FACING FUTURE CHALLENGES
DEFENCE REFORM IN INDIA

ANIT MUKHERJEE

In July 2011, India appointed the Naresh Chandra Committee to re-visit the issue of defence reform. Addressing such fundamental problems as poor institutional knowledge, confused civil-military relations and a lack of inter-service and interagency co-ordination will help India to realise its ambitions on the world stage. However, the committee may find it difficult to define reforms that are acceptable to all of the principal actors: the military, politicians and civilian bureaucracy.

In a widely discussed speech in Chennai in the early summer of 2011, the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton urged India to be a 'more assertive leader in Asia' and beyond.[1] Despite some recent misgivings on the part of analysts, this reflected the new status quo of the bilateral relationship.[2] However, besides the obvious question of whether India is prepared to play such a role, Secretary Clinton's remarks raised another larger, unstated one: does India have the institutions and the capabilities to play such a role?

It is clear that India's economic rise is forcing it to look beyond its territorial borders to secure its economic interests (particularly *vis-à-vis* energy), to engage with its diaspora, conduct diplomatic outreach with other states and respond to the changing security landscape. Against the backdrop of declining US power, other nations are also interested in India's capacity to provide security and perhaps emerge as a counterweight to China. However, for India to emerge as a true global power and to secure its expanding national interests, it will have to undertake a major exercise in reforming its national security institutions with a particular focus on defence reform. Without such restructuring, the Indian military, an essential component of India's national power, will continue to be hindered by problems in civil-military

relations, inter-services co-operation, defence planning and overall military effectiveness.

It has now been a decade since India undertook its last efforts at defence reform. This effort was initiated by the report of the Kargil Review Committee which was tasked with investigating failures that led to the Kargil War between India and Pakistan in 1999.[3] As a result of this report, the government subsequently appointed a Group of Ministers that, in 2001, recommended significant reforms of India's national security institutions.[4] However, while there have been some incremental changes, a number of problems persist, and some of the committees' key recommendations were not implemented.[5] Acknowledging these problems and responding to public criticism, the government appointed a committee under Naresh Chandra, the former defence and cabinet secretary, in July 2011, to re-visit the defence reforms process.[6] This article describes some of the persistent problems and major debates underlying India's attempts at defence reform. Then it suggests a transformational roadmap that can adequately prepare India to face future challenges. However, it acknowledges that these efforts will be meaningless without political will, as there is considerable bureaucratic opposition – both from civilians and the military.

Moreover, the absence of a national crisis removes the urgency to undertake such restructuring.

A key research consideration to bear in mind is that there is an absence of primary documents. The Indian military and ministries of defence do not adhere to declassification rules of the sort that exist in Western democracies.[7] This has resulted in a unique system wherein most of the debates in India's strategic community are opinion-driven, anecdotal or personalised accounts. Denying information has become a useful tool to stymie debate and prevent the examination of existing bureaucracies. This makes research into the Indian defence and security establishment difficult; and worse, may have serious consequences for military effectiveness and overall national security in years to come. This issue of declassification and raising awareness is also discussed in the paper.

India's defence policy today is marked by a complicated mix of opportunities and challenges. In terms of its international standing, it is in the envious position of having the ability to purchase most weapons systems from the world's three major weapons producers – the US, Russia and the EU. Its relations with the US have been transformed over the last decade and this is matched by a growing strategic engagement with a number

Indian soldiers rehearse for the Republic Day parade in Jammu, India, January 2011. *Courtesy of AP Photo/Channi Anand.*

of Asian and African countries. At the same time, it faces numerous challenges, including the emergence of a threat on two fronts, in the form of China and Pakistan. China, by successfully contesting India's territorial claims in Kashmir and in Arunachal Pradesh, and maintaining its special relationship with Pakistan, presents the single biggest challenge to India's security. This is a dilemma which is compounded by the massive and opaque Chinese military modernisation and the two countries' mutual fears, differing perceptions and a number of diplomatic and strategic engagements with countries around the Indian Ocean and South China Sea. At the same time India also has to deal with an unpredictable Pakistan and prolonged uncertainty in Afghanistan. Internally, India continues to face a number of domestic insurgencies while dealing with both domestic and Pakistan-based Islamist terrorist outfits. Preparing for such challenges and uncertainties has led India to embark on its own military modernisation, emerging as the world's leading arms importer.[8] However, India's defence policy suffers from certain institutional deficiencies that hamper its overall military effectiveness.

