

SEMINAR REPORT ON
INDIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY:
DISCUSSION ON SPECIFIC ISSUES

30 September 2015



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Report Edited by : Gp Capt Puneet Bhalla

Rapporteurs ; Prateek Kapil
: Sripathi Narayanan



Centre for Land Warfare Studies

RPSO Complex, Parade Road, Delhi Cantt, New Delhi-110010

Phone: 011-25691308; Fax: 011-25692347

email: landwarfare@gmail.com ; website: www.claws.in

The Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS), New Delhi, is an autonomous think tank dealing with contemporary issues of national security and conceptual aspects of land warfare, including conventional and sub-conventional conflicts and terrorism. CLAWS conducts research that is futuristic in outlook and policy-oriented in approach.

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e-mail : vijbooks@rediffmail.com; web: www.vijbooks.com

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CENTRE FOR LAND WARFARE STUDIES (CLAWS)
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- An NSS explains the congenital application of state power to state purposes, leading to optimal efforts and outcomes. It brings transparency, accountability and responsibility of the state and its officials. Also, publication of these guidelines allows an informed debate.
- A formally published NSS is essential for clear articulation of the nation's world view, the threats and challenges as also of its national aspirations and interests. Such a document would highlight prominence and priority of issues and provide more clarity in policy enabling various stakeholders to understand their role in the overall national security context.
- National security is holistic and in addition to hard security issues, has to deal with factors like health, education, human and economic security and other non-traditional issues. Articulation of such issues will lead us to strategy that will consist of both covert and overt elements.
- The process involves laying down of the Grand Strategy and the formulation of National Interest that would enable the deduction of national challenges and vulnerabilities. Based on these the National Security Objectives would be drawn up and from all of these would flow the National Security Strategy. This would be followed by defining of the National Defence Policy.

- There can be no military doctrine without a strategic one. NSS can be a draft document with policy formulations which can then give rise to National Defence policy. There is a necessity of integrating armed forces in national security decision-making. Having a Chief of Defence Staff is one of the steps that would help better achieve politico-military synergy. There is an urgent need to revive the concept of military diplomacy.
- In a troubled and violence prone neighbourhood, there is a need to apply realism in the analysis of ourselves and our opponents. India continues to face internal security threats in terrorism and Left Wing Extremism. There is a need to prepare for future threats that will be considerably different in their nature from what India has faced or is currently facing. There is a requirement for comprehensive strategies to deal with these threats.
- While institutional reforms are needed for intelligence, case exists both for and against multiplicity of intelligence agencies. There is however consensus on the need for a great coordination within and among different agencies.

DETAILED REPORT

Introduction

Presently, there is no comprehensive book or a monograph that deals with India's national security strategy. At best few of the renowned defence analysts have mentioned some elements of national security strategy in their books. With an aim to build on perspectives towards a holistic concept of NSS, which further can germinate clear policy prescription, Centre for Land Warfare Studies conducted a national seminar on "India's National Security Strategy" on 30 September 2015. The seminar brought together experts in various fields related to national security and the following issues related to National Security Strategy were presented and debated.

- Emerging security environment, threats, challenges and vulnerabilities
- National security objectives
- India's Defence Policy and necessity of a National Security Strategy
- Strategy for dealing with external threats
- Internal security strategy
 - Counter-proxy war strategy for Kashmir.
 - Strategy for counter-insurgency in the north-east, left-wing extremism, counter-terrorism, narcotics trafficking, the proliferation of small arms and the circulation of fake currency.
- Strategy for external and internal intelligence and counter-intelligence
- Economic strategy

The Keynote address was delivered by Lt Gen Philip Campose, PVSM, AVSM**, VSM (Retd) Former VCOAS. The seminar was conducted in two sessions:

- **Session I:** Defence Policy, Threats and National Security Objectives
- **Session II:** External Threats, Intelligence Management and National Security Strategy

The panellists who took part in the discussion were:

