Deterrence has been in existence since times immemorial. In earlier times, deterrence was based on the capability of the opposing forces to capture or deny territory and cause severe damage or degradation to adversary’s war-waging potential. The advent of nuclear weapons in the sixties transformed the ‘concept of deterrence’ to ‘concept of nuclear deterrence’ due to their colossal destructive potential to inflict severe punishment to the adversary’s vital centres of power as well as the population instead of merely causing damage to the opponent’s military potential. After World War II nuclear deterrence became central to all strategic discourses.

The means of imposing deterrence have changed over a period of time but the concept of deterrence to prevent an enemy power or an inimical state from waging war or undertaking any hostile action(s) to achieve political objectives remains the same. **Deterrence is a strategy to maintain peace by persuading an adversary that aggression of any kind is the least attractive of all alternatives by confronting him with greater costs than prospective gains.** The value of deterrence lies more in the cognitive domain, in influencing perceptions, rather than the physical domain and is achieved both by threats and promises. As threats can be military, diplomatic or economic; deterrence no longer remains purely a military concept but also an essential and important determinant of a nation’s security policy.

Deterrence is closely linked to Compellence and Dissuasion. While deterrence is the power to dissuade an adversary not to initiate an action, compellance is the power to coerce or compel the adversary to alter its existing policy. Dissuasion is more comprehensive and refers to a broader spectrum of deterring actions than those associated with military deterrence alone e.g. economic sanctions etc. Militarily deterrence is normally executed through a Strategy of Denial and Punishment. The strategy of Denial involves the denial of objectives to the adversary by pre-empting his intentions while the Strategy of Punishment entails massive retaliation to inflict severe punishment by targeting cities, key economic centres and civilians.

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937 Singh, Harjeet, op cit, p 264
Nuclear weapons are required basically to deter and not to fight wars, while conventional weapons are meant to deter as well as fight wars. In essence, there are two definable paradigms of military security - the nuclear paradigm deterrence avoids war while the conventional weapons paradigm prepares to fight and win wars. During the Cold War both, nuclear and conventional weapons coexisted. Nuclear weapons have, however, not been able to deter sub-conventional wars also known by different nomenclatures like the Low-Intensity Conflict Operations, proxy wars, insurgencies and acts of cross-border terrorism. Non-State Actors being elusive and ambiguous by nature pose a difficult challenge for any type of deterrence. The 9/11 terror attacks on the US, Pakistan sponsored cross-border terrorism in India, civil wars in Libya, Syria, Ukraine and many other parts of the world exemplifies that deterrence of any kind is ineffectual against the terrorists. It is believed by many analysts that the sub-conventional warfare in conjunction with nuclear deterrence has reduced the relevance of conventional warfare. But it is not so. **Conventional military capability remains a vital determinant of deterrence.** The side employing sub-conventional means tends to increase the threshold levels of the adversary to initiate conventional war due to the threat of nuclear weapons. The India-Pakistan confrontation has become more challenging for India, wherein Pakistan tends to increase the threshold levels of India for initiating a conventional war. Pakistan employs the threat of nuclear weapons to deter conventional war, while India, uses them to deter a nuclear war. Adequate space, however, exists between nuclear and conventional threats to prosecute limited wars in the backdrop of the danger of possible escalation to the nuclear domain.

A shift in the focus of major powers from deterring war to the management of international relations is underway, where-in the ‘Balance of Interests’ is increasingly becoming more significant than the ‘Balance of Power’. The concepts of geopolitics, geostrategy, and geo-economics have become much more relevant in today's statecraft. Geopolitics is the analysis of the interface between geographic settings and political processes, while geostrategy is a subfield of geopolitics aligning geographic direction and thrust of state policy. Geo-economics entails the systematic use of economic instruments to accomplish geopolitical objectives and management of power-relationships. The nuclear deterrence has started losing its erstwhile predominant significance, particularly at the global level. NNSD in conjunction with
political alliances and partnerships, economic cooperation, technological collaboration, and diplomacy has become a much more viable and credible deterrent strategy that will be usable in all spectrums of conflict.

Nuclear deterrence in the Indian context is triangular, involving both China and Pakistan. China has adopted a no-first-use posture while Pakistan has kept its nuclear policy ambiguous. China has partially succeeded in developing strategic capabilities that include ICBMs and SLBMs to serve as a retaliatory force. India needs to manage its relationship with China from the long-term perspective by concurrently expanding economic cooperation and building nuclear and conventional capability. Pakistan has not formally declared its nuclear doctrine but it believes in first strike capability and has developed TNWs for deployment on the battlefield to contain India’s conventional offensive. This is Pakistan’s FSD which is considered as a qualitative response to counter the threat created by India’s Cold Start Doctrine. **The bedrock of Indian nuclear strategy is the ‘NFU’ doctrine supported by massive retaliation.**

The completion of the first deterrence patrol by the nuclear-powered submarine Arihant, recently, has significantly enhanced India’s second-strike capability and added substantial deterrence value. The covert survivable sea-based capability will help to preserve deterrence, thereby providing greater teeth and credibility. India’s NFU, though a viable deterrent strategy, needs a revision. India follows a policy of ‘deterrence by punishment’ with a ‘counter-value targeting strategy’ to inflict severe damage to the adversary’s cities and industrial centres instead of a ‘counterforce strategy’ aimed at destroying the adversary’s conventional forces.

War is the continuation of policy; the decision to go to war is guided by the national security policy. War is the ‘means’ to achieve the political objective which is the ‘goal’, and war cannot be separated from the purpose. The paradigm of peace and war normally follows the sequence *Peace - Confrontation - Crisis - Conflict - War - Resolution* in an escalatory continuum providing ample scope for employment of various instruments other than military force. A confrontation occurs due to the collision of challenge and resistance. Confrontation may lead to war, capitulation by one side, or a negotiated settlement. A crisis occurs due to the initiation of some sort of conflict behavior to resolve the confrontation in its favor. Normally all wars result due to some sort of crisis, although all crises do not lead to war. War is followed by a
resolution phase intended to usher in enduring peace, but this has not happened in the Indian context so far.

Deterrence and decision making for war are two sides of the same coin. While deterrence manifests to prevent war and on its failure, decision making for war results in the decisive employment of military force to achieve political objectives. The success of deterrence to prevent wars depends upon numerous factors such as the credibility of the threat, reputational aspects of the country with respect to the application of the threats, national will and the costs that can be imposed on the aggressor. **Decision-making is a function of political resolve and military capability to uphold the vital national interests.** Wars fought to secure or protect vital national interests are termed as ‘wars of necessity’ and for non-vital national interests as ‘wars of choice’. Thucydides – an Athenian historian, emphasized that the decisions for war go beyond the vital national interests and are driven by motives of ‘Fear, Interest and Honor’ – both individual as well as that of nations. Fear of losing strategic space enjoyed by a country amongst the nations at the regional and global level acts as a great motivator to uphold or restore its interests through the instrument of military force. The honor includes the search for fame and glory; the desire to escape shame, disgrace, and embarrassment by application of military force. The Just War theory for initiating and justifying the same is as relevant and applicable as it was in the yesteryears.

