

MEASURES TO ACHIEVE JOINTNESS

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INTRODUCTION

1. Post Kargil War the leaders of the country realised that the MoD and the three Services need to carry out an in-depth review and analysis of Security Management System in the country. Subsequent formulation of the Group of Ministers and their recommendations led to creation of HQ IDS in October 2001. The mainstay of the said recommendations was to improve integration amongst civil and military components and also ensure "jointness" amongst the Armed Forces to the extent desirable. The hierarchy / leaders of the mighty nation realized that there was minimal integration / jointness amongst the three Services inspite of having fought a few major wars post independence. It dawned upon them that individually the Services might be very sound and capable of delivering the goods but as a team they were still a fledgling taking its maiden flight.

2. The elite and the intelligentsia still ponder that was the Kargil debacle a blessing in disguise for the nation. Had it not been for the Kargil war, and our misadventure therein, we as a nation would have never realized the importance of integration amongst the Services. The fact that we have been working in water tight compartments all these years came to limelight only after analyzing our mistakes during the Kargil war. It is a stated fact that "*Wise men learn from others mistakes*". Though as a nation, as a Service or even as an individual all of us will agree with the concept of integration (both horizontal and vertical) but we are still pushing ourselves against accepting this fact. All of us are convinced that the future lies there, it will crystallize someday – definitely for the good of the nation and the Services but we seem to putting in all our energy to delay the process.

AIM

3. The aim of this paper is to suggest possible measures to enhance the spirit of jointness amongst the three Services.

PREVIEW

4. The paper is laid out in the following parts:-

- (a) Part I – Existing situation.
- (b) Part II - Recommended Measures to Enhance the Spirit of Jointness.

PART I - PRESENT SITUATION

4. It was indeed an eye opener when I got posted as Jt Dir, MS & SD Dte, HQ IDS. My only exposure to this org prior to receipt of the posting order was a lecture by the CISC, Lt Gen HS Lidder, PVSM, UYSM, YSM, VSM, ADC, during his visit to Defence Service Staff College. Fortunately, I was amongst the lucky few who were attending the 62nd Staff Course and got an opportunity to listen to the lecture. In addition to whatever little the course students gathered about HQ IDS in the short spell the highlight was that the CISC had four three star eqvts, ten two star eqvts and a quite a few one star eqvts and below under him.

5. Today I can proudly state that I have been associated with this majestic org for more than an year and it has been an enriching experience. Had it not been for my exposure to a joint org such as HQ IDS it would have been very difficult to associate with the nuances of serving in a joint set up. In my entire service in the last 13 years I was never exposed to anything like this. I got an opportunity to serve with inf in HAA, in RR Bn, within my Corps in staff and as an instr but never got an opportunity to have Naval and Air Force offrs sharing the same desk. My first such exposure was as a student in staff college. It is a hard fact but has to be accepted that the environment is still largely not in terms with an org such as HQ IDS or ANC/SFC.

6. It is indeed a very candid confession that most of our counterparts who have not had the opportunity of serving in Delhi and further serving in directorates having some form of official interaction with HQ IDS seem to be oblivious of our existence. Even today if one interacts with individuals in the world outside the boundaries of tri-service orgs, the word "HQ IDS" sounds alien to quite a few of them. It has been almost seven years since our raising and we still have a long way to go. Treading through the difficult path of formative years is not an easy task but if one has the resilience and the will to stand against all odds and perform, the results achieved are very satisfying. For the hard work that has been put in by our predecessors the benefits will be reaped by our future generations.

7. It is the moral responsibility of each and every individual who has served in joint org to promote and impart knowledge about its existence, the good job that it has been doing and how these orgs are realizing the national dream of jointness/integration. It needs to be conveyed to our colleagues that the impediments/hurdles coming our way are being conquered slowly but progressively.

PART II – RECOMMENDED MEASURES TO ENHANCE THE SPIRIT OF JOINTNESS

8. Every org/individual is doing its/there best and contributing positively towards enhancing the applicability of the proposed system. Gradually but positively we are inching towards achieving are intended goal. However, there are certain issues that need to be addressed to bring about a positive outlook towards all the joint structures. These measures, though trivial will have outreaching effects and need to be analyzed in that context. After all, the aim of each service is the same 'Def of the motherland'. With the same aim and common objective we only need to mend our ways and perhaps the thinking process to achieve our goal. Some such measures have been enumerated in the succeeding paragraphs.

Ops & Trg

9. **Trg on Joint Structures since Inception.** With a view to increase our knowledge base in the environment it is important that the cadets in various Academies are made to learn about the existing joint structures. In order to be more receptive to the idea of fostering jointness they need answers to certain basic questions as under:-

- (a) Reasons warranting this change in our system after almost 50 years of independence, when apparently everything seems to be functioning well.
- (b) The likely future of the Armed forces with respect to joint structures.
- (c) The likely timeline over which the system will evolve.
- (d) The distinct advantages of the system over the existing system.

10. It is mandatory for us to make them understand that all future operations in the prevailing scenario will demand a joint approach, if success is intended. If the individual is convinced about the reasons for such a shift, he will be open to changes and will welcome them with open arms. It is our duty to clear the cobwebs troubling his mind, so that when he is part of the system, as a trained soldier he can associate with it better and relate to the nuances of going single Service. The aim should be to convince the cadets that this is not the right approach but the *only approach* if we need to survive the complexities of any future conflicts.

