INDIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

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PREFACE

National Security is an all-encompassing term that includes the protection of a nation and its citizens from a range of multi-dimensional threats and coercion. The overwhelming scope of a strategy to deal with these threats in a fast-evolving national and international landscape is sometimes a hindrance in formalising a ‘National Security Strategy'. However, a well-defined National Security Strategy is also a clear vision of the path that a nation should take in the pursuit of attaining its national objectives. It also provides a guide for all organs of the state on the policy directions that they should follow.

The lack of a formal National Security Strategy for India has been the subject of some criticism among the strategic community. Therefore, the initiative by the Indian National Congress to commission this report deserves credit. This report will generate a broader discussion and help refine the contours of India’s National Security Strategy.

In preparing this report, we neither ignore the strength of India's growing power nor the difficulties that shackle us from achieving our real potential. We live in a time of considerable uncertainty, but what is certain is that the choices we make today will define our future place in the world.

Each period in history comes with its unique set of challenges. We have attempted to suggest solutions to the security risks that India faces today. We do not seek to dissect history and dig into past missteps. We look to the future to see how it could be shaped to build a safer and more prosperous India.

The preparation of this report owes a lot to the wisdom of many respected and experienced practitioners in the fields of governance, diplomacy, defence, internal security, intelligence, economics, media, and social sciences. Without their support, this report would not have been possible. However, the final copy is my work, and any shortfall rests on my shoulders.

Lt Gen D S Hooda (Retd)

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INTRODUCTION

The framing of a National Security Strategy must necessarily start with an examination of India's security objectives. At the heart of this are the people of India and the character of the Indian state. India is home to one-sixth of the world's humanity, and its people aspire for a prosperous and safe future in which they can pursue their dreams without fear. This requires the state to create a conducive external and internal environment in which India occupies its due place in world affairs, is shielded from global and regional risks, and lives in peace.

India's ancient history of cultural assimilation, her harmonious diversity, and our Constitution are strong guiding factors for a vision of the course that India must take. In achieving this vision, there are significant challenges. We are still home to more than 47 million people living in extreme poverty; we rate below the global average in gender equality, and our income inequality is among the highest in the world. Unless these trends are reversed, we cannot achieve real security.

We are mindful of the uncertain geopolitical environment in the world, threats of transnational terrorism, and our troubled neighbourhood. Globalisation is under pressure, and restrictive trade practices buffet the international landscape. The rise of nationalism is constraining migration flows and leading to policies of insulation and protectionism. This could have a serious impact on developing economies like India.

We live in an uneasy neighbourhood. To our west and north, India has unsettled borders that could be a flashpoint for future conflicts, to our east there is a potential danger of refugee influx, and to our south is the Indian Ocean that is becoming an arena for strategic rivalry. There are continuing internal conflicts in parts of India that are increasingly playing out in social media with the prospective danger of dividing communities.

To ensure a secure and stable India that can guarantee safety and prosperity to its people, India's national security objectives could be defined as:

- Protecting India's national sovereignty.

- Securing the territorial integrity of India.
- Promoting India's rise to its rightful place in international affairs.
- Ensuring a peaceful internal environment within India.
- Creating a climate for our citizens that is just, equitable, prosperous, and shields them from risks to life and livelihood.

Flowing from these objectives are the tenets of our Security Strategy. These tenets lay down our fundamental approach to achieving holistic national security for India. These are, **Assuming our Rightful Place in Global Affairs, Achieving a Secure Neighbourhood, Peaceful Resolution of Internal Conflicts, Protecting our People, and Strengthening our Capabilities.**

This National Security Strategy describes the path towards achievement of the fundamentals listed above. No strategy comes without risks and uncertainties, but the start point must be a clarity on the direction that we take.

ASSUMING OUR RIGHTFUL PLACE IN GLOBAL AFFAIRS

A Strategic Global Scan

Great Power Rivalry

The current global strategic landscape is marked by a growing polarisation among the major powers - China, Russia, and the United States (US). The primary drivers of this polarisation are not ideological, but political and economic in nature. Individual major powers are attempting to assert their national sovereignty by prioritising their unilateral policies over commitment to international cooperation. This strikes at the very heart of the structure of international relations created after the Second World War.

The US has imposed sanctions against Russia for violating US laws against corrupt business practices in 2012, over Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, and, more recently, allegations of Russian involvement in cyber measures to influence the outcome of the US Presidential elections of 2016.

Russia has reciprocated with symbolic sanctions against the US and the European Union (EU), arguing that NATO's eastward expansion is contrary to the understanding that Russia had reached with the West for the reunification of Germany and the end of the Cold War in 1989. Russia's "Greater Eurasia" initiative of June 2016 seeks to reconstruct some of the former Soviet Union's inter-linkages through the creation of a Eurasian Economic Union bringing together Russia, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, and Belarus.

As China grows more powerful, its relationship with the US is becoming more tense. The US is in a trade war with China to lower tariffs on US exports and on alleged violations of US intellectual property rights. At the regional level, the US has unveiled an "Indo-Pacific" strategy spearheaded by its Indo-Pacific Command (earlier Pacific Command) based in Hawaii. The objective of this strategy is to contain China in East and Southeast Asia.

On its part, China has launched an ambitious "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI). The BRI seeks to enhance China's dominance in economic relations with a vast number of countries,

including many considered to be in the traditional spheres of influence of the US, EU, and Russia. While Russia and China have expanded their bilateral relations, the two powers are still wary of each other in strategic areas such as Central Asia and the Far East, where their interests compete.

One result of great power rivalry has been the weakening of the moral framework for fighting global terrorism, with geopolitics and national interests becoming the dominant factor. The US entry into Iraq in 2003 led to a complete destabilisation of the Middle East and the creation of the Islamic State. The US-Russia competition in Syria has little to do with fighting terrorism but more to assert themselves in the region. In the process, they have directly and indirectly aided various terror groups. The Saudi Arabia intervention in Yemen is a manifestation of the larger Shia-Sunni conflict. Apart from the horrific humanitarian cost, one consequence of this conflict has been the strengthening of the al Qaeda in Yemen.

Retreat of Multilateralism

In terms of international peace and security, the most significant impact of this polarisation among the major powers has been on the effectiveness of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The permanent membership of the five powers of the UNSC was justified in 1945 by their assertion of a special privilege for policing the world. The breakdown of international peace and security, with over 68.5 million people displaced by violent conflict around the globe, illustrates the ineffectiveness of the UNSC vividly. This has implications for international cooperation beyond peace and security, both for upholding fundamental human rights and freedoms, as well as for achieving sustainable development.

The rise of nationalism in politics is being witnessed across the world and is reflected in election results in diverse countries. These include major powers such as the US, Russia, France, and China. The nationalist sentiment is geared to prevent a perceived erosion of national identity and is strongest in homogenous societies. However, nationalism in pluralistic societies has also become an important political factor, which often uses economic issues for political purposes. There is an inherent confrontation between the policy of insulation and protectionism, spearheaded by nationalism, and the policy of integration and expansion, represented by globalisation.

Rising inequalities in income levels, which is related to the way policies of globalisation have

been implemented, have fed into nationalist sentiment, creating policies that seek to target the competitive advantage of trading nations through political rather than economic measures. The “tariff wars” initiated by the US Administration under President Trump, and the response to these by the affected countries, illustrates this phenomenon.

In this context, a major issue that has been debated at the multilateral level in the United Nations is the impact of migration on both nationalism and globalisation. In December 2018, the United Nations adopted a non-binding Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration at a special meeting in Marrakesh, Morocco. This inter-governmental agreement is aimed at "fostering greater international cooperation to better address the complex situation facing the world's 258 million migrants — 3.4 percent of its population". At the same time, the agreement reaffirmed the "States' sovereign rights to determine their national migration policies and to govern migration within their jurisdictions."

The Middle East and North Africa

The current situation in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) has its origins in the “Arab Spring” movement of 2011. Seen widely as an attempt to empower ordinary citizens of Arab states from Tunisia to Libya, Egypt and Syria, the movement fractured within a short period. In broad terms, the attempt to empower ordinary citizens in the MENA through street demonstrations has resulted in unexpected volatility across the region, with varying outcomes.