India, on achieving independence, focused on economic development domestically and adopted non-alignment as the pillar of its foreign policy. It accorded minimal attention to creating deterrence through the development of military capability. India fought five wars since independence and all of them were ‘Wars of Necessity’ to safeguard vital national interests. 1947-48, 1965 and 1999 India-Pakistan Wars and the 1962 India-China War were fought to defend its territorial integrity, while the 1971 India-Pakistan War was to ensure socio-economic security threatened by the refugee crisis.

The 1947-48 was a unique war in which the rival armies were led by British Generals whose geo-strategic interests were aligned with that of Pakistan’s national interest of annexing a geographically contiguous and Muslim dominated J&K to strengthen its two-nation- ideology. India’s marginal superior military capability was substantially
negated by ingenious employment of a large number of tribesmen by Pakistan. Indian political leadership, unable to see through the real British motivation to their support to Pakistan, succumbed to pressure and allowed a dominating role to the Governor-General in the apex security apparatus that effectively disabled Indian decision-making. Under British pressure, the PM took the matter to the UN which continues to rankle India even today. India fought the 1947-48 War not only against Pakistan but against Britain as well, who jointly outsmarted Indian political leadership. India’s inability to strategically prioritize to push back the raiders and recapture the whole of J&K was inhibited more due to biased decision-making than the military capability.

India’s military humiliation in 1962 was the result of not balancing national security and development – the two main pillars of nation-building. India’s policy of seeking strategic friendship with China was intended to achieve deterrence against a powerful adversary. It didn’t work due to the inability of political leadership to orchestrate diplomacy and military. Despite cautionary notes from within the system, the top leadership misread Chinese ambitions and did not perceive any threat. Concomitantly India’s military capability remained sub-optimal impacted by financial constraints. Its non-alignment policy inhibited extracting any leverages against China from the superpowers. Indian diplomacy resisted Chinese terms for a boundary settlement but inadequate military capability and lacking any international alliance did not provide it with any deterrence value against China’s aggressive stance. The lack of institutionalized apex security mechanism allowed certain personalities to play a dominating role in decision-making that aggravated the civil-military relations. Bureaucracy interfering in military decisions and the senior Army leadership acquiescing to it exposed India’s civil-military relationship. China by resorting to the employment of military force without exploring other options in its ‘War of Choice’ followed by a unilateral declaration of cease-fire and withdrawal in the East (NEFA) to their perceived LAC achieved its larger hidden aim of establishing regional supremacy convincingly. The perceived LAC was the same as mentioned by Chou- en-Lai in his letter to Nehru of 07 Nov 1959, which coincides with the McMahon Line.

India and Pakistan after the 1947-48 War charted different strategic paths to strengthen their respective ideologies on Kashmir and mitigate threats from each
Pakistan irked by the success of India’s political integration process and emboldened by its humiliation in the 1962 War with China decided to apply the instrument of military force to resolve the Kashmir dispute in its favor. India’s lacklustre performance in the Kutch skirmishes in April 1965 reinforced Pakistan perception of India being militarily weak. Considering that India’s modernization programme initiated post-1962 defeat, would widen the military capability gap in India’s favor while it is militarily weak now, Pakistan decided to launch a war in the strategic window of opportunity in 1965 preceded by a tribal invasion to exploit the domestic fault-lines in J&K.

India’s political decision-making driven by the need to re-assert its honor and avoid humiliation by a weaker nation showed audacity and boldness to take the battle into Pakistan negating its assumptions of lacking the will to fight an all-out war. The military by clinching quick victories and thwarting Pakistani offensive design vindicated the trust reposed in it by the political leadership and restored its honor and prestige. India’s decision-making mechanism led by the PM functioned extremely well. It displayed the clarity of purpose and congenial civil-military relationship. India’s Prime Minister and the Defence Minister provided stable, mature and bold leadership and gave adequate freedom of action to the military to plan and execute operations. The government’s higher direction of war, however, did not reflect its intentions to achieve a decisive victory over Pakistan that could later act as a credible deterrent for any future misadventure. The Indian Navy was not employed at all in 1965 and restrictions were imposed on employment of the IAF. There were caveats to the Army’s operations to capture only limited territory. India’s political leadership succumbed to intense Soviet pressure to return the captured objectives like Hajipir Pass to Pakistan at the Tashkent Conference.

The 1971 India-Pakistan War was the first war in India’s post-independence era, where India, displaying its superb politico-military decision-making ability, strong political resolve and a robust military capability adroitly synchronized the essential elements of comprehensive national power to transform the crisis into securing a decisive victory and creating a friendly neighbor on its Eastern border to meet its vital long-term national security interest. India evolved a sustainable resistance movement by the Mukti Bahini and concurrently launched a diplomatic outreach campaign to shape the environment in its favor. The resistance movement was
supplemented by a well-calibrated coercive strategy. By signing the Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty it sought support from the USSR, achieved deterrence against arms supply to Pakistan and built-in additional safeguard against Chinese military intervention. Geography as a determinant of deterrence was exploited by the timing of the military intervention. It’s well thought out military strategy synergizing all three services to execute a swift offensive in the East, a defensive-offensive operation in the West and defensive deployment along the Northern borders against China was sound and reasonable. **India outmaneuvered Pakistan to compel it to launch air strikes on 3 December 1971 in the West so as not to be seen as an aggressor. India launched a swift military campaign to liberate Bangladesh.** Undeterred by the US Task Force in the Bay of Bengal, India, hastened its military operations and secured the surrender of the Pakistan Army leading to liberation of Bangladesh and partition of Pakistan. However, the pattern of non-employment of full combat potential continued. A full-fledged offensive in the Sind in West Pakistan could have imposed greater deterrence against any subsequent Pakistani misadventure in J&K but the need to garner international support for its present operations in the East outweighed the advantage of futuristic deterrence. The US and USSR both pressurized India not to expand operations in the West.

India’s decision-making at the political and military level functioned very efficiently with PM having shaped the international environment coordinated the politico-military aspects with great finesse. The outstanding strategic military leadership of the COAS was suitably supplemented by the operational and tactical leadership of the subordinate commanders. India’s decision-making process, political and military leadership, diplomacy and military capability matured brilliantly from the fractured mechanism displayed in 1962. The honor and prestige of the country were established comprehensively. However, India got outsmarted at the negotiating table in Shimla, where it could not impose an unambiguous solution on J&K despite having the political leverages of more than 90,000 PoWs.

