

Restructuring of Indian National Security Architecture

A great deal of soul searching followed 26/11 on the efficacy of the national institutions, responsible for national security in India, and their methodologies. A universal conclusion was that they are inadequate in several ways. As a result, currently, ways are being considered to improve their quality.

An important question arises: is it being done the right way? Is some fundamental change envisaged or just some superficial tinkering of existing systems or cloning new avatars of already existing ones.

The existing systems are, by and large, a legacy of the British Colonial past. This legacy is now outdated and the systems based on this legacy need to be discarded and replaced by those based on brand new thinking.

The broad principles for this new thinking could be the following:

- A. The systems should be created by laws of the parliament. They should clearly lay out the charters, functions, and duties of each new organisation.
- B. The systems should be autonomous in respect of all internal administration requirements such as recruitment, postings, promotions, discipline, salaries and perquisites, etc.
- C. Operations, strategies and tactics should remain a part of such autonomy, subject to limits set by the charter.
- D. Appointments of heads should be the prerogative of the political head of the government with a term statutorily fixed.
- E. Their performances should be broadly monitored by oversight committees, set up by parliament but operational matters should remain outside their scrutiny.

Such entities would primarily be intelligence and assessment producing bodies and would be separate and distinct for internal and external spheres. For a better co-ordination, use of resources and overall evaluation a single authority - National Intelligence Co-coordinator (NIC) should control them. This authority should like wise have a say or control over other similar organisations, embedded in other government institutions. But this authority will not be the National Security Advisor (NSA).

Although the office of NSA has been in existence now for more than 10 years, there is much confusion about his role and reach. Preferably, the same laws should have the provisions for creating this office and defining its objectives, functions and obligations.

Fundamentally, the NSA and his outfit should be responsible for providing strategic policy options to the Prime Minister or Committee of Ministers for Security in respect of every national security situation present now, or anticipated in future. His area of responsibility will mainly cover foreign policy issues but will also include internal security issues requiring a policy direction. He and his team should have a vision of what can happen to the world security scenario in the immediate time ahead or in the time

space of, say, 5 years, 15 years or 50 years ahead. This vision should also encompass futuristic scenarios based on India's aspirations and expectations. The National Intelligence Co-ordinator would submit his assessments of a security situation to the NSA whose team should have competent staff to evaluate the assessment independently and to present to the policy makers a range of possible scenarios and their implications. The Intelligence bodies should be represented in this high level entity so that they directly know what intelligence is needed or what gaps need to be plugged.

All executive operational responsibilities should rest, not on the NSA, but the National Intelligence Co-ordinator who will take action separately to fill up the gaps in intelligence or prepare plans for any counter actions. Such plans would be prepared on the basis of action oriented analytical approaches to which every organization under him would have contributed. This could be a daily process leading to action in real time. His writ must run over the entire nation. Therefore his creation should also be founded on laws of the parliament. Since he will have to be vested with police powers of investigation, arrest and prosecution, which sometimes may run contrary to the interests of short sighted political leaders of some states, necessary amendments in the Constitution may become necessary to empower the Centre to appoint a National Intelligence Co-ordinator with such authority.

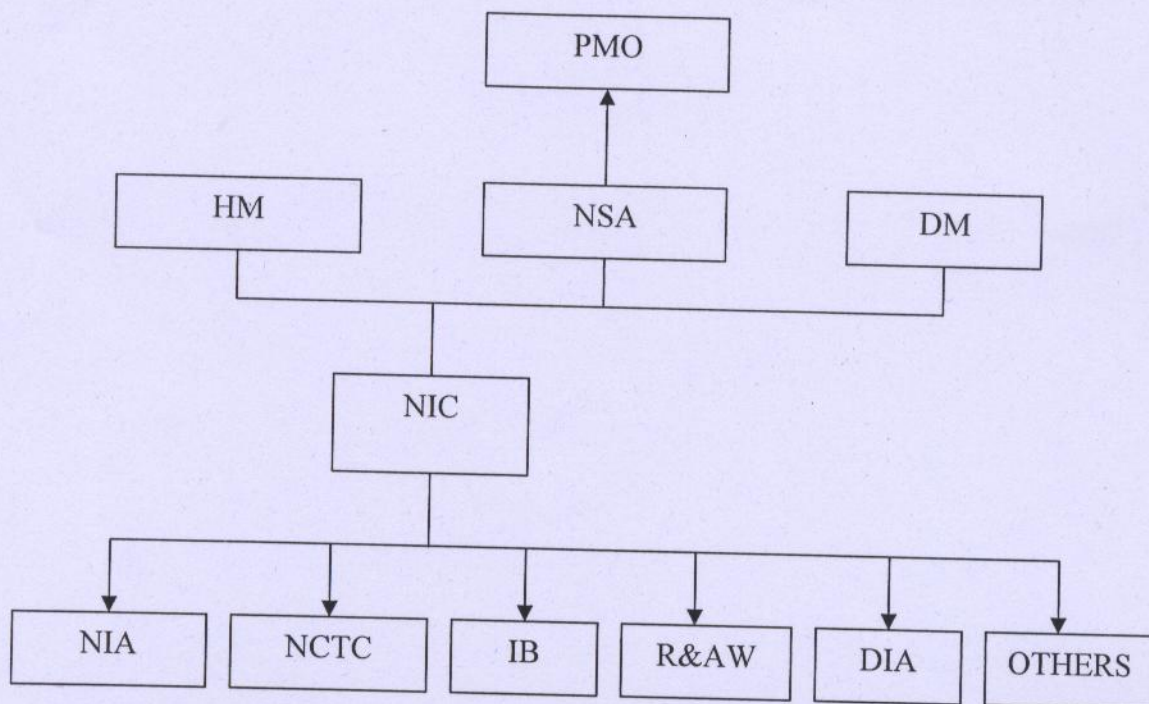
Absence of such empowerment of the Centre is a big lacuna in the current system of arrangements in the country. This has been responsible mainly for the absence of unified coordinated action against Naxalism all these years. The newly energised central action plan against this threat may end up falling by the wayside since the Centre has no statutory power to coerce States to accept a common strategy on counter action. For this reason, one has to keep one's fingers crossed about the successful functioning of the newly created National Investigation Agency (NIA) or the proposed National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC).