11. **Cross Attachments.** With a view to sensitize the environment and promote bonding amongst the three Services it is a must that we resort to the age old dictum of cross attachments. The fundamental pre-requisite to operating in a united format will involve understanding the capabilities and limitations of each other. While doing so, it must be a sincere endeavour to implement it at the lowest level achievable. The limitations of offering officers to billets in the joint organizations have to be overcome and ways and means need to be adopted wherein suitable individuals could be given opportunity to serve outside their respective Service and gather some gainful experience on the sister Service. The time frame could be kept

flexible to meet the requirement. For example an Air Force pilot / Forward Air Controller could be part of a Ex of the Armd Div / Bde in the deserts so as to relate to the situation better, understand the dynamics of manuevere warfare and realize the importance of timely air effort. Similarly an offr in staff in the Bde HQ could be associated with the Air Force stn to understand the nuances of provisioning of aerial recce, bomber mission, cas evac msns, the limitations imposed on the ac when it is carrying a specific bqmb type etc.

12. **Joint Exercises.** It should be our sincere endeavour to hold exercises involving reps from the three Services. Theatres where all the three Services will be operating simultaneously to realise a common end result could be simulated with limited deliberations. The aim should be to incorporate tps in such exercises thereby exposing them to the future battle field scenarios wherein all the three Services will be operating shoulder to shoulder. Today, the nation talks of boasting a blue water Navy and aspires to be a superpower in the near future. A blue water Navy can only deliver desired results if it is supported by the required land forces and the air assets to achieve the national aim. The basics of our education system also follow the principles of supporting theory classes with the necessary practical lessons, because this form of learning has stood the test of time. Therefore, it is but obvious that in order to extract necessary dividends in the times of need our troops have to be exposed to the practical aspects beyond the realm of black board exercises and war games without troops and eqpt. A major army exercise spread over 2-3 months could incorporate necessary reps from the Navy and the AF towards the terminal phase for about 1-2 weeks. The participation should be preferebly down to Bde/Unit level. The same sould be applied when the other two services go for exercises.

13. **Mandatory Service in a Joint Structure.** It should be mandatory to serve in a tri-service org for promotion and foreign postings. The specifics of service bracket, appts could be deliberated upon but certain stipulations are a necessity to promote jointness. For example an offr should have completed about six months cross attachment with any of the sister Services by 5-8 years of service. This system should not be a one time arrangement. In addn to the career courses being

undertaken by the offr wherein issues on jointness are addressed the offr must be exposed to staff appts / tenures in joint organizations once in a ten year cycle. Thus the offr gets to serve in staff prior to taking over comd of a unit or sometime after the completion of the comd. However, serving in joint structures must be mandatory to be eligible to go up the ladder because individuals who have been exposed to the functioning of a joint structure will be able to adapt to the ever changing environment and will be able to promote jointness in letter and spirit.

Adm

14. **Renaming of Nomenclature of Uniforms.** After all these years of independence and association amongst the Services we still have a different nomenclature of the uniform to be worn by each Service for a similar occasion. It will take minimal turbulence but will assist in standardizing and promoting jointness a long way if we could sit together and decide on a common nomenclature. For example working dress winter is termed as Dress No 3 in the Army, Dress No 7 in the Navy and Dress No 5 & 7 in the Air Force. Similarly mess dress summer (formal occasion) is termed as Dress No 6(a) in the Army, Dress No 6 in the Navy and Dress No 8 in the Air Force. The brunt is actually borne in a joint org wherein when a dress has to be specified for a particular function / event, three different nomenclatures have to be specified for the three Services to avoid any confusion. If the nomenclature is standardized it will be a trivial step towards integrating the Services.

15. **Commonality in Rank Badges.** This proposal could have very strong reservations from the three Services but inspite of the reservations it could be considered in the light of a proposed integrated structure of the Armed forces. There have been talks about integrated theatre commands with reps from the three Services functioning as colleagues in the near/distant future, while serving in the same environment and similar conditions. The ranks could still be continued in the present context but the rank badges being worn could be standardized to project commonality/jointness. The possibility of adopting the existing rank badges of a

particular Service by the other two may not sink well but redesigning the existing pattern after picking something from each Service may be accepted after a few deliberations.

16. **Common Appraisal System.** Since we have different appraisal systems / procedures in the three Services, there is lack of uniformity among joint organizations. This is especially observed in a scenario wherein the IO / RO / SRO are from a different Service. If the initiating / reviewing offr has had an exposure of serving in a joint org earlier it will be easier to evaluate the ratee at par with his counterparts serving in a pure Service org. Unless the report is not suitably modified to be commensurate to the respective Service peculiarities the ratee may be inadvertently harmed without the IO / RO intending the same. The issues which need to be addressed so as to evolve a common appraisal system are as under:-

- (a) Endorsement of CRs by Retired offrs.
- (b) Open vis-à-vis closed system.
- (c) Difference in rating and its implications.
- (d) Appraisal feedback.
- (e) Intimation of selection board results (fit cases).

17. **Diluting the Barriers between Armed Forces and the MoD.** The armed forces and the MoD have to function in complete synergy so as to complement each other. It is high time that for an efficient system both the orgs have to realise that they share a symbiotic relationship. The best way to understand each others pulse is to place offrs on deputation so that offrs from MoD serve in the Service HQs and offrs in the Services get to function as part of the MoD. The result of this churning will be a better understanding and bonding amongst the officials thereby resulting into a impregnable and efficient security system.

CONCLUSION

18. Notwithstanding the peculiarities of each Service there are ways and means to achieve uniformity / standardization and we must explore all possible measures to get the desired end result, which is integration. Our actions today will dictate what the future holds for us. It is of utmost importance that we evolve out of our respective Service specific issues and grow as a united force. Nobody denies mastery in core competencies, since it is the basic ingredient to success but simultaneously broadening our horizons and opening ourselves to the joint structures is also an unavoidable facet today. We are lagging way behind others who have already accepted this course. Not only do we have to imbibe the system but we also need to push ourselves to gather momentum and get at par with the nations who have adopted this model.