Pakistan while launching the Kargil intrusions in 1999 again perceived the Indian Army to be weak and fatigued due to continuous deployment in counter-insurgency operations in J&K. The need to validate its nuclear capability to deter India from launching a conventional offensive in the plains sector with superior conventional forces was an added incentive. India launched a limited war restricted to the eviction
of intrusions with self-imposed restriction of not crossing the Line of Control and postured its forces along the Western border to deter Pakistan from escalation. **Its strategic military restraint was supplemented by skillful diplomacy to project itself as a responsible nation willing to sacrifice short-term gains for enduring regional peace and a stable world environment.** However, India’s strategic restraint in Kargil in 1999 was perceived by Pakistan as its military weakness and it was not deterred from pursuing its policy of cross-border terrorism.

India’s decision-making, however, floundered during operation Parakram in 2001-2002. Having taken an emotive decision of military deployment without considering various other alternatives, India found itself devoid of options. The attack on the Parliament was rightly perceived to be an attack on the Indian nation. A rational and objective analysis of the international and regional environment prevailing at that time was overlooked. **After mobilization, India displayed indecisiveness and lack of firm intent to apply the military instrument against Pakistan.** The magnitude of the crisis constrained India to simultaneously handle the military dimension, the nuclear threat, coercive diplomacy, and international pressure. India’s coercive diplomacy failed to persuade Pakistan to accede to Indian demands due to lack of compelling capabilities and flawed application of diplomacy. The military, which is the last resort was applied first and failed. Pakistan’s nuclear threat and international pressure, particularly of the US succeeded in deterring India from launching a conventional offensive. Though India has the nuclear and military wherewithal to counter Pakistani threats, yet India displayed caution and weakness against Pakistan. This has weakened the deterrence against Pakistan.

The analysis of deterrence and decision-making in India’s wars since independence has highlighted a relatively higher significance to the determinants of political leadership and international pressure. Some other determinants namely, diplomacy, intelligence, and public opinion have emerged more prominently vis a vis another determinants. **Decision-making is foremost a human activity that is expected to synthesize personal qualities of experience, knowledge, and wisdom with all the instruments of comprehensive national power.** A political leader is expected to possess all these traits and exercise them while handling the crisis. As the value of deterrence lies more in the cognitive domain in influencing perceptions rather than only in the physical
domain, the strategic decisions pertaining to national security are extremely important from the deterrence perspective. Bold and audacious decisions impose caution on the adversary and provide the requisite deterrence. Decisions reflecting appeasement or weakness emboldens the adversary to adopt a tougher stance. Where leaders acquiesced, the national interest suffered – Kashmir dispute in the UNO is a case in point. Nehru’s personality reflected a propensity to appease the opposite side instead of asserting own claims firmly, while Vajpayee succumbed to international pressure. Mrs Gandhi showed firmness in resisting US Pressure in 1971. India’s decision-making for all the wars reflected lack of resoluteness to optimally disable the adversary that could deter it from seeking the path of confrontation -the examples of 1965 and 1971 are most apt.

The political leaders need to have the resilience to withstand international pressure to uphold vital national interests. Indian political leadership displayed a propensity to satisfy the international community which manifested in the 1965, 1971, 1999 Wars and Operation Parakram. While India, a developing nation cannot go against the international community as it needs their diplomatic support, yet there is a scope for a fine balancing calibration of international environment and building the futuristic deterrence perspective against the adversaries. India’s policy of exercising strategic restraint and not crossing the LoC for conducting tactical operations during the 1999 Kargil War sacrificed military advantages to garner international support. Though it earned the desired politico-diplomatic advantages, the same restriction was perceived as a strategic weakness by Pakistan which manifested in the continued acts of terrorism in India. Due to the nuclear threat, international pressure and multilateral diplomacy would always play a significant role.

The need for the senior military leadership to display the moral courage to convincingly put across their professional advice is re-emphasized. The contrasting examples of General Thapar during the 1962 China and Field Marshal Manekshaw in the 1971 War exemplifies the moral conviction of senior military leadership. General Thapar though not convinced of the feasibility of conducting offensive military operations on the Namka Chu Ridge in 1962 War with China, followed the political instructions bereft of ground reality with disastrous results. In contrast, FM Manekshaw resisted political pressure to militarily intervene in April-May 1971 when neither the Army was prepared nor the terrain and weather favored military
operations. The remarkable victory is a testimony of Field Marshals' conviction to resist political pressure.

**Military and diplomacy, though belonging to two different realms, are essential determinants in decision-making for war.** Diplomacy being invariably the first line of engagement between two belligerent states seeks to avoid war. It is only when diplomacy fails that the nations resort to war as the military is the last resort to achieve political objectives. Both are therefore complementary to each other. For diplomacy to succeed, the military has to be strong enough to pose a viable challenge to the adversary. The concept of gunboat diplomacy is as valid as it was in the olden days. Public opinion and media, too, are important determinants as they shape international perceptions which can be exploited by diplomacy. A resilient and strong economy to sustain the war effort and resist international pressures of economic sanctions etc. aids decision making.

The analysis of India’s past wars reveals that war was not considered a proactive tool of statecraft by the Indian political leadership and **concomitantly the concept of deterrence to avoid war was not deliberated seriously.** Avoidance of war, according to Kautilya, was the ultimate test of the efficiency of a King and his Army. This alludes to deterrence. It is, therefore, imperative to build credible deterrence during peacetime. The saying if you want peace to be prepared for war can be tweaked to say **if you want peace to create deterrence and be prepared for war.**

India’s apex decision-making mechanism has generally remained the same as proposed on independence by Lord Ismay even though the nomenclatures have undergone a change. **India’s decision-making process works well during war-time but suffers from civil-military disconnect and weak institutions in peace-time.** India’s Security Policy and Grand Strategy have not been evolved and documented to deal with complex geopolitical and geostrategic issues confronting the country and by implication achieving deterrence capabilities. Some improvements in the system have taken place which may address the security related issues in a comprehensive manner. The strength of the mechanism lies in its prudent application driven by national interests.