The Absent Dialogue: Civil-Military Relations in India

Problems within the Indian military can be understood by examining three broad areas: civil-military relations, issues pertaining to processes within the military and inter-ministerial issues.

Owing to the absence of praetorian tendencies within the military, the study of civil-military relations in India has not had the attention it deserves. When considering this area, it is first necessary to understand the truly unique nature of the governmental structure and, in particular, the relationships between the body politic, the civilian bureaucracy in the form of the Ministry of Defence (MoD), and the military commanders.

Civil-military relations in India have been shaped, as in other countries, by the colonial legacy, political system, administrative structures, historical precedents and established social norms. Political control is exercised through the office of the defence minister who heads the Ministry of Defence. The MoD is staffed by civilian bureaucrats who are mostly, but not exclusively, from the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), which is a generalist civil service,

providing bureaucrats who, more often than not, lack domain expertise. As a result, officials in the MoD often have limited experience of working with the defence forces and on military issues. Nevertheless, in practice, these civilian bureaucrats assume a fair amount of importance and it is their relationship with the armed forces, much more so than the relationship between the military and politicians, which is referred to by the term 'civil-military relations'. There is political cover for the decisions made by the civilian bureaucracy, but the political emphasis that there is in Britain is not so prominent in India.

The limited study of this area that has occurred has usually been in a comparative context that contrasts India's firm civilian control (with an emphasis on the bureaucratic rather than the political process) with Pakistan's experience.[9] Civil-military relations in India are problematic for three main reasons. First, as a result of the 1962 Sino-Indian war, in which alleged civilian and political meddling was widely criticised, Indian politicians rarely interfere in what is considered the domain of the military.[10] Of course, in all matters which may have political

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consequence or an impact on foreign and diplomatic affairs, such as choosing an international training partner for joint exercises, the military must check with the MoD first. However, the military does have control over most of the internal functions of the services, with very little civilian or political oversight. This level of military autonomy also stems from a lack of civilian expertise in military affairs. In other words, politicians rarely interfere not only because this is now the established norm, but also because they do not know enough about the military. As a result, there is a lack of dialogue and understanding between the political class and the armed forces.

Second, the MoD is staffed by a transient, generalist civilian bureaucracy that is hampered by a lack of expertise and information asymmetry. This is unlike the UK, where bureaucrats are not usually shuttled between other non-related departments, although there are rare exceptions to this general rule. In India, as the civilian bureaucrats tend to lack the requisite knowledge, they are unable to contribute much to the discussion of important issues. However, these bureaucrats also possess considerable financial and file-processing power which they exercise with varying degrees of efficiency and competence over the service headquarters. The confused nature of civil-military relations and the division of powers creates certain anomalies. Hence, for instance, service headquarters frame their own defence plans with minimal civilian guidance. At the same time, the military is unable to obtain financial sanctions for their five-year plans from the MoD, thereby rendering the process irrelevant.[11] Worryingly, the job of inter-services prioritisation is undertaken by the office of defence finance within the MoD.[12] Civilians, both bureaucrats and politicians, have limited knowledge of the military's operational plans as this is usually an affair limited strictly to the services.[13] Major procurement decisions are made by the MoD but their frequent preference for state-owned industry is often objected to by the services.

Third, the services have considerable autonomy over what is considered their own domain. This includes force structures, doctrine, training and promotions up to a certain rank. In these matters there is little that civilians, hampered in any case by a lack of expertise and information, can do to shape the decisions made by senior military officers. In practice, this means that policies can change rapidly with a change in command. Often this results in ad-hoc and personality-based decision-making. For instance, the current Indian Army chief, General V K Singh, in 2011 proposed to overturn a significant policy pertaining to officer promotions that was initiated just a year before by his predecessor General Deepak Kapoor.[14] On this occasion, the MoD could not entirely resist the new army chief's wishes but was able to delay its implementation by a few years.