Festering sectarian confrontation between the Sunni and Shia groups in the Middle East, which emerged from the devastation of the Iraq War, has spread into Syria and the Gulf. The dominance of the Shias in Iraqi politics is linked with the rise of violent extremism and terrorism among Iraq’s Sunni population. Saudi Arabia has mobilised military action against alleged Shia militancy of the Houthi tribes in Yemen, accusing Iran of supporting them. Israel has re-energised its campaign against Iran as the instigator of instability in the region and called for economic and military action against Iran for alleged nuclear weapons proliferation. The activities of pro-Assad groups in Syria, and Hezbollah in Lebanon are perceived by Israel as proxies of Iran, acting in coordination with Hamas in Palestine.

Volatility in the Middle East will be impacted by the approach of the major powers and countries like Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and

India towards Iran. The division between the US and its European allies on implementing the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action to deal with concerns on Iran's nuclear weapons ambitions will be tested on the ground by the effectiveness of US unilateral sanctions on Iran, especially in the financial services sector. Iran's geographic location in terms of hosting alternative North-South connectivity links to existing maritime links between Asia and Europe and the dependence of Japan, India, and China on Iran's energy exports will play a significant role in the response to calls to isolate Iran.

The role and influence of external powers like the US, Russia, and China in the current situation in the Middle East is determined by their individual domestic interests. The US appears to have recalibrated its support for democracy in the Middle East and is now guided by the alignment of US economic interests in the oil sector and its strategic defence cooperation with the Middle East powers like Israel, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Kuwait.

Following the deployment of its military assets in Syria in support of the government of President Assad, Russia has used the crisis in Syria to re-establish its credentials as a power-broker in the region. This proactive engagement in Syria has enabled Russia to establish an ongoing dialogue with other major Middle Eastern powers, including Saudi Arabia and Turkey, which impacts on Russian foreign policy interests in Iran and Afghanistan.

China activated its foreign policy interests in the Middle East by casting its veto with Russia in the UNSC on the Syrian issue from October 2011 onwards. So far, China has cast four vetoes on the Syria issue, which is remarkable for a regime that has used its veto privilege sparingly in the United Nations. However, since 2015, China has opted to abstain rather than align with Russia, which is indicative of both a reappraisal by new Chinese leadership under President Xi Jinping of China's position, as well as positioning China as a bridge in a revived Cold War confrontation between the US and Russia. With more than 45% of its oil imports being sourced from the Middle East, China has sought to insulate its energy interests through this nuanced position.

Navigating the Global Space

A Global Role

India has benefited from international cooperation in transforming herself since her independence in August 1947. The linkage

between security and development, including upholding human rights and freedoms, is intrinsic to India's experience. Many of India's major security partners have responded to this experience, recognising India's credentials as a reliable international partner.

Today, when nationalist and protectionist sentiments threaten international cooperation in many countries across the world, India must become a leading player supporting the benefits of international cooperation. This can be achieved through proactive diplomacy to create partnerships, both regionally and globally, to give shape to many other countries that share India's aspirations.

Two areas which India should prioritise in expanding her diplomatic influence and establishing her place among the leading powers of the 21st century are:

- Creating an equitable and inclusive digital world, where advances of technology are secured to sustain development. This requires India to lead the adoption of a people-centric digital society, building on her own national experience of Digital India.
- Providing an intellectual dimension to international cooperation, which will enable an inclusive and forward-looking vision to the way in which the world will evolve during the 21st century. India's core civilisational values (Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam) will play a significant part in catalysing such a role for India.

As a country with growing geopolitical and economic influence, India must also ensure that she has a place in all decision-making structures of international relations. This includes the UNSC whose decisions have a direct impact on India's core national interests. India's case in attempting to list Masood Azhar in the sanctions list of the UNSC Resolution 1267 against al Qaida/Taliban is well known. Unless India is permanently represented in the Council as an equal member, its national security interests will not be adequately addressed.

Bilateral Engagements

India must engage with other nations confidently in a multi-polar framework, based primarily on her own national interests. The forging of partnerships and alliances must be based on a clear understanding of geopolitical

realities and the fact that the rules-based international order is under pressure.

Relations with the US must be nurtured on our shared commitment to democratic values and mutual respect. Our divergent definitions of the Indo-Pacific strategic framework should be harmonised as a priority. Trade and investment relations should be placed on a predictable and secure basis, underwritten by internationally agreed trade laws. The links between ordinary people of India and the US, including the large Indian diaspora, must be strengthened so that they can help both countries connect more closely with each other.

Relations with Russia must be pursued on their own merit to sustain the privileged and strategic partnership between the two countries. Russia's existing participation in India's manufacturing, energy and defence production sectors should be expanded, as must India's participation in Russia's economic activities, including in Russia's Far East and the Indo-Pacific. Priority must be given to expanding people-to-people interaction, including in the media, cultural, scientific and technological areas.

Relations with China must be calibrated with care, based on the principle of reciprocity. The border dispute must be resolved through political will, based on technical discussions that have taken place between the two countries so far. India must seek greater participation in China's services economy and negotiate the early removal of non-tariff barriers to exports of Indian products.

Relations with other major powers like France, the United Kingdom and Germany must be developed on the principle of equality. With these European powers, India would need to activate a diplomatic initiative to meet the post-Brexit situation in Europe, in order to safeguard her political, economic and consular interests.

The focus on an India-Middle East narrative must be anchored on our shared strategic interests in energy, trade, culture and security in the western Indo-Pacific region. India should consolidate her profile with major Middle Eastern powers like Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and UAE while maintaining a strategic dialogue with individual countries in the region. In addressing issues connected with countering violent extremism, India's dialogue with her Middle Eastern partners should focus on preventing any attempt to include India in sectarian issues, especially the Shia-Sunni divide.

Pakistan blocks India's land movement towards the west. India must find an alternative to bypass Pakistan, and in this Iran will play a key role. It is a strategically located country that provides warm water ports for the Central Asian states, westward access to the Indian trade, and entry into Afghanistan via the Chabahar Port. India's engagement with Iran may bring up some differences with the US, but our strategic interests must be clearly explained.

Relations with Japan, South Korea, and Australia should focus both on synergising investments and technology, as well as enhancing security cooperation. Relations with emerging powers in Africa and Latin America should be strengthened with new dialogue platforms for strategic discussions on peace, security, and development.

ACHIEVING A SECURE NEIGHBOURHOOD

A Troubled Neighbourhood

South Asia remains one of the most troubled regions of the world. Violent conflict rages on in Afghanistan, with the UN Mission recording 3804 civilian deaths in 2018, the highest count since 2009. The withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan could result in an upsurge in fighting and increased refugee inflows into neighbouring countries. Regional powers will jockey for influence in Afghanistan, increasing instability.

Pakistan's hostility towards India remains unabated. Despite its problem of severe political and economic weakness, Pakistan continues to sponsor terrorism as a state policy. Growing Indian impatience and a strong response to terror incidents have the potential for escalating to a war-like situation.

The rise of China and its growing assertiveness poses the most significant long-term challenge to India. An unsettled border provides China the opportunity for selective provocation at a time of their choosing. The Himalayan barrier, which separated South Asia from China, has been flattened by massive infrastructure development along our northern borders. Road links from the north have also been extended into Pakistan, Nepal, and Myanmar.

China has not been a traditional naval power but is now increasing its presence in the Indian Ocean, across which flow not only Chinese oil but also raw materials sourced from Sub-Saharan Africa. It is developing the Gwadar port in Pakistan, has taken over the operation of Hambantota port in Sri Lanka and operationalised the gas and oil pipelines from Myanmar's Kyaukpyu port to Kunming. Using its economic strength, China is today the largest trading partner of Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Myanmar.

However, we must also not underestimate our opportunities. India's economic growth can be a driver for greater prosperity in South Asia and lead to enhanced regional cooperation. Chinese influence in Southeast Asia is coming under some strain due to maritime disputes and ethnic tensions. Military expenditures in ASEAN remain

consistently high, in part due to China's growing power. Wary of falling in China's debt trap, many countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, Nepal, Bangladesh, and even Pakistan have pulled out of major development projects with China. Many of these countries look towards India as a balance to China.

Ensuring Regional Security

Engaging China

Future strategic rivalry between China and India is a certainty, and a successful trading partnership cannot overcome the reality of this competition. The manner in which our relationship is handled will define the geopolitics of not only South Asia but also of the larger continent of Asia. In suggesting our future approach, we neither ignore China's comprehensive national power and its great power ambitions, nor India's potential strength.

