



Chief of Defence Staff

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This article is based on **“Deciphering the CDS”** which was published in The Indian Express on 10/01/2020. It talks of significance of Chief of Defence Staff in India’s defence preparedness.

Recently, **Gen. Bipin Rawat** was appointed as India's **first** Chief of Defence Staff (CDS). The post of **Chief of Defence Staff** was created to provide “effective leadership at the top level” to the three wings of the armed forces and to help improve coordination among them. Along with it, **the Department of Military Affairs (DoMA)** was created as the fifth department within the **Ministry of Defence**.

Establishment of a CDS is a step in the direction of fulfilling the long-pending reform in the Indian armed forces. It was recommended by the **Kargil Review Committee in 2001** and reiterated by the **Naresh Chandra committee in 2012**.

Organisational Setup of Ministry of Defence

Department of Defence

- The Department of Defence deals with the Integrated Defence Staff (IDS) and three Services and various Inter-Service Organisations.
- It is also responsible for the Defence Budget, establishment matters, defence policy, matters relating to Parliament, defence co-operation with foreign countries and co-ordination of all defence-related activities.
- Department of Defence is responsible for the “defence of India and every part thereof, including defence policy and preparation for defence and all such acts as may be conducive in times of war to its prosecution and after its termination to effective demobilisation.

Department of Defence Production

The Department of Defence Production is headed by a Secretary and deals with matters pertaining to defence production, indigenisation of imported stores, equipment and spares, planning and control of departmental production units of the Ordnance Factory Board and Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs).

Department of Defence Research and Development

- The Department of Defence Research and Development is headed by a Secretary.
- Its function is to advise the Government on scientific aspects of military equipment and logistics and the formulation of research, design and development plans for equipment required by the Services.

Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare

The Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare is headed by a Secretary and deals with all resettlement, welfare and pensionary matters of Ex-Servicemen.

Department of Military Affairs

- The Department of Military Affairs is headed by newly formed Chief of Defence Staff.
- Work exclusively pertaining to military matters will fall within the purview of the DoMA. Earlier, these functions were the mandate of the Department of Defence (DoD).

What is the role of CDS?

- CDS acts as **the permanent Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee** which will also have three service chiefs as members.
 - His core function will be to foster greater operational synergy between the three service branches of the Indian military and keep inter-service frictions to a minimum.
- He will also head the **newly created Department of Military Affairs (DoMA)** in the Ministry of Defence.
 - The CDS will be the **single-point military adviser to the Defence Minister** on matters involving all three services and the service chiefs will be obliged to confine their counsel to issues pertaining to their respective services.
 - As the head of DoMA, CDS is vested with the **authority in prioritising inter-service procurement decisions** as Permanent Chairman-Chiefs of Staff Committee.
- The CDS is also vested with the authority to provide directives to the three chiefs. However, he does not enjoy any command authority over any of the forces.
- CDS is **first among equals**, he enjoys the rank of Secretary within the DoD and his powers will be confined to only the revenue budget.
- He will also perform an **advisory role in the Nuclear Command Authority (NCA)**.

Nuclear Command Authority

- The Nuclear Command Authority (NCA) of India is the authority responsible for command, control and operational decisions regarding India's nuclear weapons programme.
- The NCA comprised a Political Council and an Executive Council.
 - The Political Council was chaired by the Prime Minister and is the sole body which can authorise the use of nuclear weapons.
 - The Executive Council, chaired by the National Security Adviser to the Prime Minister, provides inputs for decision making by the NCA and executes the directives given to it by the Political Council.

Significance of CDS

- **Synergy between Armed forces and Government:** CDS' role is not simply about tri-service cooperation, it is equally about fostering better cooperation between the Ministry of Defense bureaucracy and the Armed services.
 - Since 1947, there are three **Service Headquarters (SHQ)** designated as "Attached Offices" of the **Department of Defense (DoD)**.
 - Due to this, communication between SHQ and DoD takes place largely through the medium of files.
 - With the creation of CDS as Principal Military Adviser (PMA) to Defense Minister, the process of decision-making will be accelerated.
- **Jointness in operations:** The Chiefs of Staff Committee-COSC (predecessor of CDS), has been dysfunctional because its chairmanship is held by one of the three chiefs on a part-time rotational basis.
 - Historically, the chairman COSC lacked the authority as well as capacity and inclination to tackle tri-service issues of substance.
 - With the CDS now being designated as "permanent chairman of COSC", he will be able to devote undivided attention to the administration of tri-service organisations.
- **Operationalisation of Theatre Command:** Creation of DoMA will facilitate the operationalisation of joint/theatre command.
 - Although a successful template for joint operations was created in the **Andaman & Nicobar Command**, the lack of political direction and indifference of the COSC has led to inactivity of this joint command.
 - Theatre commands would need staff with the knowledge and experience to deploy land, maritime and air forces. Given the disruptive impact of each of these measures, they would best be implemented by the CDS.

- CDS as a key functionary in the nuclear command chain will also administer the **Strategic Forces Command**.
 - This measure will go a long way in enhancing the credibility of India's nuclear deterrent.
 - The CDS would also initiate an early review of **India's Nuclear Doctrine**.
- In the approaching era of dwindling defence budgets, a crucial function of CDS will be "prioritising" the capital acquisition proposals of individual services.

He will have to ensure that the "**defence rupee**" is spent judiciously; on warfare-capabilities considered vital for national military power, and not on pandering to service demands.

Way Forward

- The arrival of India's first CDS will certainly give a fresh wave to India's defence preparedness. This can be reflected as:
 - Gen. Rawat has sought the establishment of an **Air Defence Command (ADC)** which will enable nationwide coverage, prevent fratricide in the event of war and sustain jointmanship in air defence operations.
 - In addition, Gen. Rawat has declared his intention to synergise logistics support, particularly in areas where two or more services are co-located.
- There exists a bureaucratic gap between the government and armed forces.

So as to ensure smooth functioning between CDS and government, there is a need to pursue enabling **amendments to the government of India business rules and the Central Staffing Scheme**.
- Also, in the 21st century, warfare is just not limited to conventional domains of Land, Marine and Air, it is now extended to Space, Cyber and Electromagnetic.

In this context, the creation of CDS will not be a panacea, therefore India needs to carry out thorough reforms to upgrade its armed forces so that it can meet the security challenges of 21st-century.

Drishti Mains Question

Creation of Chief of Defense Staff position is highly significant in India's defence preparedness. Discuss