A look at India’s security environment reveals the deep impact of the emerging global and regional order. The architecture of the global order is being shaped by the USA and China, with Russia attempting to regain its erstwhile superpower status. The USA seeks
to maintain its unipolar world status with new allies and partners, including India, while China attempts to change this in favor of a bipolar world. The gradual shift in the ‘balance of power’ from the Atlantic to the Pacific and a renewed emphasis to link the Indian Ocean with the Western Pacific, has increased the significance of ‘Indo-Pacific’. China seeks a multi-polar world order that warrants India’s cooperation but a unipolar regional order that attempts to marginalize India. Thus, the emerging relationship between India and China will continue to be characterized by cooperation at the global level and competition at the regional and bilateral level. The pending border dispute with frequent incursions and provocative actions is to be seen in this context. Pakistan’s nuclearization, ostensibly to neutralize India’s conventional military superiority, is being used as a shield to pursue an aggressive proxy war in J&K. Any change in Pakistan’s intent to cease cross-border terrorism is unlikely. Security threats to India are more from non-state actors than the conventional forces of our Western adversary. China, by virtue of having a more powerful economy, military power, and nuclear weapons is a long-term threat perspective.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

War is an act of policy and the last resort to achieve political objectives. The policy focusses on the end state to be achieved, the way it is to be achieved and the means allocated to achieve the desired end. India is a status quo-power while the adversaries are revisionist powers and are not hesitant to wage war to achieve political objectives. Therefore, the desired end state for India is to prevent the adversaries from waging war or undertaking any hostile action. Considering the adversaries’ intent to employ the military instrument, it is imperative to evolve the likely scenario under which India would be drawn into a war. This will result in working out the political objectives. The ‘National Security Policy’ and the ‘Grand Strategy’ are required to coordinate the ways and means to achieve the political objectives. As war is the last resort to achieve political objectives, various means in terms of diplomacy, economics, technology, soft power, etc. assume significance. When war becomes inevitable, an efficient decision-making mechanism is required to execute the same. The recommendations are accordingly structured as follows:

(a) War Scenario and Political Objectives.

(b) National Security Policy and Grand Strategy.
War Scenario and Political Objectives

China. China’s White Paper titled ‘China’s Military Strategy’ issued in May 2015 legislates the use of force to achieve political goals while maintaining its earlier stance of “avoiding war through the military strategy of Active Defence”. It indicates a desire to retain the option of first use of military force. China’s aggressive posturing as seen in Doklam in Sikkim 2017, and earlier in Ladakh in 2013 and 2014 is likely to continue with the greater possibility of manifesting in sensitive areas in addition to the established disputed areas. The probability of such crisis escalating to conflict at the tactical level with further potential to transiting to a short yet intense engagement as a prelude to a final settlement of the boundary issue cannot be ruled out. It will, of course, take into account the prevailing geo-strategic environment including its and that of India’s relationship with the US. India’s political objective against China should be “Resolve the boundary dispute through politico-diplomatic means and if during the process or non-resolution escalates to war, India should be able to stoutly execute its defensive-offensive strategy.” The escalation-dynamics and the response-matrix needs to be worked out conjointly by the armed forces and the bureaucracy involving all stakeholders including the cyber and media for perception management. There is a need to upgrade the border infrastructure, modernization of the military and put in place operational concepts to deter any border incursions. The capabilities required for deterrence and war-fighting should be accelerated.

Pakistan. Pakistan, under the shield of its nuclear capability, is likely to continue the policy of cross-border terrorism against India and avoid a conventional war. Considering Pakistan’s nuclear threat and international pressure to exercise restraint, India has reworked out its warfighting strategy against Pakistan. The ‘Cold Start Doctrine’ has matured and been refined over a period of time. Pakistan too has evolved its strategy of New Concept of War-Fighting that has been enmeshed with its nuclear threat of full-spectrum deterrence and development of TNWs. The trigger for India going to war with Pakistan is likely to be a terrorist strike on a high-value target. Besides developing adequate defensive measures to guard against such terrorist strikes, India should raise the costs of Pakistan’s involvement in sponsoring the terrorist activities by a well-articulated and calibrated politico-diplomatic-military
responses India’s surgical strikes in 2016 and air strike in 2019 has shown a major strategic shift to emulate Israeli policy that advocates retribution to hit the terrorists in their strongholds and proved effective. The policy enunciated in November 1955 states, “We cannot guard every water pipeline from the explosion, we cannot prevent every murder of a worker in an orchard or a family in their bed. But it is in our power to set a high price on our blood, a price too high for the Arab governments to think it worth paying.” The political objective should, therefore, be “To make Pakistan’s cross-border terrorism policy cost-prohibitive to compel it to abandon the same, and while doing so, if it leads to escalation, execute Offensive-Defensive Strategy to achieve a decisive victory.” Inaction, as seen in the past, emboldens the sponsors and non-state actors to continue their acts of terrorism with greater impunity Pakistan should be convinced of an effective and a viable military response. Pakistan’s response to India’s air-strike the very next in 2019 day, leading to a dog fight is indicative of the likely escalation matrix for conventional war which Pakistan wants to avoid. India, should, therefore, show consistency in its policy to make Pakistan’s cross-border terrorism policy cost-prohibitive to it.

**National Security Policy and Grand Strategy**

The policy formulation process is a formalized and a multi-faceted process in which war is a subset of the national security policy. Though the nation has fought five wars and engaged in combating proxy war in J&K and insurgencies in the North East, it has not evolved a comprehensive national security policy and grand strategy that has impacted the long-term institutionalized capability-building process of the armed forces. **The sooner it is evolved, the better for optimization of various determinants and components of national comprehensive power.** The National Security Policy should encompass the following:

(a) **External Threats.** Specify the external threats and the need to maintain credible military deterrence capability that should encompass an integrated tri-service approach, synergized intelligence and surveillance, harnessing space and optimizing technology incorporating non-contact warfare. It should also dwell upon the contours of sub-conventional warfare escalating to conventional war and its interface with the nuclear dimension. War-avoidance should be inbuilt through general deterrence and dissuasion. The military should not be seen as a

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threat-based force but developed into a capability-based force having a potent conventional ability. **The need to develop asymmetric capabilities to exploit the vulnerabilities of the adversary should be factored in.** It need not be a declaratory policy.

(b) **Internal Security Threats.** The Army is heavily engaged in its secondary role of combating internally security threats in J&K and the North East. This impinges upon the Army’s role of conventional preparedness to meet external aggression. The requirements of internal security should be gradually taken over by the Central Armed Police Forces and Army freed of this commitment. While security forces would manage the conflict in J&K, it ultimately needs a political resolution for which a continuous dialogue with the domestic stakeholders is imperative.