India desires a peaceful relationship with China. However, India's core interests cannot be compromised, and these interests are the integrity of our borders, our stance on terrorism and our sensitivities in the South Asian and Indian Ocean regions.

The ongoing border talks are achieving no major breakthroughs and focus of negotiations must shift to accurately defining the Line of Actual Control (LAC). This too is a complicated task but if successful, will go a long way in preventing the occurrence of flashpoints like Depsang, Chumar, and Dokalam. Meanwhile, India must be prepared to strongly contest any incursion of our perception of the LAC that breaches the norms laid down in the *Border Defence Cooperation Agreement* between our two countries.

Over the last ten years, PLA Navy flotillas in the Indian Ocean have become more capable with the deployments extending for longer durations. Unlike the agreements governing the handling of incidents along the LAC, no formal mechanism is in place to discuss details of how a situation at sea can be de-escalated, and what rules of engagement must be laid down for military commanders at sea.

Given the increasing dependence on maritime trade, India and China have much at stake in maintaining peace and harmony, both in the Indian Ocean Region and the South China Sea. There is, therefore, a need to facilitate regular dialogue between the two navies wherein sensitive issues could be discussed, leading to a bilateral 'Framework for an India China Naval Engagement' that is similar to the Border Defence Cooperation Agreement.

China's stance on terrorism emanating from Pakistan has not only been disappointing but strikes at the heart of India's national security. This must be conveyed in clear terms in all our dealings with the Chinese government. China's acceptance of this concern will strengthen relations between the two countries.

India-China relations do not have to be viewed only in terms of a long-term strategic rivalry. There are many areas of cooperation. As growing economies, the two countries share comparable challenges, aspirations and development goals. India is a growing market for China with bilateral trade in 2017 being over $84 Billion. A more balanced trade will be in the interest of both countries.

India and China have similar views on free trade and globalisation. Restrictive trade practices and a retreat of developed economies from globalisation could impact the economies of both countries. Environmental concerns are another common area. A 2016 Pew poll found that 50 percent of the Chinese were willing to trade growth for cleaner air. The same problem plagues India. These are the growing demands of the people that have to be met by the respective governments. Growing cooperation in the field of environment could be subsequently expanded to include the issue of sharing the water of rivers originating from Tibet.

As confidence grows between the two countries, some of China's security concerns could also be assuaged. China is highly sensitive to the flow of imports through the Indian Ocean and is, therefore, pursuing alternative road corridors through Pakistan and Myanmar. At a future stage, India could offer access to China through Indian ports, though this will entirely depend on China's willingness to show an understanding of our core interests.

Dealing with Pakistan

India-Pakistan relations are at a new low. Pakistan's attempts to bring India to the negotiating table by destabilising Kashmir have not only failed but also hardened India's stance. The events following the Pulwama bombing have established new redlines in India's response to terror flowing from Pakistan. The international support to India's airstrikes at Balakot has also reinforced our policy on cross-border operations. However, there is also no doubt that military actions carry the risk of escalation and this needs to be factored into our future plans.

There is a need to have a sustained and long-term strategy to build consistent pressure on

Pakistan to desist from supporting terror. Diplomacy and economic isolation will play a large part in this strategy. Pakistan's role in nurturing terrorism is increasingly being condemned by nations around the world, and combined with its economic woes, it can be induced to crack down on terror organisations. When required, India must also be prepared for unilateral, limited military actions against terror groups in Pakistan.

India must also not rule out dialogue with Pakistan. However, talks with Pakistan must be structured, and further progress must be based on visible results. Confidence building measures cannot be pursued if there is a daily flare-up on the borders and infiltration continues. India and Pakistan must also seriously engage on nuclear issues. Nuclear sabre rattling by Pakistan is a major hindrance to stability in South Asia.

Afghanistan

India has major strategic interests in a peaceful resolution of the Afghanistan conflict. However, such a resolution is looking increasingly unlikely. India has always supported an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned process of peace and reconciliation, but both the US and Russia are currently engaging in direct talks with the Taliban. Despite this, India must not compromise on its position and get drawn into supporting the Taliban.

The US, Russia, Iran, and China have their own strategic interests in dealing with the Taliban. Our strategic interests do not lie in abandoning the years of goodwill created with the Afghan people and the government. This will require a patient and well-thought-out approach and greater proactivity than shown in the past.

Cooperation in the Neighbourhood

Our South Asian neighbourhood, with deep historical, cultural and economic links, should have been an area where India's leadership and growth resulted in the well-being of all the people of this region. Our relations with our neighbours, barring Pakistan, are strong but often dependent on the political dispensation in that country. This has enabled China to increase its influence in the region.

Enduring relations will come about if mutual interests can be better aligned. India must make better use of its soft power, significantly improve road and rail connectivity, and increase regional trade. Easing the movement of people for education, commerce and tourism should not be viewed from the narrow prism of

security but as a way of drawing the region together. Common cause can be made of issues like climate change that seriously affect all the countries.

Due to India-Pakistan tensions, SAARC is slowly losing its value. In its place, greater energy should be devoted to groupings like the Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal (BBIN) initiative and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC). India's Act East policy and relations with ASEAN countries should be strengthened. However, India will only be considered seriously if it enhances its credibility by visible actions. The India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway, conceived in 2002, will only be completed by 2020. The Imphal-Mandalay bus service, which had a trial run in 2015, has not yet commenced. Along with improving connectivity, institutional measures must be put in place to ease the flow of goods and services.

Indian Ocean Region

The primary objective of our maritime security strategy is to deter conflict and coercion against India. The Indian navy contributes to shaping a positive maritime environment and is formally mandated to be the net provider of maritime security to the smaller states in the Indian Ocean.

As India looks beyond its primary areas of interest to the Western Pacific, and China increases its maritime footprint into the Indian Ocean, the growing rivalry between the Asian giants could cause anxiety amongst the smaller countries of the region. A start point should be the enunciation of an Indian Ocean strategy to help the littoral states perceive our point of view.

We should move towards strengthening maritime cooperation and security. Formal mechanisms that could influence maritime governance include the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), Western Pacific Naval Symposium (WPNS) and the Djibouti Code of Conduct. An effort must be made to expand IORA's membership to include all the littoral countries. The IONS should be empowered by giving it a permanent secretariat and should attempt to strike a formal relationship with the WPNS to knit an Indo-Pacific maritime construct.

The Indian navy has considerable capacity for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR). However, while we have the

wherewithal, the means to coordinate multinational HADR operations are absent. Commissioning of an HADR coordination centre with representation from other countries would help in building confidence amongst nations of the littoral.

With a continuous overlapping of the footprints of international navies, it is also time that India led an initiative to conclude a 'Code for Unalerted Encounters at Sea' encompassing the entire Indo-Pacific. It is customary for a navy to mark its presence to an outsider to assert jurisdiction, but a rush of adrenalin during such unplanned encounters has the propensity to spiral into nationalistic displays and could lead to unpredictable situations.

PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF INTERNAL CONFLICTS

Internal conflicts are a grave danger to national security, imposing enormous economic, political, human and social costs. India's struggle with insurgencies began soon after independence, and it has had its share of successes in dealing with these movements, but challenges remain, particularly in Jammu and Kashmir, the North East and Left-Wing Extremism.

The threat from transnational terror groups like the al Qaeda and the Islamic State may currently be limited, but it cannot be ignored. In September 2014, al Qaeda announced the setting up of al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS). A month later, AQIS published the first issue of its magazine *Resurgence*, which focused on the plight of Muslims in South Asia and called for Jihad. On 26 January 2015, The Islamic State announced its expansion into *Wilayat Khorasan*. They have released videos calling for avenging the demolition of Babri Masjid and killing of Muslims in various parts of India.

A peaceful resolution of internal conflicts will significantly boost our security, enabling our people to live in harmony and fully utilise the benefits of India's growth. It will also lessen opportunities for inimical forces to exploit our fault lines and impede our progress.

Jammu and Kashmir

After almost three decades of conflict, Jammu and Kashmir remains India's biggest internal security challenge. Violence has significantly dipped from its peak in 2001 that saw over 4500 deaths in the state. However, from a low in 2012, there has been a steady increase in violence levels in the past six years.