- Ambassador Satish Chandra, Dean, Centre for National Security and Strategic Studies, Vivekananda International Foundation
- Brig Gurmeet Kanwal (Retd), Former Director, CLAWS
- Lt Gen B S Pawar, PVSM AVSM (Retd), Former Commandant School of Artillery
- Lt Gen Aditya Singh, PVSM AVSM** (Retd), Former GOC-in-C, Southern Command
- Lt Gen Ata Syed Hasnain, PVSM UYSM AVSM SM** VSM** (Retd), Former Military Secretary
- Ambassador Kanwal Sibal, Former Foreign Secretary
- Mr Vikram Sood, Former Secretary, Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), Government of India

The seminar was attended by serving officers of the Armed Forces, distinguished veterans and members of the strategic community. The interaction was successful in initiating a debate on the broad contours of national security strategy and came up with some important issues and recommendations that have been collated in a paper for further reference of stakeholders. The paper will also be used for the Indian Army Doctrine seminar to be held shortly. The comprehensive set of recommendations will be worked upon to form of a book in the future. Some salient observations and corresponding recommendations are:

National Security Strategy

(NSS) can be broadly said to be the art and science of developing, applying, and coordinating the instruments of national power (diplomatic, economic,

military, and informational) to achieve objectives that contribute to national security. For a nation to be able to successfully manage the threats, challenges and vulnerabilities that it is faced with, it must formulate a clearly thought through NSS. All the major world powers periodically issue a document of this nature, based on which the military strategy of the nation is formulated.

As a regional power and an aspiring global power, it is essential for the Indian government to publish a formally written NSS for clear articulation of the nation's world view, threats and challenges as also its national interests and aspirations. The NSS should entail international experience, threats, challenges and vulnerabilities. It needs to comprehensively employ political, diplomatic, economic and military tools in both the external and internal security conflict to credibly deter aggression and plug gaps in internal security. It will enable various stakeholders to understand their role in the overall national security context. It would also provide more clarity in policy prescriptions and highlight prominence and priority of issues.

National security is holistic and encompasses economic, monetary, energy, environmental, military and political security & security of energy & natural resources. It also has to deal with factors like health, education, human security and other such non-traditional issues. The aim is to provide for the wellbeing & right to life of every Indian in conditions of internal & external peace. Any issue that impinges upon realising these aspirations becomes a national threat and all measures taken to overcome these threats coalesce into the National Security Strategy.

A military doctrine ideally evolves from a national security policy. Such a doctrine in turn forms the basis for defence planning and procurement and military training efforts.

Need for a National Security Strategy

- Despite India facing numerous formidable challenges to its national security, there is no declared National Security Strategy. This has been attributed to varied reasons including the lack of tradition of strategic thinking, of necessity, of requisite expertise and of lack of interest of the leadership or to avoid responsibility.

- During his Prime Minister ship, Shri Narasimha Rao had remarked that even though there was no national defence policy, there were several guidelines which were strictly followed and observed. This implies that the Indian defence policy is opaque and known to only a few government officials. As a consequence, Indian policy has drifted along with concomitant knee jerk reactions and responses, with mixed results. Also, non-publication of these guidelines leaves them unclear for the strategic community, thereby precluding an informed debate.
- Absence of an NSS inhibits the congenial application of state power to state purposes, leading to suboptimal efforts resulting in subpar outcomes. It inhibits planning, management, efficiency and reliability. There is a lack of transparency, accountability and responsibility of the state and its officials.
- There have been references to the NSS in individual works and those sponsored by some think tanks. However, such attempts are prone to these perspectives being stereotyped with the personalities and their backgrounds and such isolated views tend to get subjected to varied interpretations. Also, absence of NSS provides space for parochial and narrow articles on the issue which in this information age can create misunderstandings and adverse reactions.

National Security Objectives

- The values we need to protect while defining the national security objectives are democracy, equality, pluralism, inclusiveness, liberty of beliefs and expression, secularism, peaceful co-existence, human rights, openness and the rule of law.
- National Security Objectives would encompass:
 - India's Sovereignty & Territorial Integrity
 - Peaceful, Prosperous & Friendly Neighbourhood
 - Capacities for defence against all threats

- Political Stability & Internal Social Harmony
 - Inclusive economic growth with the management of natural resources, improvement in manufacturing, food security, energy efficiency and education
 - Equitable access to growth
 - Wide Consensus on Policies Based on Informed Awareness & Understanding
- There is a need to move from a sub-regional framework to a more global framework. The two pillars of National security are Diplomacy and Defence.
- However, at present there is a lack of clarity and lot of scope for discussion on our national aspirations themselves.