A combination of all these factors – lack of civilian expertise but retention of some powers, service headquarters functioning as attached offices and an overall lack of positive civilian guidance for the military – has resulted in considerable civil-military tension and discord.[15] To be sure, some of this is inevitable but India's experiences have been an issue for a while now and have not been systematically addressed. The result is a relationship that can best be characterised cumulatively as 'an absent dialogue' between the relevant parties.[16]

Problems Within the Indian Military

The autonomy enjoyed by the services contributes, in part, to a number of problems in the internal processes within the Indian military, each with implications for national security. In the interests of brevity this article discusses only three areas beset by problems: 'jointness', officer education and manpower policies, and an archaic chiefs of staff system.

The Single-Service Approach

Jointness in the Indian military, defined as the ability of the three services to operate together, is hugely problematic. It is characterised by a single-service approach both to training and operations,

and by poor interoperability. India's historical experience with jointness closely adheres to the 'co-ordination model', wherein the three services agree to co-ordinate their operations when required, instead of the integrated operations model. This has not only led to sub-optimal results under operational conditions but also perpetuates single-service narratives. For instance, there are currently different and self-serving versions of the Kargil War being taught at the air force and army war colleges. While parochial service loyalties are hardly unusual, and are perhaps inevitable, differing narratives also result from the absence of a joint operational study of this war.[17] Hence, despite much debate about the available capabilities for an air-land battle, India's armed forces have not, to date, analysed these operations from a joint perspective. This lapse can also be blamed on a lack of civilian expertise: ordinarily it should be the responsibility of the Ministry of Defence to commission a joint report after an operation such as the Kargil War. Instead, the Indian MoD afforded the service headquarters the freedom to commission their own studies. This is indicative of both civilian inexperience and an abdication of responsibility by the respective service headquarters. In contrast, jointness has been imposed in most other democracies after a well-informed, open debate led by civilian leaders.[18]

Officer Education and Manpower Policies

Officer education and manpower policies are also in need of re-examination, as the current system perpetuates a generalist officer cadre, an ahistorical education and a lack of civilian involvement in professional military education. The current human resources policies of the Indian military do not emphasise regional or functional specialisation.[19] As a result, the military suffers from a lack of experts on important issues pertaining to area studies, terrorist groups, counter-insurgency, doctrinal development, strategic studies and even military history.[20] This stands in sharp contrast to the US military which allows its officers to gain expertise in different subjects,

such as area studies and military history, among others.

The second problem with officer education policies in India is the lack of military historiography. In the absence of a declassification procedure, this should not be surprising. The study of military history in India almost exclusively relies on autobiographical studies, which are inherently flawed. Among the rare instances when official histories have been written, the source documents on which they rely are unavailable to other scholars.[21] Ultimately, this results in a loss of institutional memory and an inability to self-analyse.

Finally, unlike other militaries, there is almost no civilian involvement in professional military education in India. Instead, the faculty at the staff college and other schools of instruction are almost exclusively service officers deputised for relatively short tenures. This is a significant difference between the Indian military and those of other major democracies. For instance, even though the British armed forces do not encourage officer specialisation, they employ civilian instructors at the Joint Services Command and Staff College and other military education institutions. This creates a cadre of experts that can, at least in theory, then be utilised by the military.

The Chiefs of Staff System

Another issue that creates problems but is rarely discussed is the unique, and archaic, chiefs of staff system in India. After independence, the service chiefs in India retained both their functions as chiefs-of-staff and commanders-in-chief. In 1955 Prime Minister Nehru, in the interests of civilian consolidation, forced a change of nomenclature and dropped the commander-in-chief title without altering the roles and responsibilities of the chiefs of staff. In other words, service chiefs continued to wear two hats and are currently responsible for both staff and operational duties, an alien concept in most other democracies.[22] Two problems flow from this. First, the concentration of power in one office leads to ad-hoc and personality-based decision-making instead of a consensual model. Hence

many policies change with a change in commander.