There are two key factors responsible for the continuing strife in Jammu and Kashmir. The first is the constant support of Pakistan to terror activities in the state. From 2013 onwards, Pakistan-based terror groups have intensified their attacks on security forces camps and convoys. Ceasefire violations by Pakistan have jumped from 114 in 2012 to 2140 in 2018. These ceasefire violations are a clear attempt by Pakistan to vitiate the security environment and assist the infiltration of terrorist groups.

Following the Pulwama attack on the Central Reserve Police Force convoy, and Indian airstrikes on the Balakot terror camp, there was a period of extreme tension between India and Pakistan. While the crisis has currently been defused, it is far from clear whether Pakistan will scale down its support to Kashmir-specific terror organisations.

The second factor fuelling the conflict is the sense of anger and alienation among sections of the population in Kashmir valley. This is exacerbated by growing radicalisation, and the separatists exploiting the narrative of the Kashmiri identity being under threat. Street protests have become common, and there is regular interference by civilians in military operations, leading to rising civilian casualties.

Another worrying trend is the rise in number of local youths joining terror ranks. Local recruitment has jumped from 16 in 2013 to almost 200 in 2018. Poorly trained and equipped, these local terrorists are no match for the army, but their funerals attract thousands of mourners and become a recruiting ground for more youth to pick up the gun.

This conflict plays out daily on social media and has resulted in a growing emotional divide that leads to further alienation of the community. This divide is also visible within the state, particularly between the Jammu and Kashmir regions.

There are also some positives. The Jammu region has remained mostly free from resident terrorists, and even the Muslim-majority areas do not show support for terrorism. The army's posture along the Line of Control has ensured that infiltration into the state from Pakistan remains controlled, and the success of the security forces in neutralisation of terrorist leadership has ensured that the overall security situation is within control. There are also many people in Kashmir who believe that dialogue should be the primary instrument for resolving the problem.

Mainstreaming Measures

A search for solutions in Jammu and Kashmir is complex as it has both a transnational (support from Pakistan) and an internal dimension. Both dimensions need to be tackled with equal emphasis. An approach to our overall relations with Pakistan has already been outlined, and in this part, the focus is on the internal aspects of Jammu and Kashmir.

The immediate focus should be on bringing calm to the streets and reducing violence levels

in Kashmir. It is only after this that further steps can be taken for a long-term resolution to this difficult problem. And calm will come only if we deal with the people of Jammu and Kashmir with empathy and understanding. Contentious issues that could provide a trigger for more disturbances should currently be kept on the backburner, while attempts are made to arrive at a political consensus on these subjects.

There must be a clearly defined political objective that aims to mainstream Jammu and Kashmir with the rest of India. This will set into motion an "All of Government" approach that synergises the actions of various central and state agencies. This will also provide clear guidelines for the security forces to formulate their military strategy and define metrics for realistically gauging success. This will bring in the much-needed consistency in holistically dealing with the problem.

Perceptions and a fear of the future are key factors in triggering and sustaining conflict. The government must have a well-crafted information campaign that attempts to replace uncertainty and fear with hope. This needs transparent and visible actions by the government and an outreach to the people, in particular to the youth. A well-thought-out surrender and rehabilitation policy could be an effective step in reversing the growing trend of locals joining terror ranks.

Healing must begin from within the state. An intra-state dialogue among the people of Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh is essential to bridge their differences. The civil society must be encouraged to take the lead in this initiative. The vexing problem of the displaced Kashmiri Pandit community must be squarely faced to find an honourable solution. As long as any part of the population feels ignored or discriminated, it will be difficult to find appropriate answers.

Killing terrorists is an integral part of military operations to ensure that the state does not descend into chaos. However, this is not the primary measure of success or conflict-resolution. Serious efforts are required for countering radicalisation. There is a need to initiate structured programmes that bring together civil society members, family groups, educationists, religious teachers and even surrendered terrorists in an effort to roll back radicalisation.

It is the responsibility of the state to maintain law and order and act against those who resort to violence. The security forces have displayed tremendous professionalism and restraint in carrying out their task. However, they are also

paying a heavy price in deaths and injuries. They need better protective equipment, bullet-proof vehicles, counter-IED technology, surveillance and early-warning devices, and strong garrison security. These provisions must be made on priority.

The North East

The North East region has 8% of India's area and 4% of its population. Its diversity is reflected in the 475 ethnic groups that inhabit this area. The North East is connected to the India heartland only by a narrow 22 km Siliguri Corridor while sharing borders with five neighbouring countries. Each state has its own unique set of issues, but a common thread that runs through the region is a lack of development, a feeling of segregation from the rest of the country and a sense of alienation. This has led to a rise of ethnic identities that are often in conflict with each other and demand greater self-governance.

Sustained counterinsurgency operations have resulted in most insurgent groups having shunned violence or entering into ceasefire agreements with the government. However, this has not led to complete peace returning to the region. Groups like the NSCN (IM) retain their armed cadre and run a parallel government in Nagaland while other surrendered groups continue to engage in extortion. The Meitei insurgent groups have their armed wings located in Myanmar, and weak border management permits them to move into and out of Manipur with relative ease.

Integrating the North East

A resolution to the issues in the North East lies in greater development, integration and in understanding the ethnic sensitivities of the region. Our first attention must go to the vulnerability of the Siliguri Corridor. Free movement from Nepal and Bhutan and infiltration from Bangladesh could be exploited to stir up trouble. A resolution of the Gorkhaland problem would also enhance the security of the Siliguri Corridor. The issue of Gorkhaland needs to be viewed from a national security perspective and not narrow political advantages.

Major initiatives should be undertaken to address the weakness in infrastructure development in terms of road, rail, air, and water transportation systems. There is also a need to create better facilities in the fields of education, health care, and sports. Success in

India's Act East policy will also usher in higher economic activity in the region.

The resolution of the Naga insurgency would have a positive effect on the entire region. However, this problem cannot be addressed by solely talking to groups based in Nagaland. Any agreement will also have an impact on neighbouring states, particularly Manipur. It is essential that Manipur be fully integrated into finding solutions to bring a resolution to the Naga problem.

Illegal immigration is an emotive issue throughout the region and needs to be tackled with wisdom and maturity. Issues related to people who are finally excluded from the National Register of Citizens will have to be well thought-out because a large excluded population could be vulnerable to exploitation and become a security risk. The hasty introduction of legislation like the Citizenship Amendment Bill, without prior political consensus, could reignite identity fears and lead to violence.

Left Wing Extremism (LWE)

A former Prime Minister once described LWE as the "greatest internal security threat to our country." The situation has since improved considerably, and today there are 106 LWE affected districts in 10 states with 35 most affected LWE districts in 7 states. This success can be attributed to the holistic approach of the Anti-Naxalite Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs that focuses on inter-state coordination, development schemes, and in addressing grievances of affected communities such as protection of forest rights and providing livelihood opportunities for youth.

Notwithstanding the improvement in the situation, the Maoists remain a potent threat. Their intelligence system is effective, as is the network of over-ground activist 'fellow-travellers'. They show thoroughness in attack and ambush planning, have carried out deadly IED attacks, and are ruthless with police informers and all those who oppose them. Using couriers and cut-outs to avoid compromising communications, their security systems are strictly enforced. 'Tax' collection from 'compradors' engaged in mining, road construction, tendu leaf purchase etc in areas under their influence provides annual funds that are estimated to be over Rs 1000 crores.

Tackling LWE

A strategy to deal with LWE must address the root causes of the problem. The deprivation of the

Adivasi tribes, and their exploitation and displacement due to large-scale mining feeds discontentment. Development schemes have not been able to adequately rehabilitate the tribals since they lack the necessary skills and education. Tribal youth often feel left out of the conspicuous wealth creation generated by mining, or even in government employment. They form the bulk of the Maoist foot soldiers and field commanders. The government must address the aspirations of the tribal communities by bringing in development while respecting their traditional rights and practices. This will require visible improvement in governance, a transparent justice system, and suitable land reforms.

A serious attempt must be made to adopt a unified approach. The architecture of the Maoists cuts across state boundaries and is bound by a common political philosophy and unitary strategy, driven by ideologically committed leaders. On the other hand, differing political perceptions is a hindrance to the adoption of an collective approach. The challenge will be to evolve a political and legal framework that enables the adoption of a unified strategy cutting across all affected states.