National Defence Policy

- NSS can be a draft document with policy formulations which can then give rise to National Defence policy.
- There is a necessity of integrating armed forces in national security decision-making.
- The Higher Defence Organisation conceptualised by the Naresh Chandra committee has not been implemented. Having a Chief of Defence Staff, with requisite changes in the higher defence and security organisation at national level, would help better achieve politico-military synergy.
- The concept of military diplomacy for India should be revived.

Emerging security environment, threats, challenges and vulnerabilities

External Threats. In a troubled and violence prone neighbourhood, there is a need to apply realism while analysing our opponents. China and Pakistan continue to be the two main external threats for India.

- **China.** India has disputed borders with a powerful China that has upped the strategic ante. It continues to build upon its strategic and conventional capabilities and expand its footprint in Space and Cyberspace.
- **Pakistan.** A revisionist Pakistan continues to promote cross border terrorism, even as it continues its efforts to expand its conventional capabilities. Its presence in space and cyberspace is limited.
- **Sino-Pak Collusion.** There is potential for a two front confrontation with both China and Pakistan. As both have territorial issues with India in Jammu and Kashmir, they have an incentive to work together towards ensuring instability in the region. China has provided collusive support to Pakistan to unsettle India and their collaboration has resulted in proliferation of nuclear and missile technology. The China- Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) that would pass through Indian (PoK) territory, helps Pakistan to consolidate its claims in PoK.

Expanding Sphere of Influence. Both the states are also taking active steps towards increasing their influence in nations across the region through diplomatic, economic and military means.

- **Nepal.** China has made considerable diplomatic and political inroads in Nepal at the expense of India and this could be used to foment further trouble for India. The problems in Nepal after the adoption of its latest constitution are worrisome for India.
- **Afghanistan.** China is becoming diplomatically active and is co-chairing reconciliation meeting with the support of the United States. This benefits Pakistan while at the same time limiting India's role in Afghanistan and even affecting its engagement with Central Asia. The affects of the US drawdown and the new Afghan government's Pakistani engagement need to be closely monitored.
- China has great presence and influence in **Central Asia** and has improved its relations with Russia; allowing it to purchase advanced

weaponry from Russia. These developments are of serious concern as this could influence Russian policy towards India.

- **Myanmar.** China has the potential to create a wedge in India's Look East initiative and Delhi's engagement with ASEAN nations.
- China's foray in the **Indian Ocean**, for example the docking of Chinese submarines in a Sri Lankan Port is a point of serious concern for India. India's strategic interests span the Horn of Africa to Persian Gulf to the Straits of Malacca and South China Sea. China's US policy is aimed at challenging US incrementally. US' China policy is aimed at building a network of ties with China's neighbours to limit China's growth.
- China's revival of the "**One Belt One Road**" is of concern to India. The Bangladesh–China–India–Myanmar Forum for Regional Cooperation (BCIM) is not in India's interest.

Internal Threats

- **Kashmir.** Pakistan's strategy in J&K has been to promote extremist ideas to keep the pot boiling and keep the Indian security establishment in a flux. It has been able to withstand both Indian and International pressure and has even managed to garner international support because of its strategic location. India made valuable gains in its counter terrorist operations during 2003-2007, leading to containment of terrorism. It provided a good foundation for the current initiatives.
- **Insurgency in North East** has been contained to a large extent but some areas continue to be restive.
- India continues to face internal security threats in terrorism and **Left Wing Extremism**.
- **Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)** is a coherent physical threat and also an ideological one in West Asia. While India has been fortunate in that ISIS and other West Asian groups have had only

marginal effect here, their presence does reinforce the global threat of terrorism.

Other Threats/Challenges. There is a need to prepare for future threats that will be considerably different in their nature from what India has faced or is currently facing.