Second, it can be difficult for this single officer to do justice to both his staff and operational duties. For example, General J N Chaudhuri all but admitted this after the 1965 Indo-Pakistani war when he said that he was under 'unbearable strain' and that often his staff and command functions were incompatible.[23] Unfortunately, General Chaudhuri, in 1965–66, and later General Manekshaw (the chief of Army Staff during the 1971 Bangladesh War), in 1972, used these arguments to lobby for the creation of an army-dominated chief of Defence Staff post. The other services, most notably the Indian Air Force, felt threatened and opposed this measure on both occasions, effectively killing it. However, the underlying logic of General Chaudhuri's argument – that the service chief does not have the time to do justice to both staff and operational duties – still holds.

This issue would seem to assume greater urgency in the current age as managing modern military organisations becomes increasingly complex. However, in 2001 the Arun Singh Committee, which was tasked with undertaking defence reforms under the rubric of the Group of Ministers, did not deal with this problem head-on and instead recommended the creation of an Integrated Defence Staff (IDS) to be headed by a chief of Defence Staff (CDS). In the course of the deliberations of the Arun Singh Committee, some of its members felt that an incremental approach to reforms would be best and that after the establishment of the CDS the system would naturally evolve towards theatre commands and the Joint Staff concept, as in the US.[24] According to the late K Subrahmanyam, a prominent Indian strategist and chairman of the Kargil Review Committee, the idea of appointing a CDS was a mistake. He argued that instead of the British model, the committee should have mirrored the American Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) concept[25] because this would avoid the concentration of powers in the single office of the CDS and instead establish a group, like the JCS, to advise the defence

minister on military and defence policies. Also, this would have created a direct interface between the defence minister and proposed theatre commanders. This debate became irrelevant, however, when the government of the time, in the face of opposition from the Congress Party and the Indian Air Force, demurred even from appointing a CDS. According to a member of the Arun Singh Committee, who later was appointed chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, this 'ripped the heart out of the [Group of Ministers'] recommendations'.[26] Since then this issue has been in cold storage, and now the idea is resisted by existing bureaucracies, including some in the army.

The prevailing chiefs of staff system contributes to another contested issue with implications for civil-military relations: the integration of the MoD with the service headquarters. This issue has been a source of friction between civilians and the military for a long time and was discussed by both the Kargil Review Committee and the Arun Singh Committee.[27] Military officers voice a narrative common within the services when they complain that the service headquarters function as 'attached offices' to the MoD and that they are under 'bureaucratic control instead of being under political control'.[28] As a result of this, according to service officers, there are innumerable delays and the military is kept out of the decision-making loop. On the other hand, civilian bureaucrats argue that the alleged exclusion from decision-making is actually a misperception and that they merely implement the instructions of their political masters, and more specifically those of the defence minister. Moreover, civilian officials in the MoD also argue that they are encouraged by their political masters to question the proposals of the service headquarters as it serves a necessary auditing function. The Arun Singh Committee deliberated on this issue in 2001 but could not come to a definite conclusion and, as a compromise, decided to delegate powers to the service headquarters. Simultaneously, the Arun Singh Committee recommended a change in the nomenclature of the service headquarters to include the word 'integrated'.[29] However, later in 2009 a

Ministry of Defence official admitted that the 'renaming of Army and Naval Headquarters as Integrated Headquarters is merely cosmetic'.[30]

Co-ordinating National Security

India's overall national security also suffers from a lack of inter-ministerial and interagency co-ordination, which has implications for the application of military power. There are five crucial stakeholders in the machinery of government that between them deal with national security: the ministries of defence, home affairs, finance, external affairs and the National Security Council. It is fairly well known that disagreements between the ministries of defence and finance have historically hampered long-term defence planning.[31] Less well-understood, however, is how jurisdictional and inter-agency problems between the forces under the auspices of the ministries of defence and home affairs, and under respective state governments, hamper India's counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency efforts.[32] Hence, for instance, while local law and order falls under the police and other forces under the jurisdiction of the state governments, the army is under federal government control, via the army service chief; this divide between them results in problems in intelligence-sharing and inter-agency co-ordination. To obviate such problems, the concept of a 'unified headquarters', which attempts to integrate the efforts of these groups, has come into being; however, its functioning leaves much to be desired.[33] Similarly, at the top level of government, the Ministry of External Affairs and military have not always had the best working relationship, reaching its nadir during the deployment of the army to Sri Lanka in the 1980s.