The security forces are doing an outstanding job but need to be strengthened in three crucial areas:

- **INTELLIGENCE.** This is the backbone of effective counter-Maoist operations. Efforts of central agencies, state, and Central Armed Police Force's (CAPF) intelligence units need to be coordinated to be able to build up a credible picture. State police can play a crucial role in getting early warning of Maoist attacks.
- **JOINT OPERATIONS.** CAPFs have more firepower, training, and superior logistics/discipline, while state forces have better local networks. Innovative solutions need to be adopted to achieve better synergy. Adivasi youth are at home in jungle terrain and can be recruited as scouts. This will give better situational awareness while conducting operations.
- **TRAINING.** Before deploying, all personnel must meet defined benchmarks in basic skills such as marksmanship, physical fitness, tactical drills, counter-IED precautions, first aid, orientation to Maoist tactics and terrain/local culture familiarisation. Equally important, small unit cohesion and leadership skills need to be built up.

Transnational Terrorism

The success of both al Qaeda and the Islamic State in recruitment or carrying out attacks in

India has as yet remained limited. This can be credited to the vast majority of the Indian Muslim population that finds little resonance with the harsh ideology of these two groups. However, while analysing any threat, it is essential to look at both the intent and the capability. Even if the current capability is small, but the intent is strong, the latter will drive the development of the means to achieve the aim.

For transnational terror groups, the battlefield is virtual, and the objective is the individual mind. Perceptions, attitudes, and grievances, real or imaginary, are vital weapons. The Islamic State, in particular, runs a very sophisticated perception campaign. This campaign might appear abhorrent to most of us, but it has been very successful in attracting a section of Muslims from all around the world to their cause. Limited recruitment has also taken place in India.

Combating Terrorism

Tackling transnational terrorism requires a review of our structures and practices. The investigation into a terror group involves cooperation with foreign agencies, understanding and choking of financial networks, probing into the darkest spaces of cyberspace, and finally the physical ability to neutralise the target. This can only be accomplished by setting up inter-agency task forces designed to deal with specific threats. Such task forces should be formed for al Qaeda, Islamic State, Lashkar-e-Taiba, and Jaish-e-Mohammed. In addition to government functionaries, the task forces must comprise experts as required in the field of language and cyber skills.

Strategic communications and effective narratives must form an essential part of our strategy. There is a need to set up an organisation that will focus on countering the extremist narrative. This programme must target all extremist content, irrespective of religion and ideology. Focus should also be on media/social media content that can fuel radicalisation and promote divisiveness in society. This must be accompanied by structured counter-radicalisation and de-radicalisation programmes for affected youth. Local police play an important role in countering radicalisation and terrorism. The beat cop is critical in gathering intelligence, understanding the pulse of the locality and identifying youth who are vulnerable to an extremist narrative. Police must both be modernised and trained for this role.

PROTECTING OUR PEOPLE

The ultimate test of an effective national security strategy lies in its ability to protect the common woman and man. As India becomes economically stronger, the benefits must flow down to all our citizens in an equitable manner. We must also enhance our abilities to protect our people from impending risks. Some of these risks are a global phenomenon, e.g. climate change, cyber threats, and technology disruptions, while some arise from physical and social evolutions in India driven by our demography, urbanisation, and perceived inequalities. Some of these risks do not appear to pose a short-term threat and therefore tend to be ignored, but mitigation measures to minimise their impact can also not be applied in a short timeframe. These risks, if not addressed, can create a large, disaffected section of the population and confront us with a more significant challenge to our national security than external threats.

Economic Security

Any conversation about India's national security is incomplete without discussing India's economic security since this will provide the financial engine to power the resources needed to build a comprehensive strategy on national security. The strategy for economic security must protect the drivers of economic growth and reduce the vulnerabilities to India's economic progress.

MONETARY POLICY. It is critical to maintain the independence of the Reserve Bank of India and its Board, and to judge the success of the Monetary Policy not on rhetoric but by balancing the following metrics:

- Low inflation.
- A level of interest rates that provides economic stimulus without overheating the economy with too much easy money.
- Adequate liquidity to ensure the stability of the banking system.
- Economic growth to maximise employment growth.

FISCAL POLICY. The role of the Fiscal Policy in providing economic security will require the following:

- Progressive taxation and programs to promote social equality and provide economic incentives at every income level.
- Infrastructure investments to maximise economic growth and remove bottlenecks to growth.
- Social and educational training programs to promote economic mobility for the economically challenged.
- Managing national debt levels to maintain global confidence in India's ability to repay its debt and interest.

REDUCING VULNERABILITIES. Building a strong base for Economic Security will also require defensive actions to reduce the vulnerabilities to India's economic engine. The key vulnerabilities and the actions to be taken are:

- Prevent devaluation of the Indian Rupee by maintaining low inflation through a rigorous monetary policy and a coordinated fiscal policy. Incentives must be provided to boost exports and reduce imports dependence, especially in oil and technology.
- Focus foreign policy to strengthen bilateral relations with the specific objective of lowering the impact of tariffs on Indian goods and accelerating corporate investments in India.
- Build a national 'Digital Security Organisation' with capabilities to defend and protect our governmental agencies, our citizens, our utility, electricity, banking, telecommunication, computer, and internet networks.
- Invest in offshore oil exploration as well as renewable energy sources to reduce India's long-term dependence on oil exports and move towards energy independence as a nation.

Climate Change and Environment

In the Climate Risk Index for the period of 1997 to 2016, published by Germanwatch, India ranks 12th in the world. Numerous reports have pointed to Indian cities being among the most polluted in the world. A United Nations Environment Programme report of January 2019 has pointed out that air pollution can alter long-term rainfall patterns in India, affecting millions of farmers. Ground level ozone pollution has reduced wheat and rice yields in India by 20 to 30 percent even as the agriculture sector has been the worst hit by rising temperatures, losing 60 billion hours of labour

due to heatwaves in 2017. The Indian Economic Survey 2018 points out that climate change might reduce farm incomes by up to 20 to 25 percent in the medium term. This would further exacerbate the ongoing farm distress.

A Niti Aayog report has stated that 600 million people are facing acute water shortage and 21 Indian cities are likely to run out of groundwater by 2020. 70 percent of India's surface water is polluted and the highest number of people without access to clean drinking water live in India. Environmental degradation comes with enormous costs in healthcare, loss of livelihood and depressed living standards, and could lead to social disturbance and violence.

The problem is not limited only to India. All countries in South Asia are at an equal or higher risk than India. The next wave of immigration into India will not be due to conflict or economic opportunities but forced by climate change.

In 2008, India adopted a National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC). However, the implementation has been tardy and needs to be accelerated. India needs to urgently put in place transformative environment policies to reduce air pollution, improve waste management, check land degradation and promote efficiency in water use. There is also a greater scope for adopting modern technology to reduce environmental degradation while continuing with sustainable development. We also need to build a strategic plan to meet the drinking and agricultural water needs of India for the next 25 years.

Climate change is responsible for extreme weather events and increases the risk of natural disasters. Despite this linkage, disaster management, climate change planning, and sectoral development are compartmentalised as separate streams in national policy-making systems. As long as disaster relief and climate change adaptation remain in different policy domains, achieving systematic, risk-informed sectoral development planning will remain elusive. There is a need to establish a structure of shared responsibility and decision-making that allows for sustained and effective coordination and consensus building between ministries and other stakeholders.

Disaster management must also move beyond a reactive approach that is focused on relief. We must implement appropriate development policies that can reduce the risks and costs of disasters. These involve the adoption of suitable regulatory and other legal measures,

institutional reform, improved analytical and methodological capabilities, education and awareness. Risk reduction should be seen as a comprehensive process that goes beyond traditional responses to the impact of individual national hazards. This process should be multi-sectoral and interdisciplinary in nature and include a wide range of interrelated activities at the local, national, regional and international levels.

Demographic Pressures

India is a country of young people, and its demographic window of opportunity goes on till 2050. However, this opportunity will not automatically translate into a dividend unless there is sustained economic growth that is equitable and creates opportunities for all. There is much debate about data on job growth and the annual requirement of jobs, but what is not in doubt is that in India, unemployment is a major concern, gender inequality in employment is high, and vulnerable employment, without a social safety net, is pervasive. These issues need to be tackled with urgency.

