UNDERSTANDING MILITARY DOCTRINE
A PRIMER

Directorate of Doctrine
Training and Doctrine Division
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New Delhi
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- The word ‘Doctrine’ has originated from the Latin word ‘doctrina’.

**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.
**National Aim**

**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/REVIEWSED?

- 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”.
Any Doctrine is “Effective”, so long it is -

- In Open Domain.
- Intellectually Rigorous.
- Relevant and Pertinent.
- Reflects the views of all the stakeholders.
- 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).
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.