Ideally, the job of settling all these inter-ministerial and inter-agency disputes should have been taken up by the National Security Council (NSC), which was established in 1999. However, there are serious concerns about India's experiment with the NSC.[34] Many agree with former Prime Minister Narasimha Rao's contention, expressed in 1995, that this concept is ill-suited to the parliamentary system of governance and

is more appropriate for a presidential system.[35] Prime Minister Rao argued that creating a separate agency to settle such disputes and align the work of different agencies at the highest levels would lead to unnecessary duplication and jurisdictional problems as the functions of the NSC are already undertaken by the Cabinet Committee on Security, India's highest executive body.[36] Indeed, Britain's own National Security Council was created as recently as 2010 and its practical purpose within a parliamentary system is far from clear.

A Transformational Roadmap

The institutions that shape Indian defence policies have, for the most part, been found to be ill-co-ordinated and ineffective.[37] Except for some minor alterations that usually followed force expansion, there has been little change in the system that was devised by Lord Ismay and Lord Mountbatten in 1947. Ironically, Mountbatten was successful in implementing defence reforms in Britain but he could not do so in India despite repeated attempts to lobby for changes to their armed forces.[38] Path dependency and bureaucratic politics provide two obvious explanations for this failure. However, there is another less obvious reason which, nevertheless, has been as significant in the past: politicians in India have harboured a latent fear of a praetorian military and, comforted by India's relative strength *vis-à-vis* its adversaries, have historically refrained from tinkering with the system.[39] Hopefully India's leaders are no longer beset by such fears, as a coup in contemporary India appears as fantastical and unlikely to most observers as one in the US or the UK.

As a 'mature democracy',[40] Indian political leaders need to create a military commensurate with its ever-increasing national interests and global ambitions, especially as it still faces considerable threats and challenges. While it need not necessarily emulate the structures of other powers, it needs to examine how to reconfigure existing institutions effectively and appropriately to ensure that it is fit for purpose, both in terms of efficiency and helping India to compete

on the world stage. Such a transformation can be achieved by concentrating on six major issues, each attended by significant reform.

First, there is a need to create a greater awareness of, and to facilitate an informed public debate about, national security issues. The best way to do this is to adopt declassification procedures immediately. Without them, the security discourse will remain dominated by former military officers or bureaucrats who, in turn, base their arguments on opinions and claimed experience. While their views should be considered, scholarly studies based on primary documents would be more analytically useful.

Second, there is a need to create a specialised civilian bureaucracy that is only employed in national security institutions. Since 1967, successive administrative reform committees have recommended 'domain specialisation' in the generalist Indian Administrative Service. However, for a variety of reasons this has not been accepted. The current system of shifting bureaucrats between different ministries, and only for relatively short placements, is simply illogical.[43] In 2001, the N N Vohra Committee, tasked with examining internal security by the Group of Ministers, recommended that bureaucrats rotate between associated national security agencies.[42] It also recommended the creation of a specialist cadre of bureaucrats to work in the ministries of defence, home affairs, external affairs and the National Security Council, with postings to associated departments in their state cadre. However, this idea faced considerable opposition both from the political class and existing bureaucracies and ultimately was not implemented.

Third, there is a need for considerable changes in the internal processes of the military. The most important – and the most difficult – of these is a complicated three-step change that will have to be undertaken simultaneously: create the position of chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, establish theatre commands and integrate the military with the Ministry of Defence. Possibly the most controversial

but necessary change would be to make each of the service chiefs function as a chief of staff of his service.[43] This is not only the normal practice in most other democracies but will also enhance civil-military integration and the decision-making process in the Indian system. In addition the government should appoint a permanent chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff committee, who could be a former service chief, to head the Integrated Defence Staff. Concurrently, there is a need to establish theatre commands corresponding not just to India's immediate borders but also to regions of interest such as Southeast Asia, Central Asia, West Asia, the Indian Ocean and Africa.[44] These theatre commanders would then directly interact with the defence minister. In 1996, the then-defence secretary rejected the concept of the JCS and theatre command on the grounds that this structure is more relevant for countries in which the 'military has a global role to play'.[45] As India's economic and strategic interests expand, this kind of defence reform will be required to ensure that the Indian defence leadership is commensurate with its global interests and role.