(c) **Strategic Culture.** India’s prevailing strategic culture is defensive and passive. India’s reluctance to the optimal employment of force even in wars did not provide any deterrence value. Considering Pakistan’s culture to challenge India’s status quo policy, its vigorous pursuance of exporting cross-terrorism and China’s revisionist culture, **India should make a declaratory policy for the employment of the military instrument to safeguard its national interest.** A change in India’s strategic culture is required. **Leverage the threat of escalation to build up diplomatic pressures against Pakistan.** Economic strengths and soft power should also be incorporated to build a coherent strategic culture.

(d) **Modernization through Indigenization.** The modernization of the armed forces and that of Central Armed Police Forces is a necessity that warrants urgent attention. Indigenization offers distinct advantages to maintain strategic autonomy and eliminate dependency on foreign countries. The need for the development of indigenous technology should be followed rather than resorting to technology transfers.

(e) **Budgetary Support.** A fixed budgetary allotment in terms of fixed percentage of GDP with provision to carry forward the unexpended amount to the next financial year should be stipulated for planning and development of long-term capabilities driven by indigenization and technology. A well-equipped and potent military force will contribute towards the development of the nation.

**The Grand Strategy.** After the formulation of National Security Objectives by the Policy, the grand strategy should work out the methodology to accomplish the same.
The Grand Strategy should synthesize both the tangible and intangible aspects to secure laid down objectives. The grand strategy will eradicate dissonance and provide strategic direction to the policy makers, bureaucrats, armed forces, industry, academia, and everybody.

Means to Achieve Deterrence

War avoidance is achieved by deterrence and implies capability building along the entire spectrum of conflict. India should concurrently strengthen its deterrent, political and strategic value determinants. It’s ongoing efforts to build a viable nuclear and conventional capability along with creating international alliances/partnerships, strengthening economic leverages and other determinants need to be accelerated to enhance deterrence against both the Western and Northern adversaries. Recommendations are given under the following heads: -

(a) Border Management and Counter-Terrorist Strategy.
(b) Conventional Military Capability.
(c) Nuclear Deterrent Capability and NFU Doctrine.
(d) Diplomatic Outreach to Optimize Geo-economics
(e) River Waters Management.
(f) Structure and Organization.
(g) Empowerment of Leadership.

Border Management and Counter-Terrorist Strategy

Deterrence should be imposed on the adversary from the initial stages of the escalation ladder. It pertains to management of the border with China and of terrorist activities against Pakistan. The various aspects of this policy are enumerated in the succeeding paragraphs.

Border Management with China. India’s vast land border having a number of disputed and sensitive areas is subject to frequent transgressions by China with potential for escalation. It is imperative that the border-management posture is strengthened to manage the escalatory ladder at the initiation stage itself. Following are recommended: -

(a) ITBP Under the Operational Control of the Army. India’s border is manned by the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) part of Ministry of Home Affairs and the Army part of MoD depending upon the significance and sensitivity of the
area. There is a lack of institutionalized integration though formations have evolved standard operating procedures. It is recommended to place ITBP under the operational control of the Army for a better and integrated response against any Chinese incursions.

(b) **Quid-Pro-Quo Strategy.** A workable quid-pro-quo strategy to China’s aggressive posturing or territorial grabs should be evolved in areas that afford us a tactical advantage. These could be allotted higher priority for infrastructural development. Asymmetric capabilities should be developed in Ladakh, Garhwal, Kumaon, Sikkim and Arunachal Scouts to interfere with the Chinese supply lines or logistic support to force them to withdraw in case of territorial grabs. Such a strategy will strengthen diplomatic negotiations to restore the status quo and not seen as provocative actions. **Quid-pro strategy and asymmetric capabilities should form the mainstay of India’s response matrix duly supplemented by technology** to obtain real-time hard intelligence about Chinese activities.

**Counter-Terrorist Strategy against Pakistan.** A high-profile terrorist act can trigger a war between the two countries. To avert war, it is imperative to evolve a viable ‘Retribution Matrix’ against such activities to deter Pakistan. This should be worked out conjointly between the armed forces and civil agencies including bureaucracy, intelligence, and other security agencies to decide on the likely response mechanism. The various aspects of this policy are as follows: -

(a) **Identify Threshold Levels of Tolerance.** There is a need to identify clear-cut threshold levels against terrorist attacks - what constitutes red lines for retribution and at what level; is it in terms of a number of human casualties or extent of destruction of property or infrastructural damage, or any act that hurts a nation’s prestige. **It should be a judicious combination of a number of casualties and significance of the target with inbuilt flexibility.**

(b) **Evolve a Retribution Matrix.** The scale of retribution will depend upon the political decision and military capability to execute the retribution matrix. A graduated response matrix and coordinated amongst various stakeholders including diplomats and media for post retribution management must be worked
out with contingency plans for escalation. A number of contingency plans should be rehearsed and stream-lined avoiding predictability.

(c) **Escalation Matrix.** The risk of escalation to war consequent to any military retribution act will always be there. This is the most crucial aspect and should carefully consider the following: -

(i) Escalate at a time and place of own choosing with adequate preparation and secrecy in-built to avoid any type of international pressure. Work out the target profiling and build the capabilities required to execute.

(ii) Wargame the likely response from Pakistan and measures to counter the same including the international pressure that will build upon India to exercise restraint. India should not succumb to international pressure till Pakistan is inflicted substantial damage or promises to make verifiable measures to cease cross-border terrorism. Lessons learned from the 2001-02 mobilization should be woven into the planning.

(iii) Work out the diplomatic initiatives required to be taken at the international level to expose Pakistan’s full-fledged support to terrorism in India and insist on the world community and financial institutions to impose stringent economic punitive measures against Pakistan. Imposing economic sanctions against Pakistan should be the cornerstone of international diplomacy.

(iv) The identification of the threat and the response matrix will dictate the level of existing and required capabilities to be developed in peacetime.

(d) **Asymmetric Capabilities.** Develop asymmetric capabilities to exploit Pakistan’s domestic fault lines starting from Baluchistan, where there is already simmering discontentment against the Pakistan Central Government. The Human Right Violations in Baluchistan and other parts of Pakistan should be consistently exposed to the world community.

**Conventional Military Capability**

A robust conventional military capability strong enough to execute a decisive Offensive-Defensive Strategy against Pakistan and a Defensive-Offensive Strategy against China must be put in place. An effective military strength will generate an array of options to make Pakistan’s abetment of cross-border terrorism in Kashmir cost-prohibitive. The most essential requirement is to hasten the pace of modernization and remove critical deficiencies in equipment and ammunition. To
impart a push to military capability-building as well as an indigenization process, certain measures need to be expedited are as follows: -

(a) **Strengthen the Defence-Industrial Base.** To strengthen India’s defence industrial base the government has recently incorporated the Strategic Partnership policy that intends to create private sector DPSUs on the lines recommended by the Kelkar Committee. The Strategic Partnership policy should make it mandatory to develop indigenous platforms and technologies with scope for incorporating foreign OEMs into a consortium creating specific defence platforms. The underlying theme should be to develop own technology and not procure from foreign OEMs and manufacturing specific products under license in India.