The NCTC cannot be a success unless it is placed under the authority of an independent empowered National Intelligence Co-ordinator. Under today's dispensations the different agencies can feed the NCTC with intelligence if all of them are under the National Intelligence Co-ordinator but the necessary field action can follow only if legal and executive powers are also vested in him with an all India jurisdiction. The States will share their database without reservation with the NIC or NCTC only if laws compel them to do so.

Finally vigilance will have to be exercised to ensure that action oriented strategic or tactical assessments do not get compromised by political prejudices or reservations. This alone is a good enough reason for insulating the new security architecture with legal independence.

The following flow chart explains how intelligence and assessments will flow from lower levels to higher echelons:

FLOWCHART FOR INTELLIGENCE GATHERING & ASSESSMENT



NOTES

PMO	Prime Ministers Office
HM	Home Minister
NSA	National Security Adviser
DM	Defence Minister
NIC	National Intelligence Co-ordinator
NIA	National Investigation Agency
NCTC	National Counter Terrorism Centre
IB	Intelligence Bureau
R&AW	Research & Analysis Wing
DIA	Defence Intelligence
OTHERS	Other Agencies of all hues

1. NIC is the recipient of all Intelligence inputs. Finished products flow to NSA, HM, DM and even PM directly if the nature of the product so warrants.
2. The idea is to ensure that adequate data and analysis are available directly at the PM's level for making an immediate decision at any point of time.

3. The chart refers to only flow of Intelligence – and at the NIC level for coordination and assessment.
4. NIC has also operational responsibilities to get the gaps filled through agencies affiliated to him.
5. Strategic assessments are to be made at NSA level only.
6. NSA and NIC will be totally autonomous within their jurisdictions. So will be RAW and IB.
7. Assessments will also focus on scenarios and options for decision making. This will also include threat perceptions, vulnerable areas both in space and time. Such scenario oriented assessments can be generated at any level of intelligence producers and can get refined at every stage in their upward movement.

POLICING

In so far as policing issues are concerned, the ARSIPSO strongly recommends that the police reforms are pending since long and these should be implemented expeditiously. Directions of the Supreme Court have to be implemented in letter and spirit. Some of the suggested measures are known but require reiteration:

1. Need to right the imbalance caused by inadequacy of police strength. Our police-population ratio of 139 policemen per 1 lakh population suffers in comparison with that of western countries where law and order problems are far less serious. It also falls way behind the UN recommended strength of 235 per 1 lakh of population.
2. Large number of vacancies exists in all State police forces. Belated efforts are being made to fill up the vacancies but it is a fact police recruitment has become a scandal in many north Indian states where for recruitment of a constable the going rate is nearly 1 lakh of rupees.
3. Police training institutions particularly of constables, training centres in most of the states are in shambles, with poor infrastructure, inadequate equipments and demotivated staff. They are ill-equipped for imparting training in many states. The staff posted in training institutions does not get any training allowances. Training institutions in Army and paramilitary forces are fortunately better placed. BPR&D should be asked to make a review of these training institutions and ask the central as well as State governments to take immediate steps to plug the loopholes.
4. In some states, constable's post induction training for 9 months is disrupted because of election duties for 2 or 3 months.

5. Not only R&AW and IB but state police intelligence agencies (special branch) have to be galvanized by inducting capable officers. At present they are packed with people chosen for considerations other than merit and are deployed for collecting of political intelligence and not countering terrorist activities.
6. Commissionerate system of policing may be introduced in all big cities of the country. Experience shows that wherever Commissionerate system has been introduced, police response has been more effective.
7. In most of the States some very useful practices, such as foot patrolling, patrolling of sea coast, etc., have been discarded due to non-use. These need to be revived and energized.