These recommendations will face fierce resistance, especially from within the service community which, by inclination, is conservative and opposes change.[46] To overcome some of this resistance, a fourth reform would be to integrate the armed forces headquarters with the Ministry of Defence. This would involve the cross-posting of officers between the defence ministry and the service headquarters, and would meet one of the military's concerns about current arrangements. It would obviously require an in-depth study to avoid the duplication of work, streamline processes and create better information-sharing procedures. At the same time, provisions would have to be put in place to guard against conflicts of interest or undue pressure from the military on officers deputed to the ministry. If, additionally, a civil service cadre of national security

experts is created, they could in principle contribute to operational planning and other aspects of the military bureaucracy. In short, the system must allow for the cross-fertilisation of ideas and for greater specialisation instead of the current generalist system, thereby enabling the growth of greater institutional knowledge and expertise.

Fifth, there is also a need to re-examine Indian officer education and manpower policies. There must be an emphasis on specialisation within the military. The lack of regional and functional specialists should be overcome by a combination of innovative policies that stress not just command orientation but also knowledge accumulation, innovation and intellectual growth. Moreover, the military must allow for civilian instructors to teach subjects like military history, area studies and organisational theory at professional military schools. Creating such a career stream will also attract more talent to the field of strategic studies and establish a talent pool to focus on issues relating to national security.

Finally, there needs to be a better mechanism to deal with inter-ministerial and inter-agency disputes and co-ordination. For example, this is imperative at the state level, to synchronise the operations of the state police, military, paramilitary forces and various intelligence agencies in insurgency-affected areas. More importantly, there is a need to devote resources and strengthen state police forces and paramilitary forces in these areas and free the military of domestic counter-insurgency responsibilities. On this aspect the Kargil Review Committee noted, 'the Ministry of Home Affairs, State Governments and paramilitary forces tend to assume that the Army will always be there to combat insurgency'.[47] This permanent dependency works to the detriment of all concerned and hinders India's overall force generation capability.

The functioning and jurisdiction of the National Security Council Secretariat

also needs serious re-examination and deliberation at the cabinet level. To strengthen the NSC, the government could consider an act of parliament to provide a formal role for the council while simultaneously appointing it as the secretarial agency for the country's highest deliberative body on security, the Cabinet Committee on Security.[48] This would empower the NSC as it would no longer need to request the information it needs from different agencies.

The recently constituted Naresh Chandra Committee has its work cut out. Its deliberations must not only assess the efficacy of the last round of defence reforms, but it must also make recommendations for the future. Already it has come under attack as some, like former deputy national security adviser Satish Chandra, argue that this committee is 'unlikely to produce a report that will carry weight and be accepted for implementation'.[49] Others, like the former chief of Naval Staff, Admiral Sureesh Mehta, advocate parliamentary intervention along the lines of the Goldwater-Nichols Act which reorganised the US Department of Defense in 1986 and streamlined the US military chain of command.[50] The Naresh Chandra Committee's report and its implementation will thus be the best indicator of whether India's current political leadership is truly invested in defence reform. Ultimately, such ambitious reform will require political will and the support of far-sighted senior military and civil service leaders willing to undertake painful and possibly controversial restructuring. ∎

Anit Mukherjee, a PhD candidate at the School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, is currently a Research Fellow at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis (IDSA). A version of this paper was first presented at a workshop under the Indian National Strategy Project (INSP) in New Delhi in December 2010.

NOTES

1   See William Wan, 'Hillary Rodham Clinton urges greater leadership role for India', *Washington Post*, 20 July 2011.

2   Some analysts argue that there is drift in the US-India relationship. For a more nuanced view, see Ronen Sen, 'From Drama to Routine', *Telegraph* [Kolkata], 28 July 2011.

3   For the public version of this committee report, see Kargil Review Committee, *From Surprise to Reckoning: The Kargil Review Committee Report* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2000).

4   Group of Ministers, *Reforming the National Security System: Report of the Group of Ministers on National Security* (New Delhi: Government of India, 2001).

5   See Anit Mukherjee, 'Failing to Deliver: The Post-Crises Defence Reforms in India, 1998-2010', IDSA Occasional Paper, March 2011.