Lack of opportunities in the rural areas will drive a migration of youth to urban centres. India's urban population could rise from 33 percent to 50 percent in the next 25 years. This will require major investments in smart cities, infrastructure, civic facilities, and job opportunities. If youth migrating to cities do not find adequate opportunities, they could quickly turn to crime.

We also have to seriously focus on inequality. In India, the wealthiest 1 percent own more than 50 percent of total wealth. In this age of information and understanding, the rich-poor gap has to be addressed so that it does not cause social disharmony. This will require changes in our education systems to ensure that skills being taught are aligned with market needs, providing health care for the poor, improving agriculture policies, ensuring gender equality, and equitable distribution of the gains of India's economic growth.

Technology Disruption

The world is in the midst of the 4th Industrial Revolution that is characterised by technology breakthroughs occurring with unprecedented pace. There is a blurring of the digital, biological and physical space with rapid advances in Artificial Intelligence (AI), advanced robotics, Internet of Things, quantum computing, nanotechnology, 3D printing, autonomous vehicles, and biotechnology. There are definite advantages to these technologies, but they are

also disrupting traditional patterns of employment, governance and social relations.

The most immediate impact of technology disruption could be on jobs, putting pressure on an already stressed area. The manufacturing sector will be hit as automation replaces humans, and the service sector will see the intrusion of AI. It is often said that technology also creates jobs and that India has a talent surplus in the information technology field. However, this talent is not currently aligned to requirements of cutting-edge technology, and our education and skilling systems are inadequately structured.

Technology disruption also runs the risk of increasing inequality. People without digital access are in the danger of being entirely left out of the benefits of emerging technologies. Despite the impressive growth in internet penetration, there is still a deep digital divide in India. According to a 2017 global survey by the Pew Research Centre, only one in four Indian adults uses the Internet or owns a smartphone.

Advances in biotechnology, gene editing, longevity, and performance enhancing drugs have enormous benefits for people and could significantly impact the quality of health care. However, in the short term, such technologies are likely to be available only to the wealthier sections of the population, and this could further add to a sense of marginalisation and inequality among segments of the population.

It is not difficult to predict the type of skills that would be required in the future workplace. We need to start aligning our education to focus on the kind of workers that are required for tomorrow's jobs. The industry must start a programme for reskilling its current workforce to adopt new technologies smoothly. Most importantly, the government must put in place policies that minimise the risks of technology disruption and ensure that large sections of the people are not left out of the benefits that would accrue from technology breakthroughs.

Cyber Threats

Today, the cyberspace has become central to all facets of modern human existence. That this domain has great potential for good and an equal potential for immense destruction is now evident. As 'Digital India' grows, future vulnerabilities will only increase. A 2017 study conducted by Symantec found that India ranked fourth in online security breaches, accounting for over 5% of global threat detections.

Cyber threats can manifest in many ways and affect millions of people through cybercrimes, cyber theft, data theft, and cyber intrusions There is an even greater danger if hostile powers target our critical infrastructure like communication links, transportation, energy and financial institutions, literally bringing the country to a halt. Dealing with this threat will require robust countermeasures, not only by the government but also by private companies. It is a reality that cyber defence has a cost and that many companies do not make the appropriate investment. Companies must be encouraged to report cyber intrusions honestly, and in return, the government should assist in providing them the requisite tools for securing their networks.

Another major challenge lies in the use of social media as a weaponised platform. Hostile and inimical powers will seek to sow discord amongst people, spread propaganda and weaken faith in the government. This is a form of warfare that does not require any use of force, and due to its nature, can continue to be pursued even during peace. This could cause long term damage to society and undermine trust in public institutions and democratic processes.

The vulnerability of individuals to misinformation is a result of our unprotected personal data that is being used for creating targeted messages. The Supreme Court has declared privacy as a fundamental right, but as yet there are no privacy laws governing the security of personal data. Even data stored in India is not safe as the owners of this data are the giant technology companies, mostly based in the US and not under our legal control. In September 2017, it was reported that Google has quietly stopped challenging most search warrants from US judges in which the data requested is stored on overseas servers.

There has been much debate on data localisation in India. The dangers to our social fabric in the Information Age are absolutely clear, and it is well known that our laws can only be enforced in our territorial jurisdiction. These are the primary drivers that automatically point us towards adopting a data localisation policy. The enormous economic potential that can accrue by utilisation of this data gives an added impetus to adopt such a policy.

Energy Security

In the 20th century, our primary concern was the supply of energy, particularly the supply of oil. This concern was addressed through self-sufficiency, access to sources, and development of non-fossil alternatives such as nuclear power and renewable energy.

In the 21st century, the emphasis has shifted from quantity to quality. Indian policies should now focus on three simultaneous transitions, i.e. the market transition, the low carbon transition, and the energy access transition. India's journey through these three transitions will decide the nature and direction of India's energy and economic policy trajectory in the future.

The transition that is attracting the most global attention is the low carbon transition, as it is expected to transform a coal-dependent country into one that is less so. While this transition is important, what is equally important is a transition that will increase access to modern energy sources to millions of our people who depend on traditional sources of energy such as kerosene, firewood and dried animal dung for lighting and heating.

This access transition could change the energy landscape from one of relative energy scarcity to one of energy abundance and improve the economic and technical efficiency with which energy is produced, delivered and used in India. This will happen if there is a shift from a mostly state-led energy sector to an increasingly market-led sector. The government should be a 'market facilitator,' with a concept of independent regulation that can deliver efficiency and introduce fairness based on rules, rights, and transparency.

Policy Recommendations/Initiatives

- The Government or Government Public Sector Undertaking's (PSU) role in the last mile should be minimised e.g. in the last mile retailing and distribution of fuel, LPG, natural gas, and electricity. Last mile deregulation will lead to a possible packaging of energy with other household products, thus providing value-added concepts to the consumers and industry.
- Carry out a separation of the infrastructure and energy market. In India, the three main functions of energy, i.e. energy production, energy transportation, and energy distribution are generally under the same umbrella of a PSU. For effective development of energy infrastructure, infrastructure development market should be segregated from energy producers/marketers, with a regulated third-party open access concept to ensure effective development and utilisation.
- Change in government regulation for coal-bearing land for increasing private participation in the coal sector.
- The government should consider the setting up of an independent industry

regulator for the extraction of natural resources. This will foster a holistic level playing field for private participation, ensure contract stability and speed up the resolution of any conflicts.

- Today, natural gas is about 6% of India primary energy basket compared to the world average of 24%. With the government target to increase the natural gas share to 15% by 2030, liberalisation of the gas markets in India is essential. The move towards a more diverse, flexible and liquid global gas market has important implications for investment and can bring significant benefits for India's energy security.
- Consider the development of strategic oil storage in the country with foreign equity oil. A dedicated Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) to be constructed from each oil supplier or country from where oil is imported in India, with a specific percentage of total annual supply being stored in SPR.
- Promote strategic investment by International companies in Indian mid-stream and downstream market. Investments by large international energy suppliers, along with the concept of dedicated SPR, will go a long way in mitigating supply risks.

STRENGTHENING OUR CAPABILITIES

A National Security Strategy would be incomplete if it only defines our vision and the path that we should follow, without the means to achieve our objectives. We need to strengthen our capabilities to protect our citizens and deter any adversary from threatening India's sovereignty or interfering with our strategic interests. We must take a realistic look at the weaknesses in our current structures and also gaze into the future to visualise emerging threats that will need to be countered.

Securing our Land and Maritime Borders

India has a land border of approximately 15000 km and a coastline of over 7500 km (including the island territories). The demarcated section of our land border is classified as the International Border (IB), while the disputed part of the border with Pakistan is called the Line of Control (LC), and with China is called the Line of Actual Control (LAC). The Actual Ground Position Line (AGPL) defines the position of our troops in Siachen.

The IB and LC sector in Jammu and Kashmir is highly active, with regular firing from both sides, and Pakistan supported infiltration of terrorists into India. The LAC is contested, with Indian and Chinese patrols regularly facing off over intrusions across a border that has not even been delineated. On the LAC, the massive infrastructure development in Tibet has given a significant advantage to China in most areas. Border management along the Myanmar border remains poor, and this has permitted easy movement of insurgent groups that are mostly based in Myanmar.