(b) **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).** The policies with respect to FDI in the defence sector should be liberalized. The ambiguities with respect to foreign direct investment in modern technology, investments beyond 49%, taxation and customs duty, etc. should be worked out to encourage foreign investments. The Policy should also incorporate defence exports policy within its ambit to provide a broad-based market to overcome monopoly. This should be in alignment with the country’s foreign policy objectives and commercial interests.

(c) **Modernization of DPSUs.** While the impetus for private sector entry into the defence industrial base should continue, the modernization of existing DPSUs and OFs should also be undertaken to upgrade their production capacities and induce competitiveness. A Performance Audit on the cost of Investment (COI) and return on Investment (ROI) on the DPSUs and Ordnance Factories (OFs) is imperative. These organizations should not be seen as a tool for providing socioeconomic benefits for the local population without adequate return

(d) **Make in India.** ‘Make in India’ initiative launched to facilitate the participation of private industry in defence products is yet to make a viable impact on the ground. The following should be considered: -

(i) **Public-Private Partnership.** Adopt a Public Private Partnership (PPP) model i.e. involve the private sector in the manufacture, management and marketing and forge mutually beneficial PPPs. The private sector should
not end up outsourcing the requisite technology from overseas, which could fail at crucial times. The private sector should, however, enter into a partnership with foreign countries having established expertise that should incorporate developing indigenous technology.

(ii) **Consortium Approach.** Adopt a consortium approach on the lines of the Brahmos Missile systems which has been developed as a joint venture between the Indian government and the Russian Federation.

(iii) **Optimize the indigenous IT Industry.** As software has become an essential component of any cutting-edge platforms, India’s well-developed IT industry must be incorporated in providing impetus to the ‘Make in India’ programme. IT industry’s huge potential must be institutionally harnessed towards planning and developing military applications and software.

(e) **Research and Development (R&D).** There is a need to incorporate design and development capability of DRDO with the Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and the defence manufacturing base, thereby adopting the combination of a top-down approach with the bottom-up approach.

(f) **Creation of Testing Infrastructure and Standardisation Norms.** The MoD should create the design, development, testing infrastructure, certification and standardization norms for firms in the indigenous industrial base. The government could consider designating some defence industrial zones and corridors where these facilities could be provided to industries coming up along those zones/corridors.

(g) **Procedural Delays.** The Draft Procurement Policy should keep pace with the structural changes being incorporated in promoting indigenous development of defence industrial base, enhancing FDI and technological upgradations. The policy and procedures should be simplified to the extent possible to meet the aspirations of the foreign manufacturers willing to invest in India as well as the private sector. A certain amount of flexibility should be in-built in the procedural aspects to hasten the procurement cycle.
(h) **Budgetary Support.** There is a need for adequate budgetary allotment to the services to impart impetus to the modernization process. Globally, the ratio between Revenue and Capital budget is 60:40; in the case of IAF and IN it 45:55 being platform-centric forces and can spend an adequate amount on modernization and large-scale projects. However, in the case of the Army, the ratio is 80:20 being manpower intensive organization. This unavoidable skewed ratio of Capital to Revenue expenditure for the Army needs to be improved. Certain -in-house measures by the Army to improve the teeth to the tail ratio by means of restructuring and rightsizing are already underway, but more needs to be done. Following merits consideration:

(i) **Taxes and Customs Duties.** The tax component should be ploughed back into the defence budget as part of Recoveries or provided as an increment in the same financial year.

(ii) **Defence Budget as a Measure of Capability Building.** The defence budget, though increasing marginally every year in monetary terms has actually been reducing in real terms due to inflationary trends. Budget presently allotted as a percentage of the GDP has been receding every year, perhaps due to an erroneous assumption of the unlikelihood of conventional war. A viable military capability, which takes years to build up, deters war. The world average of defence expenditure varies between 2 to 2.5% of the GDP, China is 2.1%, Pakistan is 2.36 %, while India, having greater security challenges is 1.4 % of the GDP. **India’s defence budget should be between 2 to 2.5% of the GDP.** Also like the Army has taken measures to cut down manpower, the civilian strength should also be pruned down. The defence budget caters not only for the armed forces but also for the civilians, who by virtue of their service up to 60 years obtain a higher pension. Impetus needs to be imparted to remove the hollowness, undertake technology upgrades and modernization by taking care of committed liabilities, carryforwards of previous financial years and new schemes.

(iii) **Institute Roll-On-Budget.** A large amount of budgetary allotment is surrendered every year due to the inability to expend on account of tedious procedural requirements. **A Roll-On-Budget for the Armed forces should be instituted to avoid surrender of unexpended funds and this should be**
carried forward to the next financial year. This will obviate the shortage of funds to some extent and the services would be held responsible for their expenditure.

(i) **Intelligence and Surveillance Capability.** Improve the intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities by integrating the inputs of the National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO), Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) and other civil/paramilitary and police intelligence agencies at the strategic level. At the operational and tactical levels, integrate the various ground/air/satellite-based early-warning radars, UAVs, navigation systems, battlefield management systems, target designation, and tracking systems. They must be secured against hostile cyber-attacks. Cyber warfare capabilities should be extended to the operational and tactical domain within the armed forces.

(j) **Harnessing Space.** A dedicated military space programme is required to harness space assets to enhance military capabilities. A closer collaboration between Indian Space and Research Organization (ISRO) and DRDO is imperative to have a synergized approach to fully optimally exploit and utilize space.

(k) **Relocation of Formations and Units.** Expeditious application of the Cold Start doctrine warrants relocation of formations and units. Some formations have already been relocated while the move of balance formations from the hinterland close to the borders needs to be expedited. Land and other infrastructural requirements should be first adjusted from within the armed forces assets and later through the governmental or private agencies. An-in house study by the Army to relocate and optimally utilize the existing assets can be undertaken.

(l) **Interface between Sub-Conventional and Conventional Forces.** In J&K, RR and CAPFs are deployed in the hinterland in the counter-terrorism grid while the Army is deployed on the counter-infiltration grid along the LoC. CAPFs should build up their capabilities to take over the responsibilities of RR in the hinterland, who in turn should relieve the Army from the LoC in less sensitive sectors. The regular Army so relieved should then focus on conventional training and preparedness to act as immediate reserves to launch punitive operations/conventional operations as part of the escalatory ladder. This need to be implemented in a gradual and phased manner. India should be prepared for a
conventional escalation at short notice. This would not only enable training but also act as a deterrent force against any high-profile terrorist attacks in J&K.

