy and the degree of jointmanship, automatically become contentious. But this is inevitable and must not distort our aim of creating an armed force that can provide the most efficacious means for prosecuting the joint effort.

RECOMMENDATIONS

38. The following are recommended:-

(a) For the present, the joint theatre concept, be adopted which requires the operational commands of all the three services being restructured into five joint commands based on combined service imperatives and served by a joint staff.

(b) Unification, the ultimate goal of tri-Service jointmanship, could be commenced at an opportune moment in the future, as the armed forces are unprepared for this step at this juncture.

"Unification, which is the ultimate aim of jointmanship, eliminates the very need for co-ordination; all services being one"

CERTIFICATE

1. It is certified that no classified material has been used towards preparation of this service paper.

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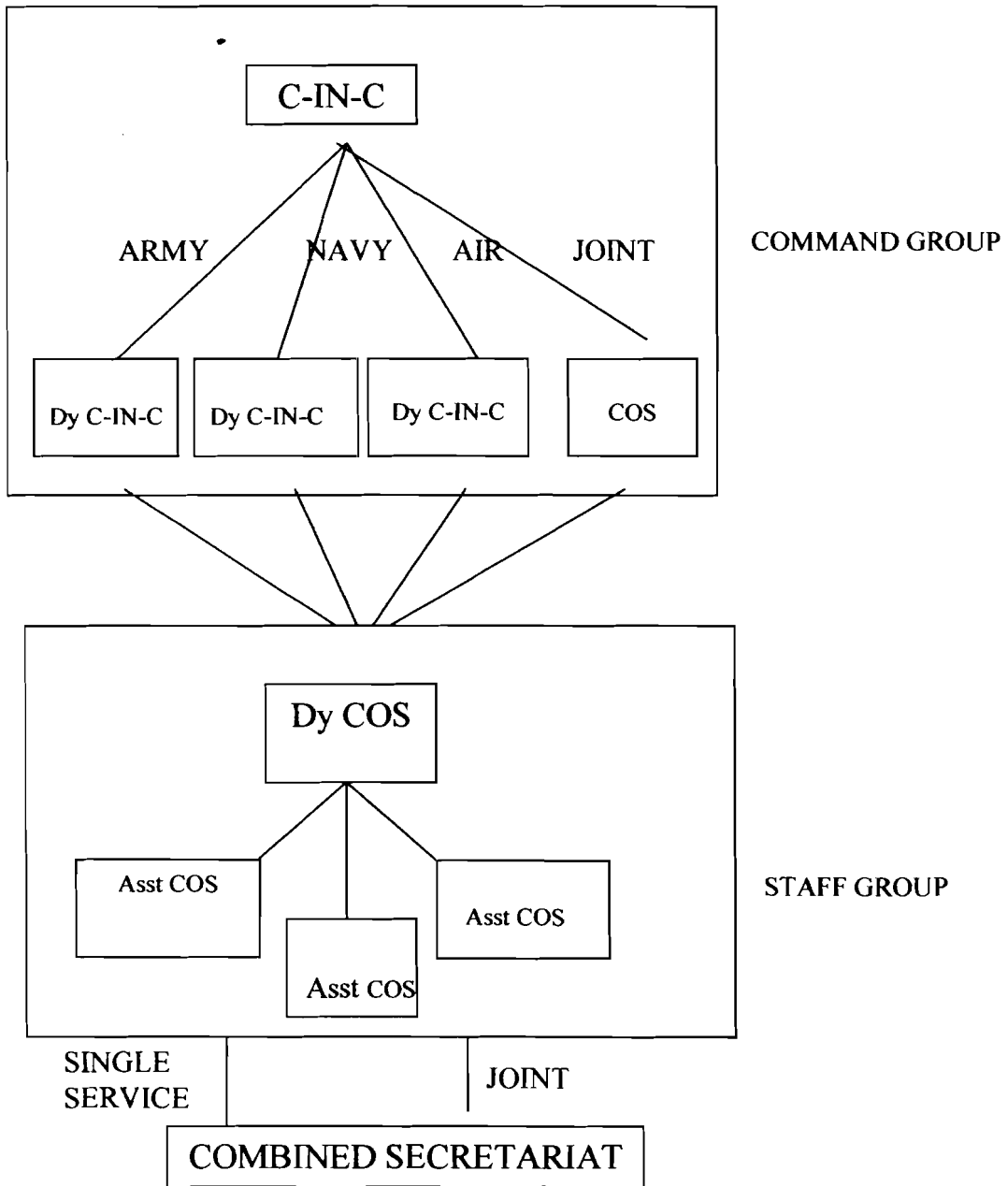
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REORGANISED COMMAND AND STAFF STRUCTURE



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