The Group of Ministers (GoM), set up in 2000 after the Kargil Review Committee, had then stated, "At present there are instances of more than one force working on the same border and questions of conflict in command and control have been raised frequently. Multiplicity of forces on the same border has also led to lack of accountability on the part of the forces. To enforce the accountability, the principle of 'one border one force' may be adopted while considering deployment of forces at the border."

Unfortunately, this recommendation of the GoM remains unimplemented for the LAC. The Indo-Tibetan Border Police, (ITBP) is technically responsible for this border, although it is the army that primarily responds to all border incidents and takes the lead in holding meetings and discussions with Chinese troops to resolve any dispute. Two forces operating under different ministries along an unsettled border is not a recipe for success. The best resolution of this issue is to place the ITBP under the command of the army.

The Myanmar border needs immediate focus. It is the responsibility of the Assam Rifles, and transferring this responsibility to another force like the ITBP will not automatically solve the weakness in border management. The problem of the Myanmar border is the present lack of infrastructure, and a comprehensive plan for the development of roads, fencing and posts along the border will enable the Assam Rifles to carry out its mandate effectively.

The requirement of a ‘smart fence’ that combines technology with a physical barrier is essential to check infiltration and smuggling. The Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS) is planned to be set up along the IB with Pakistan and Bangladesh. This must also be extended to the Indo-Myanmar border. The army's fence along the LC suffers extensive damage each year due to heavy snowfall. This should be replaced with a more robust, smart and all-weather solution.

The lack of roads and other infrastructure along the LAC and Indo-Myanmar border is a major handicap in effective border management. Despite the purported push to Indo-China Border Roads, there has been no significant change in the pace of road construction. According to a written reply in the Lok Sabha, the length of roads constructed along the LAC in the last three years has been 95 km, 101 km, and 103 km. Speeding up infrastructure development will require a comprehensive plan that includes restructuring and strengthening of the Border Roads Organisation, dedicated allotment of funds, the involvement of private companies, and fast-tracking of land acquisition and forest clearance cases.

After the 26/11 Mumbai attack, a number of important steps for strengthening the coastal security setup were initiated. Joint Operation Centres have been set up, coastal patrolling has been intensified, a chain of coastal radars has enhanced surveillance, and coordination between national and state agencies has improved. However, many security concerns remain.

Currently, there are 15 agencies involved in managing coastal security, and this leads to jurisdiction and coordination problems. There is a need to review existing coastal regulations and the role of different agencies, in order to streamline their functioning. The Coastal Security Bill, proposing the setting up of 'National Maritime Authority', should be passed by the Parliament. The coast guard has a key role in security and should be strengthened. There is also a need to significantly enhance the security of ports and offshore assets/ installations.

Strengthening Military Capability

Military capability is a critical component of national power. While India wants peace with her neighbours, we also cannot be oblivious to a revisionist and hostile Pakistan, the rising military power of China, and our own internal security challenges. We will only be assured of peace if we can visibly demonstrate our capability to defend our national interests through the use of force.

Future conflicts will see an increased blurring between the tactical, operational and strategic levels of war. Our military preparedness will have to cater for a range of response options from surgical strikes to an all-out conflict. Technology, information, cyber and space will increasingly gain importance, as will the requirement of smart and motivated soldiers to fight in this complex environment.

Today, there are significant capability shortfalls in the three services. Most of the army's equipment is in the vintage category, and the induction of modern weapon systems is extremely slow. The air force is faced with a reducing fighter strength and a lack of air-to-air refuelers, Airborne Early Warning and Control platforms, and trainer aircraft. The navy faces a capability gap in conventional submarines, unmanned aerial vehicles, mine countermeasures vessels, anti-submarine warfare, and naval utility helicopters.

Our current budgetary allocations for defence, tardy procurement procedures, existing force composition, and decision-making structures pose a serious challenge to force modernisation. The following measures need to be taken:

- **DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURES.** The Ministry of Defence (MoD) should become a fully integrated headquarter with the posting of service officers in the ministry. A Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) should be immediately appointed as the primary advisor to the political leadership. Together,

the integrated MoD and the CDS should oversee and coordinate the force modernisation plans of the military. The focus should be on increasing interoperability, enhancing jointness, and optimising the resources between the three services.

- **FORCE COMPOSITION.** The three services should undertake a comprehensive review of their current and future force structures to transform the army, navy and air force into an integrated warfighting force. The force composition that emerges from this review will form the basis for a capability development plan over a mid to long-term period. The review also must look at improving our technology adoption and fighting in the cyber and space domains.
- **BUDGETARY ALLOCATION.** The current system of ad-hoc budgetary allocation must be replaced by one where budgets are based on a capability development plan that has been approved by the government. This will bring harmony in planning and procurement.
- **PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES.** The current Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) has failed to simplify or speed up procurements. Qualitative Requirements need to be realistically framed, based on current requirements and prevailing threats. There is a need to guard against the impulse to future-proof systems. Evaluation trials need to be combined so that platforms under development do not have to undergo repeated and time-consuming trials. Repeat orders should be placed for platforms and equipment already in service, which have been developed and built by the domestic defence industrial base. Finally, authorities responsible for the processing of cases must be held accountable for any delays that occur.

The men and women of our military are our greatest asset, and their morale and motivation are crucial factors in their outstanding performance under the most challenging conditions. Issues of status equation, a plethora of court cases on pension matters, pay and allowance anomalies and poor civil-military relations can slowly chip away at pride and professionalism. These matters need to be seriously addressed through visible action.

Indigenisation of Defence Production

India cannot be a strong military power unless it develops a strong, indigenous defence production capability. This will require the

government to accept responsibility for financially supporting the design and development of indigenous defence platforms. The MoD appears to have prioritised building foreign equipment under technology transfer in the Buy & Make (India) category, or the Strategic Partner model. Both these mandate the purchase of "proven and in-service" equipment. This commits the military to buy equipment that has already gone through its development cycle, and its induction into service and maturation phase, which means it is already a decade away from being state-of-the-art.

The MoD must assume a leadership role in the creation of a robust defence industrial base. The government must pay the design and development costs for complex defence systems. For those companies that are willing to fund the research and development (R&D) costs, there must be incentives in the form of access to capital at lower interest rates. We need to recognise the benefits of creating and trusting Indian solutions optimised for our military and provide equal opportunities for both the public and private sector.

The defence public sector undertakings (DPSU) have acquired a bad name. However, we must also be realistic enough not to ignore their capabilities. Today, we do not have any alternative to Hindustan Aeronautics Limited when it comes to building an indigenous fighter aircraft. The answer lies in improving the practices and accountability of the DPSUs by greater integration of service users in the management structure and adopting successful private industry practices.

In order to boost defence exports, we should identify and target promising platforms for export, promote their early induction into the military, work with the external affairs and economic ministries to develop lines of credit for prospective buyers, ensure production lines are built in sufficient numbers, and develop life cycle support measures for platforms in service in other countries. Only by ensuring a smooth experience for countries that buy Indian weaponry, can India become a weapons exporter.

Indigenisation also requires a strong R&D base. Currently, the country lags in cutting edge technology and the adoption of Artificial Intelligence, robotics, autonomous systems, quantum technology, and hypersonic weapons. The Defence R&D Organisation (DRDO) needs to focus on these areas and move out of peripheral technology by offloading these to the industry. The DRDO must pursue

avenues of joint R&D with countries like the US, Russia, Israel, and France. There is a need to harness and synergise efforts of the DRDO, DPSU R&D centres, private sector R&D centres, and academia. This will require a cultural change in the way the DRDO is currently operating, and this change will have to be pushed by the government.

Transforming the Police

The primary role of any nation state is to ensure the safety of all its citizens. Today, state civil police forces number over 1.5 million, delivering policing services from 16,000 police stations across the country. Armed police of the centre and states are an additional 1.5 million personnel. The government's focus in the past 50 years has been on the expansion and upgrading of CAPFs. The Modernisation of Police Forces (MPF) scheme of the government allocates 80% of its funds to central police forces. Even as a percentage of the state budgets, police budgets are declining across India. This has adversely impacted on the professional capacity of both the civil and armed police component of the states.