(m) **Interface between Conventional and Nuclear War.** A seamless transition from conventional to the nuclear domain should form an essential part of operational plans of all the three services. Joint plans should be formulated to integrate conventional and nuclear forces. The nuclear weapons, unlike Pakistan, are controlled by the DRDO scientists in India. As Pakistan threatens any Indian military offensive with its TNWs that could signal the escalation from conventional to nuclear war, it is imperative that the Army’s senior leadership at the Corps level be involved in interfacing a conventional war scenario with the likely nuclear war scenario.

**Nuclear Capability and NFU**

A credible nuclear deterrence capability to achieve war avoidance against both the Northern and Western adversaries is imperative. The following merits attention:

(a) The range of Arihant missile is only 1,000 km which cannot target Pakistan and Chinese communication centres from the Bay of Bengal. To target cities and nuclear centres located deep inside China or Pakistan from adequately safe distances, India needs an SLBM and ground-based missiles with a range of 5000-8000 km. There is a need to expedite the launch of the second nuclear-powered submarine - the INS Aridhaman. The nuclear-powered submarines (SSBN) should be armed with nuclear-tipped SLBMs.

(b) India must continue to honor all the provisions of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) as a responsible nuclear power and need not to sign it. Additional tests of the Agni series of missiles should continue.

(c) Continue to build effective BMD systems to defend value targets. Against China, it should develop anti-satellite (ASAT) capabilities.

(d) Nuclear signaling to effectively reflect the political resolve must be streamlined to enhance the credibility of a second-strike capability.

**Revisit NFU.** Due to the growing wide gap between India and China’s conventional capabilities as well as the rapid development of infrastructure in Tibet in the backdrop
of Chinese intransigence in resolving the boundary dispute, a review in NFU is warranted. There is a need to build in some ambiguity in the NFU Doctrine to have inherent flexibility in the application. India could reconsider the need for a triad delivery system and adopt a dyad system. The IAF, due to the vulnerability of a large number of aircraft to enemy’s air-defence systems, while executing a nuclear strike should be reconsidered. The ground and sea-based delivery systems can achieve the same tasks and duplication could be avoided.

**Diplomatic Outreach to Optimise Geo-Economics**

Considering the growing India-US strategic relationship, an alignment with USA in conjunction with the convergence of India’s AEP to the US pivot to Asia should be considered and calibrated in a manner, so as not to antagonize China, Russia, Iran, and other West Asian countries. Diplomacy needs to exploit the vast potential of geo-economics to undermine Chinese influence. Following merits attention:

(a) Increase the scope for trade and investment by ASEAN and Indo-Pacific countries in India’s ‘Make in India’, ‘Digital India’ and ‘Smart City’ initiatives, thereby improving the balance-of-trade ratio.

(b) **Improve connectivity of the North-Eastern Region (NER)** with ASEAN to optimally exploit the geographical connect of the region with Bhutan, Bangladesh, China, and Myanmar so as to get access to the South Asian markets. The Trilateral Highway connecting Manipur with Thailand through Myanmar should be extended to Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam. Also, explore the feasibility of developing the sea-ports of Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Indonesia, and the Maldives.

(c) **Strengthen economic relationship with ASEAN and scale-up engagement with its member states.** There is greater scope to enhance bilateral trade with ASEAN which is presently around 11% of India’s total trade with the world. India should continue to actively pursue evolving the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) between ASEAN and its free trade partners.

(d) **SAARC needs to be economically reinvigorated for economic integration of the region.** Some noteworthy steps have already been taken, like formalizing the Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA) between India, Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh for promotion and facilitation of passenger and cargo vehicular traffic.
(e) **India should extend its footprint beyond the extended neighborhood to the ‘strategic neighborhood’ to include Japan and Australia.** Australia, realizing its importance, has become an active member of the IOR Association. There is still great scope to enhance bilateral and multilateral defence cooperation with Japan and Australia.

(f) India can be an enabler to integrate the economies of the West, Central, and East Asia. Aligning with the US has enormous economic and strategic security-related benefits along with attendant costs and risks.

(g) **With respect to China, India needs to enhance ‘Economic Cooperation and Strategic Engagement’ at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels to build adequate economic leverages.** India has emerged as the seventh largest export destination for China. India-China trade is skewed in favor of China. The bilateral trade with China in 2016-17 was around $ 85.00 billion with India’s exports to China being $ 17.00 billion and China’s exports to India is 68.10 billion. India’s exports are basically raw and intermediate products while China’s exports are manufactured items to meet the growing demand for huge sectors like power and telecom. There is a scope for India to enhance its exports to China from the present approximate $2.4 billion to $5.00 billion per month. **Enhancing economic relationship with China opens up avenues of cooperation which could be extended to mitigate areas of confrontation.**

(h) **Establish a regional and security cooperative mechanism with the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) countries for maritime security.** China’s development of blue water naval capabilities and availability of bases affords it the ability to challenge India’s interests in the IOR. India-China rivalry in the IOR to control the sensitive sea lines of communication is likely to intensify; India’s engagements with littoral states thus have great significance.

(i) India needs to gradually expand defence cooperation and engagement with Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam and Cambodia in the fields of military training and arms transfers. India should assist in developing its defence capabilities so as to be seen as a ‘balancing force’ to China by these countries.

(j) **With respect to Pakistan, India’s diplomatic approach should focus on imposing economic sanctions against Pakistan by countries and financial institutions that are critical for sustaining its economy.** India should convince
the USA, Japan, European countries which are the major stakeholders of the International Monetary Fund to suspend the bail-out economic packages to Pakistan till it shows substantial verifiable measures to curb terrorism sponsorship. India should **endeavor to put Pakistan in the Blacklist of Financial Action Task Force (FATF)**.

**River Waters Management**

There is scope for India to consider using the following provisions of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) to deter Pakistan from indulging in cross-border terrorism when required: -

(a) **Suspend the meetings of the Permanent Indus Commission.** The treaty provides for a three-stage grievance redress mechanism - disputes first to be raised at a meeting (twice a year). If unresolved, the dispute to be referred to a neutral expert appointed by the World Bank. If that fails, they can apply for arbitration by the UN’s Court of arbitration. If the first stage of dispute redressal is suspended, the other two cannot kick in. This leads to a dead-end for Pakistan.

(b) **Restart the Tulbul Project** which was suspended in 1987 after Pakistan objected. Restarting the project will enable India to control the waters of the Jhelum river which will adversely affect Pakistan agriculture. With a barrage, India can control the release of water into the Jhelum.