6   See Sandeep Dikshit, 'High-level task force to review defence preparedness', *The Hindu*, 22 June 2011. In India, secretary-level positions like this one are filled by officials belonging to the civil service and are not political appointees. Hence, these positions are the seniormost bureaucrats of their departments.

7   See Anit Mukherjee, 'Tell it like it is', *Times of India*, 9 June 2010.

8   See Rajat Pandit, 'India World's No. 1 arms importer', *Times of India*, 14 March 2011.

9   See Veena Kukreja, *Civil Military Relations in South Asia: Pakistan, Bangladesh and India* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1991); Kotera Bhimaya, *Civil Military Relations: A Comparative Study of India and Pakistan* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1997); and Apurba Kundu, *Militarism in India: The Army and Civil Society in Consensus* (New York, NY: St Martin's Press, 1998).

10 See Srinath Raghavan, 'Civil-Military Relations in India: The China Crisis and After', *Journal of Strategic Studies* (Vol. 32, No. 1, 2009).

11 The current defence plan which ends next year has still not been approved, while there were similar problems with almost all the other preceding plans. See A K Ghosh, *Defense Budgeting and Planning in India: The Way Forward* (New Delhi: Knowledge World Publishers, 2006).

12 Interview with former MoD official, New Delhi, 17 June 2010; Indian Defence Accounts Service (IDAS) officers who man the office of defence finance generally have more working knowledge of the armed forces and hence are tasked with this activity.

13 According to a former service chief who did not want to be identified, the Indian model does not encourage civilians deliberating upon operational plans; personal interview, New Delhi, 21 April 2011. Also see General V N Sharma, 'India's Defence Forces: Building the Sinews of a Nation', *USI Journal* (Vol. 64, No. 518, October-December 1994), pp. 458–59.

14 For more on this see *Times of India*, 'Army, MoD remain at loggerheads over new promotion policies', 14 April 2011.

15 For more perspectives on this see Kanti Bajpai, 'Be Civil with the Military', *Times of India*, 6 March 2010; Shekhar Gupta, 'Chain of Command, demand', *Indian Express*, 4 October 2008; General V P Malik, 'Defensible not defiance', *Indian Express*, 7 October 2008; and Admiral L Ramdas, 'Navy, nation and national security', *Frontline* (Vol. 16, No. 2, 16–29 January 1999).

16 This is a deliberate take on the concept of the 'unequal dialogue' as explained in Eliot Cohen, *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen and Leadership in Wartime* (New York, NY: Free Press, 2002), p. 209. Also see Anit Mukherjee, 'The Absent Dialogue', *Seminar* (No. 599, July 2009).

17 The army undertook such a study under Lt Gen A R K Reddy, then Chief of Staff, Northern Army Command. However, the chapter on air force operations was army-centric and did not interview air force officers or access their documents. The Indian Air Force did not undertake a macro-study of this campaign and conducted some minor, tactical, squadron-level studies. Interview with numerous army and air force officers involved in the Kargil War.

18 For instance, both the Goldwater-Nichols Act in the US and the Tange reforms in Australia were imposed mainly by civilian leaders despite resistance from the armed services.

19 Of course not all officers can be specialists and command postings, at times, require exposure to different appointments. At the same time, there is all-round benefit in offering officers, both mainstream and those with limited promotion prospects, some form of specialisation.

20 For instance, despite battling the Lashkar-e-Taiba for over two decades, there is no subject matter expert on this terrorist group within the Indian Army.

21 The history department of the Ministry of Defence has written official accounts of the 1947 Kashmir War, operations in Goa in 1961 and the 1965 India-Pakistan War. Similarly, the Indian Navy commissioned Vice Admiral Hiranandani to write its official history. While all of these are useful works, the documents that they rely on are unavailable to other researchers.

22 For a good analysis of this issue, see K Subrahmanyam, 'Higher Direction of Defense and its Organization', *Strategic Analysis* (Vol. 11, No. 6, September 1987), pp. 647–49.

23 See General J N Chaudhuri, 'India's Problems of National Security in the Seventies', *USI National Security Lectures* (New Delhi: United Service Institution of India, 1973), pp. 48–50.