The criminal justice system is in danger of being overwhelmed. About 8 million cognisable crimes are recorded annually. Over 30 million cases choke Indian courts and appeals in criminal cases take 20 years and more to be heard. 6.5 lakh exhibits await examination in state and regional forensics labs. The conviction rate has dropped drastically. Even in heinous offences like murder and rape, all-India conviction rates hover around 20%.

Transforming the police will require a focus on five main pillars, with particular attention to engaging with the communities.

- **POLICING PRESENCE.** A modern policing system requires an adequate presence on the ground. The UN recommends 220 civil policemen for every 100,000 population. Most conflict-areas in India have less than 25% civilian police strength of this benchmark. Sufficient police stations can act as early warning systems and ensure closer contact with communities to contain the intensity and spread of violence. At the same time, structures need to be developed that can address policing challenges that spill over local jurisdictions or require specialist capabilities such as cyber or complex white-collar crime.
- **TECHNOLOGY APPLICATION.** In addition to obvious areas like forensics support and less-lethal mob-control

technology, there is a need to explore the application of cutting-edge developments in neuro and behavioural sciences, big data analytics, modelling, and robotics.

- **CAPACITY BUILDING.** Skill-development is the backbone for effective modernisation and training needs to be scaled up. Expenditure on training is currently only 1% of the overall police budget. Use must be made of digital platforms for distance in-service training, along with an evaluation of whether current training design and andragogic methods are imparting the required skills. There is little cognitive research on policing policies, processes and outcomes. There is an urgent need to identify multi-disciplinary institutions to fund studies of existing structures, policies and processes, and conduct evidence-based research into organisational innovations and behavioural changes needed for modern management practices.
- **MORALE & ACCOUNTABILITY.** Morale and accountability are key to improved human resource development. Better working conditions and housing for lower ranks are two crucial areas. The police leadership needs to be insulated from external pressures in the discharge of its legal role. There is a critical need to restore the principle that a police chief "is not the servant of anyone, save of the law itself." At the same time, all forces engaged in counter-militancy operations need to be clear that there are boundaries in the use of force against our own citizens, and human rights are not violated.
- **COMMUNITY SUPPORT.** Engaging vulnerable communities/ethnic groups and working with local leaders can prevent minor incidents from escalating. There is an acknowledged need for greater public engagement, with the police required to be seen more as a provider of services related to the rule of law and public safety, not just an instrument to enforce the state's sovereign authority. We also need to explore ways to restore the social responsibility of village and traditional communities for maintaining routine public order and perhaps even to deal with petty offences within a framework of contemporary legal and ethical principles.

Intelligence

Intelligence is a very critical imperative in the safeguarding of national security. Timely and actionable intelligence can be a game-changer in all theatres of operations and the conduct of diplomacy. However, our intelligence structure

is unable to perform to its potential due to problems of inadequate resource allocation, shortfalls in manpower and an over-reliance on the Indian Police Service officers, many of whom do not have adequate intelligence training or experience. The over-centralisation of decision making and micromanagement has also led to some erosion of institutions.

The current intelligence architecture needs to be restructured with clear-cut responsibility and accountability. The contours of the restructuring could be:

- Establish a career intelligence cadre with qualifications of subject and regional expertise, proven language capability, and familiarity with local customs.
- Personnel with a tested acumen for intelligence work should be drawn from the broadest spectrum of society including civil services, armed forces, technology experts, and economists.
- The over-dependence on technical intelligence and the inadequacies in human intelligence should be corrected.
- Security of operations and safeguarding of operational details must be given the highest priority.
- We should make use of trusted institutions in the private sector to widen and extend intelligence-oriented reach for the furtherance of national interest.
- There is an urgent need for a cross-party body like a Parliament's Standing Committee on Intelligence, to regularly audit standards and performance, and make recommendations for improvement. Experience teaches us that without independent oversight, reform does not happen.

Cyber Warfare

The cyber threats to our critical infrastructure and to our way of life are apparent. However, we often tend to view cyber threats through a technical prism rather than as another dimension of warfare that threatens national security. Combating this threat will require formal structures, policies and an explicit declaration of intent.

In order to secure the nation from cyber attacks, particularly those emanating from hostile countries, the following priority actions need to be taken:

DETERRING CYBER ATTACKS. Deterrence in cyberspace is a hugely complex issue as cyber

warfare is characterised by an absence of clarity. Tracing the source of the attack is not easy, and we can neither be sure about the exact capability of the adversary nor accurately assess our chances of success if we launch a cyber counterstrike. Notwithstanding these limitations, we must have a clearly stated policy that a malicious cyber attack is considered as a hostile act against our national sovereignty and that India will respond by using all national resources at our disposal – cyber, military, diplomatic and economic.

CREATION OF CYBER COMMAND. If we clearly understand that cyber attacks conducted by an external state threaten the national security of India, we must also realise that this threat cannot be countered by intelligence agencies like the NTRO or by a Cyber Security Coordinator. The defence services are responsible for protecting India from external threats and must become the lead agency for responding to cyber attacks. India is one of the few countries that still does not have a dedicated cyber component in its military. The setting up of a Defence Cyber Agency has been announced but this must be upgraded to a Cyber Command. The Cyber Command must have a clear mandate to conduct full-spectrum cyberspace operations.

INDIGENOUS TECHNOLOGY FOR CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE. In India, we seem oblivious to the vulnerabilities that exist in our critical networks due to foreign hardware and software. This needs to be quickly reversed. The technological component of India's digital sovereignty has to be a gradually planned adoption of software and hardware that is designed and manufactured by Indian private companies. The government should promote and support Indian companies through funding assistance and give them preference in the purchase of equipment for critical infrastructure. Indigenisation must take place in the following areas:

- Operating systems and software.
- Microelectronics.
- Networking equipment.
- Cryptographic algorithms.
- Navigation systems.

Nuclear Forces

India has a 'No First Use' policy and a commitment to the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. However, we are conscious that we live in a region where two of our neighbours are nuclear-armed states. Pakistan has a fast-

growing nuclear arsenal while Chinese nuclear modernisation has significantly improved the quality of its land and sea-based nuclear forces.

To ensure deterrence against nuclear threats, India should continue to build up its triad of land, air, and sea-based missiles, while modernising its older land missile systems. The nuclear command and control system should be hardened against cyber attacks. India also needs to gradually start building up a missile defence system to protect major cities. Capacity should be created for dealing with the threat of Weapons of Mass Destruction by state and non-state actors.

Space

Today, India is hugely dependent on space for communications, commerce, navigation, and intelligence. In this dependence, we are no different from most countries around the world. However, while space is considered one of the global commons, there is no global acceptance on the rules that should apply in regulating behaviour in space. In the absence of any rulebook, India must develop capabilities to defend itself and develop deterrent capabilities in case a conflict transcends to the space dimension.

Strategic Communications

With the proliferation of media, and the social media serving as a medium of enormous amounts of fake news, it is imperative that the government is able to convey the accurate picture to its citizens. This is particularly important during a crisis when an absence of information or miscommunication could trigger rumours that erode faith and trust in the government.

There is a need for a structured crisis management communication group that comprises representatives from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Home Affairs and Defence, and the Prime Minister's office. This group will be tasked for all interaction with the media during any national crisis.

A large number of media cells have sprung up in various departments of the government. Often, they operate in a competitive mode. These organisations should be reviewed, and integration carried out, where necessary. There is also a need to enhance the credibility of Doordarshan and All India Radio by granting them complete autonomy and professionalising their functioning.

CONCLUSION

A steadily rising democratic India must ensure peace and prosperity for its citizens and a prominent place for the country in international affairs. We must look realistically at the global and regional geopolitical environment, and honestly assess both the challenges that confront us, and the opportunities offered by our growing national power. This National Security Strategy provides the direction that India should take to achieve our national objectives.

This strategy recognises the centrality of our people. We cannot achieve true security if large sections of our population are faced with discrimination, inequality, lack of opportunities, and buffeted by the risks of climate change, technology disruption, and water and energy scarcity.

The National Security Strategy also examines the current shortfalls in our capability and suggests measure to strengthen the essential elements of national power. A weakness in capabilities will leave us with an inability to convert our vision into reality.

As we pursue or strategy, we could be faced with unexpected challenges. However, as long as the basic tenets are followed, progress is assured.