(c) India grossly underutilizes its entitlement of water provided in the IWT. The treaty allows 1.3 million acres of irrigation, but India is utilizing only 0.8 million acres. 18,000 MW hydel power can be generated but only 3,034 MW has been developed. While projects for developing another 11,406 MW are under consideration/construction, there is still scope for developing 4,160 MW.

(d) **India needs to hasten up infrastructure development for water management within J&K and fully utilize its allotted quota of water under the IWT**, thereby preventing its flow into Pakistan unharnessed.

(e) India should consider assisting Afghanistan in building dams on the Kabul River and its tributary, the Kunar River whose waters flow into Pakistan.

(f) With relation to China, India should pursue a higher level of hydrological cooperation.
**Structure and Organization**

The capability building to achieve deterrence and taking a decision for war when a crisis erupts cannot be considered in isolation to each other. There is a need to strengthen the existing apex level institutional CCS mechanism incorporating the lessons learned from past experience and to keep pace with the dynamism of world realities and warfare changes. The following are recommended:

(a) **CDS.** In an era of greater integration of military power with the politico-diplomatic domain and need of joint war-fighting capabilities, the appointment of CDS or a permanent chairman of COSC is essential. The NSA, as Chairman of DPC, in the revamped NSC structure has been made responsible to coordinate, approve and determine major procurement, defence engagements and budgetary allocations. These tasks were earlier performed by the Defence Secretary and the Defence Minister. The NSA would be deprived of the expert single-point advice of the CDS that is required for determining major procurement, defence engagements and budgetary allocations. This is a subject of expert domain knowledge that may not be within the expertise of NSA, who should focus on coordination and approval aspects with other ministries. The NSA assuming the role of CDS in the revamped security structure seems to have scuttled the appointment of CDS at least for the time being. This should be rectified.

(b) **Deputy NSA.** Out of the three Deputy NSAs in the revamped security structure, there should be one Dy NSA from the services background to provide expert domain advice on external security requirements of the Armed Forces in policy formulation and decision-making process at the apex level.

(c) **Integration with MoD.** The MoD should be integrated with Service HQs as lateral offices and not its attached offices and accordingly, the rules of business between the Ministry and Service HQs should be modified. The accountability, responsibility, and authority should rest with the Service Chiefs. At present, the defence of India is the prime responsibility of Defence Secretary, who is a career bureaucrat and lacks expert knowledge and experience. The service chiefs, responsible for countering external aggression have no authority. The CDS/
service chiefs must be given the authority along with responsibility and included in the MoD as lateral offices.

(d) **Civil-Military Disconnect.** The civil-military disconnect continues to afflict the smooth functioning of the MoD impacting the operational preparedness and morale of the forces. **The civilian control should not be interpreted as bureaucratic control, which is detrimental to the service interests.** The perceptual gap between the two, due to inherent antipathy, if not bridged may prove damaging as was seen in the 1962 War. The civil officers should be engaged with the functioning of armed forces in the field and attend important military courses in greater numbers. The Defence Secretary, who is responsible for the defence of the country should attend the Command level wargames to become aware of the operational plans and challenges that impact the operational preparedness. Similarly, the military personnel, given their expertise and domain knowledge, should adequately staff MoD appointments to facilitate faster decision-making in procurement issues instead of the files shifting numerous times between the MoD and service HQs. Selected service officers can be posted to the External Affairs, Home and others ministries (where relevant) for immediate military advice and liaison. There should be no insulation of the military within the government.

(e) **Theatre Commands.** Tri-services integrated theatre commands should be planned in a phased manner. Vital security aspects like air space management, cyber-warfare, intelligence, satellite imagery, and surveillance and common requirements of logistics must be worked out jointly among the three-services and coordinated with the concerned civil agencies.

(f) **Integrated Planning.** The national security mechanism should embrace cross-domain synergy with all the national security agencies and should encompass the following:

(i) Synchronize the strengthening of capability-building at all levels by the judicious allocation of national security resources for a long-term perspective.

(ii) Undertake integrated action involving a comprehensive approach for effective coordination and integration amongst all government departments and agencies, Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) and other
stakeholders so that all instruments of the Nation’s Grand Strategy are always maintained inter-woven at all times in peace and during the war. Diplomatic, Economic and Military actions should work complementarily to achieve National Security Objectives.

(iii) Develop integrated war-prevention and war-fighting strategies, based on interoperability between forces.

(iv) Coordinate the development of the technological capability to cater for non-contact warfare threats. Adversaries, including terrorist groups, have made significant progress in the cyber domain with the likelihood of future wars being fought to a large extent in cyberspace. The levels of sophistication used even by terror outfits such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS in their overall cyber operations are more complex than most countries can handle. Precision targeting and stealth cyber weapons are being used in espionage and other disruptive activities. The possibility of cyber terrorists crippling India’s growing digital infrastructure has increased exponentially. The ever-increasing use of the cyber domain has given rise to a new series of cyber risks. Such advanced threats to national security require effective technical counter capability.

Empowerment of Leadership

The most important determinant in decision making for any war is the political leader. The course of any war would always be unpredictable and attainment of political objectives uncertain. There is a need to empower the political leader in decision-making and strengthen the process in an institutionalized manner. Following merits attention: -

(a) The Combined Army Commanders Conference conducted annually and attended by the PM should be utilized by the service chiefs to highlight the state of operational preparedness in terms of war-waging potential. The scope of this meeting could be enhanced to include selected members of the CCS as well as other ministries/ departments involved in developing indigenous defence projects.

(b) A politico-diplomatic-military wargame should be conducted every two years to prognosis the probability of any crisis or contingencies having the potential to
erupt or develop into conflict/ war-type scenarios along the borders and the hinterland. Some of the advanced countries are following this system.

(c) A similar exercise could be undertaken annually or every two years by any designated think tank, independently to the CCS, to be attended by the service chiefs also to examine the views of other important ministries that effect war-waging potential. The briefing should encompass highlighting the dynamics of decisions taken by the leadership in the past.

(d) The Standing Committee of Parliament on defence should give the progress of various macro procurement projects that impact operational preparedness during the Budget session.

Deterrence is a multi-faceted concept that is imperative for the security and development of the nation. It is better than going to war. A successful deterrence encompasses a well-synchronized integration and application of all determinants of comprehensive national power. Military and nuclear capability are pivotal for deterrence against the war. The capability building process that translates into deterrence against war is constrained due to a number of factors. As decision for war is a function of political resolve and military capability, the latter should empower and not inhibit the political leadership for rational decision making. India’s apex decision-making mechanism has evolved over a period of time and functions quite efficiently during crisis and war situations but there is considerable scope for improvement during peace-time functioning that in turn will further enhance smooth functioning during war.