- **Space.** Even as of space continues to be used in support of military operations, weaponisation and the issue of space debris are increasingly threatening space.
- **Cyber Security and Cyber Warfare** are threats to be countered.
- The internet is being used to generate varied threats and to conduct **information warfare**. An example is the 'digital jihad'.
- **Water** is the new oil and future conflicts are expected to centre on water issues.
- **Energy security.** The huge appetite for energy will present an emergent threat to India.
- **Climate change.** Global warming, national carbon budgets, balancing growth with emission cuts and lack of consensus among global actors are creating strategic problems.
- **Migration and Demography** can cause threats as shown by the refugee crisis in Europe. The problems of identity, ideology and religious extremism which form genesis of this particular emerging threat are very significant.
- Presence of **Indian Diaspora** in potentially hostile areas such as those recently seen in Yemen and Libya is an important concern. Remittances are an important connecting issue.
- **Economic Issues.** Currency manipulation, unfavourable trade balances and other more sophisticated forms of economic warfare.
- **Technological threats** of Cyber, Nuclear, Chemical and Biological

nature and prevention of attribution to non-state actors in these areas.

- Possibilities exist of security concerns causing large Multi National Corporations to raise their own armies in the future, with consequent impact on the global security scenario.

Nature of War. While the likelihood of conventional wars in the future is diminishing, their occurrence cannot be ruled out. Asymmetry of fire power will be the key driver in such operations. Future wars will more likely be asymmetrical and sub-conventional, including net war (operations that are carried out by a large network of individuals) and cyber. Advances in and the influence of Information Technology, Bio technology and Nanotechnology would reduce the costs of war and all conflict would be driven and dependent on technology. The Armed forces might have to increasingly undertake policing duties. With the media exposure and heightened sensibilities, tactical actions would have the potential to have strategic effects.

Strategy for Dealing with Threats

For dealing with diverse external threats, some recommendations are:

External

- There is a need to provide a boost to India's strategic programs.
- Define a more aggressive response strategy, including use of military force, against Pakistan supported cross border terrorism.
- There is need to strengthen our borders and improve border management. Disputed border should be protected by the Army and not by the BSF/ ITBP.
- With China, there is a necessity to resolve the territorial dispute on priority basis and have a strategy that involves nuanced application of both containment and engagement. China's challenges in Tibet could be capitalised upon.

- We should reserve the right of military intervention to protect and guard own interests and this should be clearly articulated.
- Defence Procurement Process needs to be overhauled to achieve self-reliance in critical military technology.
- India should have greater defence cooperation without going into a treaty/alliance setup. Forces' modernisation needs to be done at a priority basis.
- The focus should be on access to key technologies and on improving the military capability through acquisition of smart equipment. Greater participation of the private sector in defence production needs to be encouraged.

Countering Expanding Influence

- Join or lead the international effort in the fight against terrorism.
- India should maintain 'Strategic Autonomy' in international affairs. This does not imply 'Non-Alignment'. Genuine strategic partnerships towards achievement of national objectives need to be discussed and pursued.
- Strengthen strategic ties with the US in the Indian Ocean and in the Indo-Pacific Region to balance the Chinese threat.
- Preserve ties with Russia and encourage it to participate more in the 'Make in India' initiative.
- CPEC project needs to be strongly opposed through diplomatic means.
- Avoid participation in "One Belt One Road" project of China. India's participation in BCIM needs to be reconsidered.
- Promote peaceful South Asian region through diplomatic and strategic partnership. Capitalise on the Land Boundary Agreement

with Bangladesh to improve ties. Handle Sri Lanka and the Maldives strategically, consolidate ties with Myanmar and improve relationship with the new government in Sri Lanka.

- With sanctions against Iran having been lifted, accelerate our ties and renew interest in Chabahar port and North South Corridor.
- Capitalise on the recent openings with the Gulf region.

Internal

- Efforts at greater integration of North East India should continue.
- Problem of LWE can be addressed through cooperation among all affected states.

India's counter strategy in Kashmir:

- There is a requirement of a shared intellectual appreciation of the problem that would enable synergy between various government agencies involved.
- An Apex command and control authority needs to be defined for uniform approach and action on all fronts.
- Grass root democracy and continued involvement in the democratic process should be sustained.
- Over the years, responses to threats and situations have become repetitive and predictable. Some novel approaches could be deliberated upon and attempted.
- Covert ops and counter proxy war could be explored as a strategy, rather than relying solely on conventional responses.
- State government should make efforts at attracting investments into the state.
- Target the economic lifelines of the separatists. Efforts should be made at their inclusion in the democratic process.

