UNDERSTANDING MILITARY DOCTRINE A PRIMER

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ORIGIN OF WORD '' DOCTRINE"

-       The word 'Doctrine' has originated from the Latin word 'd*octrina*'.

WHAT IS A MILITARY DOCTRINE ?

✓ Body of Thought.

✓ Body of Teachings.

✓ Uniformity of Thought.

✓ Shared way of Thinking.

✓ Set of **Proven** and **Existing** Concepts, Principles, Capabilities, Capacities and Structures related to the use of Military during War and Peace. In other words, Doctrine contains only that much which '*is in use*" and '*in existence*".

✓ Brings out basic Tenets, Common Language, Lexicon, Principle, Purpose, Common Operating Philosophy, Central Idea, Common Perspective, Conceptual framework, etc.

✓ Brings out as to '*Who are we*", '*What we do*" and '*How we do*" in a basic and generic manner. It is a   "box" that contains our "**distilled wisdom**" built over a period of time.

WHAT IS NOT A DOCTRINE ?

- ✓ Vision Document
- ✓ Policy/Directive
- ✓ Instruction
- ✓ Strategy /Way Ahead/Road Map
- ✓ Service Paper
- ✓ White Paper
- ✓ Report
- ✓ Pamphlet
- ✓ Magazine/Journal

PURPOSE OF A DOCTRINE

✓ Reference/Guidance/Familiarisation of policy makers, political scientists, academia, military officers, intellectuals, diplomats, technocrats, Fourth/Fifth Estate, tax-payers, citizens, etc.

✓ Strategic Signalling/Articulation to the Adversaries.

✓ Knowledge Base/ Repository/Record of Distilled Wisdom.

✓ Building block/intellectual foundation for a formulating Policies and Strategies.

✓ Lever to influence allocation of resources.

✓ To stir a Public Debate with an aim of -

- Assisting Public to understand the critical importance of Military doctrine in shaping National Security policy making. It thereby contributes to the Security of the region.

- It assists the authors also to make note of the 'take-aways' during such debates for consideration during further development of the Doctrine.

✓ To stimulate Creativity.

✓ To foster Initiative.

✓ Progressive tool that aids in Decision making.

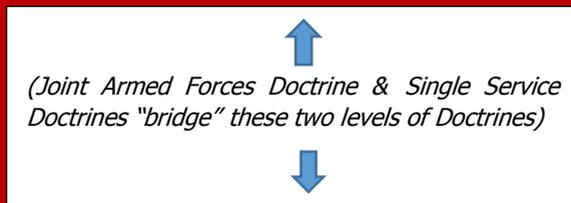✓ Show a path to be covered whilst executing a particular Strategy.

WHAT IS NOT THE PURPOSE OF A DOCTRINE ?

- ✓ To bring out any shortcomings/lacunae/deficiencies etc. in the System/Organisation.

- ✓ To direct as to how a particular issue/problem is to be solved/addressed.

- ✓ To provide a recipe for decision making.
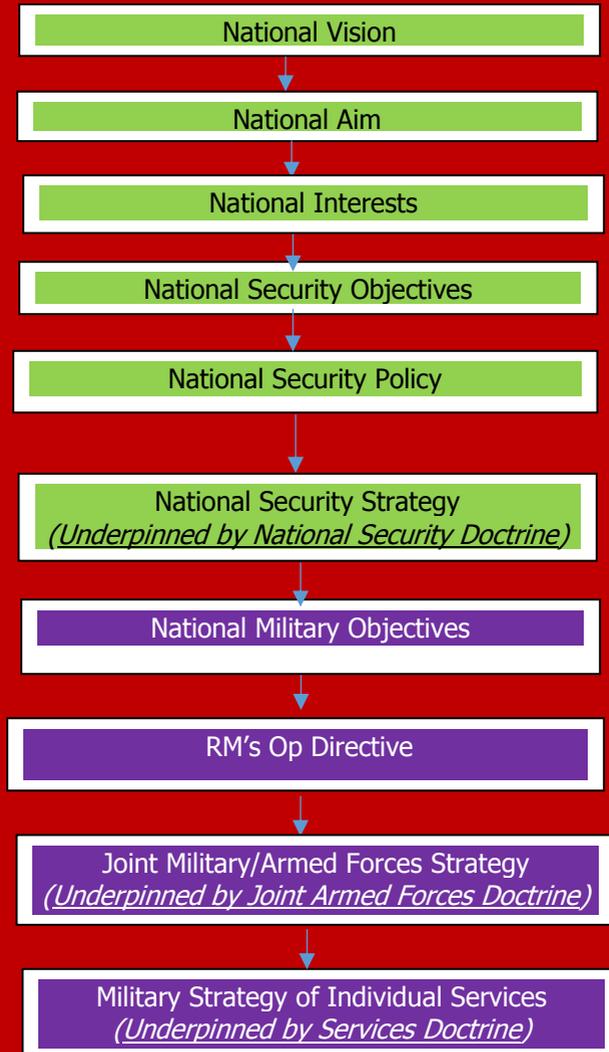
LEVELS OF DOCTRINES

