National Security Doctrine

Why in news?

Recently, the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) made a comment about the formulation of a National Security Strategy (NSS).

What is a National Security Strategy?

- **NSS** – National Security Strategy is a document that ***outlines the country's security objectives***, and the ways of adopting them.
- Updated periodically, it *defines traditional, non-traditional threats and opportunities*.
- It also *introduces accountability of agencies* tasked with the implementation of such responsibilities.
- **National level doctrines** – These are formulated and approved at the highest echelons of government.
    - For example: The Nuclear Doctrine
- **Lower doctrines -** These are formulated at the military-strategic, operational, and tactical levels for different levels of war-fighting (in the military) or tackling internal disorder (for police/ paramilitary forces).

Doctrine	Strategy
Doctrine is a set of established or agreed principles that guide actions.	Strategy is a plan of action that emanates from doctrine.
Normally it *precedes a strategy*.	Normally, it is devised after a doctrine.
They are *more permanent*.	Relativeky less permenant in nature.
They must be reviewed periodically	With every update in doctrine, the strategy must be reviewed.

Why do India need NSS?

- **Worrying status of defence planning** – The *new formats* of the Integrated Capability Plan (10 years) and Defence Capability Acquisition Plan (5 years) *are yet to stabilise*.
- The present system of *reviews* by the Parliamentary Standing Committee and Auditor General *are sub-optimal*.
- There is *lack of operational clarity* and ease of *decision making*.
- While theatre responses during the Doklam crisis were commendable, *strategic guidance was vague and unclear*.
- The system suffers from *over-centralisation.*
- There is also a larger issue of the role of the multiple institutions that are dealing with national defence.

    - National Security Council
    - Chief of Defence Staff
    - Chiefs of Staff Committee
- **Recommendations for NSS –** Various committees have had recommended security strategies on similar lines.
- **Subrahmanyam Committee Report (1979)** – It emphasized the need for credible minimum deterrence and an integrated approach to national security.
- **Kargil Review Committee Report (2000)** – It recommended comprehensive national security reforms post-Kargil conflict.
- **Naresh Chandra Task Force (2012)** – It highlighted the need for a formal NSS to guide security reforms.
- **Steps taken by India** – An apex-level *Defence Planning Committee* chaired by the National Security Advisor was set up in *2018 to formulate the NSS* and National Defence Strategy.
- The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) would accord final approval.
- However, the *status and progress of the much-publicised exercise are not known*.

The US, the UK and Russia have published national security strategies. India's neighbor's like China and Pakistan have also released such strategy documents

What are the importance of developing NSS?

- **Comprehensive threat assessment** – An NSS would provide a systematic approach to identifying and addressing internal and external threats, ranging from terrorism and cyber-attacks to border conflicts and climate change.
- **Policy coherence** – It would ensure that various *security policies and actions are aligned*, avoiding duplication and ensuring that all arms of government work towards common objectives.
- **Efficient resource allocation** – An NSS would help *prioritize and allocate resources efficiently*, ensuring that the most critical security needs are addressed with adequate funding and attention.
- **Clear strategies and priorities** – It would offer clear guidance and objectives for India's defense and security agencies, fostering a *unified direction in safeguarding national interests*.
- **International Credibility** – Having a documented strategy enhances India's credibility on the global stage, demonstrating a *proactive and organized approach* to national and regional security.
- **Increases public awareness and support** – An NSS can increase public understanding and support for national security measures, fostering a sense of shared responsibility and resilience.
- **Enhance inter-Governmental Coordination** – It would enhance coordination between different government departments and agencies, ensuring a holistic approach to security issues.
- **Promote national growth** – A well-crafted NSS would foster a *"whole of nation" approach* and build synergy for *harnessing comprehensive national power* (CNP).
- It would also enable the setting of milestones for capability-building for *modernisation,*

infrastructure and the Atma Nirbhar mission.

What are the major challenges in formulating a NSS?

- **Diverse Security Threats** – India contends with a wide range of security threats, including border conflicts, terrorism, cyber threats, internal insurgencies, and natural disasters, making it *difficult to prioritize and address all effectively*.
- **Lack of inter-agency coordination** – Coordinating among numerous security and intelligence agencies, each with its mandate and priorities, is challenging and can *lead to inefficiencies and gaps in the strategy*.
- **Lack of political consensus** – It is difficult in a diverse and democratic country like India, where different political parties have varying perspectives on security issues.
- **Challenges in resource allocation** – It is challenging, especially in the face of competing priorities such as economic development and social welfare.
- **Conflicting geopolitical environment** – India's strategic environment is influenced by complex relationships with neighboring countries and major powers, which can complicate the formulation of a coherent and effective NSS.
- **Balancing civil liberties and security** – Ensuring that security measures do not infringe on civil liberties and democratic values is a delicate balance that must be maintained.
- **Regional Variations** – Addressing the unique security concerns of different regions within India, such as the northeastern states, Jammu and Kashmir, and Naxalite-affected areas, adds to the complexity of creating a unified NSS.

What lies ahead?

- **Foster political consensus and bipartisan support** – It can be done by involving all major political parties in its formulation and ensuring transparency in the process.
- **Address regional issues –** Customize the NSS to address the specific security concerns of different regions within India, ensuring a localized approach while maintaining a cohesive national strategy.
- **Differentiate civilian and military document** – The NSS would contain several features that may not be appropriate for public release.
- There will thus be a need for two versions, one for the public and one strictly for a classified readership.
- **Regular review and audit** – Establish a process for regular review and audit of the NSS to ensure its effectiveness and make necessary adjustments based on feedback and changing circumstances.

References

1. The Indian Express| Need of National security Strategy
2. The Wire| Challenges in formulating NSS

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