- Efforts at de-radicalisation and at countering radicalisation through psychological warfare and perception management should be stepped up. Encouraging interaction between populations of PoK and Kashmir could escalate radicalisation.
- Diplomatic efforts aimed at countering Pakistan and highlighting its belligerence should be more robust.

There is a need to outline and debate the **other futuristic threats** to develop cogent countermeasures.

- Create National Security Consciousness.
- **Space.** India should look into developing limited anti satellite (ASAT) capability to deter any misadventure against its space assets. It should continue to promote global regimes for more peaceful and sustainable use of Outer Space.
- **Cyber Security.** There should be both defensive and offensive cyber capabilities for prompt response.
- **Energy.** The opening of Iran from international sanctions is positive development towards this. Nationally, transition to energy efficiency should be encouraged.
- Formulate a holistic/ coherent **National Maritime Security Strategy.**
- India should study the recent **migrations** and devise their own response mechanisms to deal with potential refugee situations.
- **Economic warfare strategy.** Economic development is of prime importance. Methods of economic warfare need to be constantly researched for their impact and for developing counter strategies.

Intelligence

In India the intelligence agencies do not have an independent existence as is the case in Pakistan and they “work more like service providers within the national security setup”. Intelligence is a continuous process and needs regular review and analysis. Some recommendations are:

- While institutional reforms are needed, case exists both for and against multiplicity of intelligence agencies. Creating and amalgamations of both new and old agencies needs to be well thought out.
- There is however consensus on the need for a great coordination within and among different agencies, under supervision that could include political oversight.
- The role of each agency needs to be specified and respective agencies should be held accountable with respect to their own charter only.
- Human Resource - HUMINT as an important element of intelligence should not be subordinated to gathering of intelligence through technical means. Therefore, more emphasis is required on efficient HR management of the cadre – from recruitment to training to career progression. A greater role for private players, as has been done in the US, could be explored.
- Intelligence agencies could be involved actively in psy-war and cyber ops.
- Hard power viz specially trained forces could be explored as there are time when such covert operations are required.

Process of Formulating the National Security Strategy

- The absence of an NSS document hasn't been for a lack of trying. The National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) had attempted and discarded 7 drafts. A good attempt was made in articulating a draft nuclear doctrine and the debates around it are still persistent and perennial. A similar process/ template could be used for the process of formulating the NSS.
- The process involves laying down of the Grand Strategy and the formulation of National Interest that would enable the deduction of national challenges and vulnerabilities. Based on these the National Security Objectives would be drawn up and from all of these would

flow the National Security Strategy. This would be followed by defining of the National Defence Policy.

- From the National Security Strategy would flow the Military Strategy and Force Structure.
- While the adversaries' capability and intention are fundamental to defining the NSS, it would be equally important to evaluate the probable causes of hostility/ conflict. There might be many cases where we might have to navigate between conflicting objectives during the process of NSS formulation. Besides analysing the emerging threats, the experience of hindsight and building understanding and consensus form important elements of this process.
- Security issues, wars and insurgencies the world over should be studied to draw out relevant inputs for devising the NSS.
- Intellectual capital in the nation needs to be linked up at a national level to further the National Security Culture. The academic community, corporate & industry along with the various arms of the state should be encouraged to debate and discuss so as to identify the various contours related to national security. This would help build a consensus towards national objectives and eventually an NSS. Periodic release of white papers on matters of national security by the government would help in these efforts.
- The importance, complexity and weightage of an NSS document are extremely significant. Such a document should undergo detailed scrutiny. There is no margin for error – procedural, judgmental or otherwise.
- Such a document should be open for a periodic strategic review according to the threats produced and their aggregate effects. Any major event could cause key changes in strategies, institutions and resources as seen in the US post 9/11.

- Strategy can be elaborate but the doctrine needs to be clear and simple.
- Higher defence management and National Security Council can take care of big picture but the inputs for the sub-sections should come from individual ministries.
- Informed awareness and consciousness about national security is vital, especially after the information revolution. The NSS must be made public to instil confidence in the population and to reassure the neighbours. At the same time, the covert dimensions of such an NSS need not be clarified in public.