- There are basically Four levels of Doctrines –

- ✓ **National Strategic** – It entails synergistic employment of all Elements of National Power *viz* Diplomacy, Information, Military and Economic ; for example – Nuclear Doctrine.

- ✓ **Military Strategic** – A Military capstone doctrine which provides a conceptual framework for understanding the role, scope and application of Military Power. It underpins the development of Military Strategy ; for example - Joint Doctrine Indian Armed Forces.

  (Joint Armed Forces Doctrine & Single Service Doctrines "bridge" these two levels of Doctrines)

- ✓ **Operational** - It guides the application of a military force in the preparation and execution of campaigns within the defined geographical areas.

- ✓ **Tactical** – It entails employment of military weapons systems and platforms in physical combat, for example – General Staff Publications.

HOW A MILITARY DOCTRINE FLOWS ?

National Vision

National Aim

National Interests

National Security Objectives

National Security Policy

National Security Strategy
(Underpinned by National Security Doctrine)

National Military Objectives

RM's Op Directive

Joint Military/Armed Forces Strategy
(Underpinned by Joint Armed Forces Doctrine)

Military Strategy of Individual Services
(Underpinned by Services Doctrine)

HOW A DOCTRINE IS DEVELOPED/REVIEWED ?

\- The process takes into consideration -

- ✓ National Interests, National Culture, and National Military Objectives, etc.

- ✓ Experience/Lessons learnt during war/ exercises, etc. wherein new Concepts are tried out/vetted prior "migrating" into a Doctrine.

- ✓ Threat Perception.
- ✓ Historical Evidence.
- ✓ Technological Developments.
- ✓ Policy/Higher Directives.
- ✓ Availability of Resources.
- ✓ Principles of War.
- ✓ Last but not the least, Doctrine is **NEVER** prepared in anticipation.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLICY, STRATEGY AND DOCTRINE

✓ A "Policy/Directive" is the first and foremost Document which is a broad directive/guideline issued by a Policy maker in a Government, Headquarters, etc. to a subordinate organisation/department for implementation in form of a "Strategy".

✓ A "Strategy" is a plan of coherent actions of employment and development of all Tools/Pillars available with an organisation to achieve their Objectives in accordance with their Policy in support of their Interests.

✓ The meaning of "Doctrine" has been explained earlier.

✓ A "Strategy" flows from a "Policy", duly underpinned by a "Doctrine". All the three are *"inter-related"* but **not** '*inter-changeable".* All three Documents run on "parallel tracks" with "feedback loops".

✓ An existing "Doctrine" or "Strategy" may be referred to by the Policy maker during formulation/revision of existing Policy.

✓ If a "Strategy" is successful, the "Policy" and "Doctrine" get reinforced; if it is not, there may be a need to revisit/revise the latter documents.

✓ Unlike "Strategy", a "Doctrine" is never futuristic/predictive (except short-term) since formulation of a Doctrine cannot be premised on its acceptance in future. Furthermore, unlike "Strategy", a "Doctrine" deals with issues in a "macro manner" and are normally in "open domain".

EFFECTIVENESS OF A DOCTRINE

Any Doctrine is "Effective", so long it is -

- ✓ In Open Domain.
- ✓ Intellectually Rigorous.
- ✓ Relevant and Pertinent.
- ✓ Reflects the views of all the stake holders.
- ✓ Articulated very clearly.
- ✓ Enduring and objective in nature.
- ✓ Constantly Evolving/Iterative.
- ✓ Not Dogmatic or a hard and fast rule/ is flexible to changes or deviations (but only after careful consideration and appraisal).

MISCELLANEOUS

- ✓ Doctrines are **NEVER** '' Finished Products" because they are always ''work-in-progress".

- ✓ They are never "legally enforceable''.

- ✓ They are "authoritative" but require "judgement" in application.

- ✓ They are reviewed every 5 years or so, if so warranted. Minor amendments can be inserted if there is any requirement/necessity.

- ✓ Every Doctrine has a record of amendments, pages for making notes by the Reader etc. Inputs are also solicited by the authors of Doctrine from the Environment for consideration, from time to time.

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