24 Interview with Vice Admiral P S Das, a member of the Arun Singh Committee, New Delhi, 24 December 2010.

25 Interview, New Delhi, 25 August 2010.

26 Admiral Arun Prakash, 'India's Higher Defence Organisation: Implications for National Security and Jointness', *Journal of Defence Studies* (Vol. 1, No. 1, August 2007), p. 24.

27 See Kargil Review Committee, *op. cit.*, pp. 258–59 and Group of Ministers, *op. cit.*, paras 6.4 and 6.14.

28 There is a widespread notion, particularly among military officers, that they are under bureaucratic instead of political control. See Air Vice Marshal Kapil Kak, 'Direction of Higher Defence II', *Strategic Analysis* (Vol. 22, No. 4, July 1998), p. 504. For a good analysis of this concept of 'attached offices', see Wing Commander R Venkataraman, 'Integration of MoD and Defence Planning', *Air Power* (Vol. 5, No. 2, April-June 2010).

29 For more on this see Anit Mukherjee, *op. cit.* in note 5, pp. 20–22.

30 See the statement from a Ministry of Defence official to the Standing Committee on Defence, cited in Vinod Anand, 'Debating Defence Reforms since Kargil', *Claws Journal* (Summer 2009), p. 90.

31 For more on disagreements between the two ministries, see Standing Committee on Defence, *Sixth Report: Defence Policy, Planning and Management* (New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, March 1996), pp. 14–22.

32 For more on this see Anit Mukherjee, 'India's Experience with Insurgency and Counterinsurgency' in Sumit Ganguly, Andrew Scobell and Joseph Liow (eds.), *Handbook of Asian Security* (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 142–45.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 145.

34 See Shyam Babu, 'India's National Security Council: Stuck in the Cradle?', *Security Dialogue* (Vol. 34, No. 2, 2003), pp. 215–30.

35 See *Lok Sabha Debates: Tenth Lok Sabha* (New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1995), 16 May 1995, Cols. 290–304.

36 These sentiments were echoed by India's first national security adviser, Brajesh Mishra. See Siddharth Varadarajan, 'It's strategic culture that counts', *The Hindu*, 22 January 2010.

37 See Kargil Review Committee, *op. cit.*, p. 259.

38 Mountbatten tried in 1960, 1963, 1965 and as late as 1977 to lobby Indian politicians to create a chief of Defence Staff post.

39 See Ashley J Tellis, *India's Emerging Nuclear Posture: Between Recessed Deterrent and Ready Arsenal* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2001), p. 285.

40 Defined as a democracy where 'civilian control has historically been strong'. See Richard Kohn, 'How Democracies Control the Military', *Journal of Democracy* (Vol. 8, No. 4, 1997), p. 141.

41 For a good book on the Indian civil service, see S K Das, *Building a World Class Civil Service for Twenty First Century India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010).

42 See Group of Ministers, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

43 See K Subrahmanyam, 'Higher Direction of Defense and its Organization', *Strategic Analysis* (Vol. 11, No. 6, September 1987), pp. 647–49.

44 This is also an operational imperative as currently none of the seventeen service commands are co-located. See Admiral Arun Prakash, 'Keynote Address', *Proceedings of USI Seminar on Higher Defense Organization* (New Delhi: United Service Institution of India, 2007), p. 9.

45 Cited in Standing Committee on Defence, *op. cit.* in note 31*,* p. 26.

46 The issue of separating staff and command functions has been envisaged along with the creation of theatre commands by a former chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, Admiral Arun Prakash, in *From the Crow's Nest* (New Delhi: Lancer Publications, 2007), p. 29.

47 Cited in Standing Committee on Defence, *Twenty Second Report: Review of Implementation Status* (New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, July 2007), p. 52.

48 The author thanks Srinath Raghavan of the Center for Policy Research for this point.

49 Satish Chandra, 'Futile Review of National Security', *Pioneer*, 4 August 2011.

50 See address by Admiral Sureesh Mehta, 'India's National Security Challenges: An Armed Forces Overview', *India Habitat Center*, 10 August 2009, p. 7; Raj Mehta, 'The CDS Chimera', *Geopolitics,* (Vol. 2, Issue 3, August 2011), pp. 38–45.