National Security Strategy

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Why is in news? What is a National Security Strategy and why India must have one

A long wait is said to be coming to an end as the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) sets about drafting India's first written National Security Strategy (NSS).

India has **never had such a document** — and the debate on whether one is needed is of fairly recent origin, spanning the last two decades or so.

About NSS:

A National Security Strategy or Policy (NSS or NSP) is a **key framework** for a country to **meet the basic needs and security concerns of citizens,** and address external and internal threats to the country.

The strategy document defines the **traditional, non-traditional threats and introduces accountability of agencies** dealing with these threats.

The Indian state **does not possess an overarching national security strategy** (NSS) that comprehensively assesses the challenges to the country's security and spells out policies to deal effectively with them.

A well-defined national strategy is a clear vision of the path that India must take in pursuit of its national vision. It also provides a guide for all organs of the state on the policy directions that they must follow.

Such a strategy must be executed within the parameters laid down by the Constitution of India and the country's democratic political dispensation.

Need for National Security Strategy:

A modern state confronts **multiple and simultaneous challenges** across several domains.

The **growing maturity of our military and strategic communities and changes** in our apex security management structure are recent phenomena.

National security cannot be confined to the use of the state's coercive power to **overcome domestic and external threats**. For example, threats to domestic peace and stability may arise from economic and social grievances.

The **vulnerability of our borders** is linked to a large-scale smuggling and contraband trade. Such threats cannot be dealt with solely through enhanced military capabilities without addressing the drivers of illegal trade.

Security strategy document is needed to address the uncertainties arising from the **recent geopolitical tensions** like the Israel-Hamas war, Russia-Ukraine War.

In the absence of a comprehensive security strategy of India, **Raksha Mantri's operational Directive of 2009** is the only document providing political direction to the Armed Forces. This document has become out-dated and needs to be revised.

The security doctrine would **help to maintain active cooperation** between security establishments at the Union and state levels and would **help in inter-ministerial coordination** in tackling any threat to national security.

National security strategy would **enhance the political accountability** in the management of defence forces and national security.

The security strategy will **clarify the precise operational and advisory roles** of national security related institutions like the National Security Council (NSC), the National Security Advisor (NSA), Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) and the Chiefs of Staff Committee.

Countries having NSS:

Developed Countries with advanced Military and security Infrastructure- **US, UK and Russia** have published National Security Strategies which are updated from time to time.

China has a Comprehensive National Security which is closely tied to its governance structure.

Pakistan also has brought out a National Security Policy 2022-2026 which underlines its national security objectives and priority areas.

Things keep in mind to draft NSS:

The NSS would have to **embrace all aspects of security**.

Military security would be only one aspect of the canvas, which would include economic, internal, diplomatic, human, climate, food, water, and every other conceivable form of security necessary for the well-being of India's people.

The **all-encompassing nature of this strategy** would require wide consultations.

Each of the **numerous aspects of security is in itself multidimensional**, and would impact the manner in which we conduct business.

The preparation of the NSS, therefore, would necessarily **be an iterative process**. It would need many reiterations of **inter-ministerial consultancy** and gamed several times over before it is ready for **consideration by the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS)** which would then accord final approval.

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**.

The **rising stature of India and its growth projections** over the next few decades have made it a significant player in world affairs for the present and the foreseeable future. Many countries see their futures as intertwined with India's growth story.

Additionally, **complex global, regional, and local geopolitical scenarios** will ensure detailed scrutiny and comment on our publicly articulated NSS. It, therefore, has to be an involved exercise with ownership and approval at the highest levels of government.

Components of National Security Doctrine

Definition of NSD · Geopolitical Environment · Political · Military · Police and Security Forces · Intelligence · Socio-Economic · Good Governance · Border Management · Cyber Security

Challenges in implementation of the NSS:

Creating a doctrine that comprehensively addresses all the **ever evolving security challenges** like Cyberattacks, crypto-terrorism is a complex task.

The **political parties are reluctant to adopt the national security strategy** on account of their increased accountability in the management of national security issues.

Balancing the competing interests and ideologies of all stakeholders like the government officials, policymakers and security agencies is a significant challenge.

Efficient and effective **allocation of resources** for the implementation of this comprehensive security doctrine is also a significant challenge.

The **lack of public awareness** regarding the need for a comprehensive national security strategy, has let the governments run Scott free for these many years without enacting a comprehensive security doctrine.

Way forward:

Maintain **credible military deterrence** against potential adversaries.

Ensure a **fool-proof and well co-ordinated intelligence mechanism** to provide early warning of threats, both external and internal.

Maintain a **tri-service rapid response capability** to respond to security challenges during war and peace against terror strikes/ hostage taking, involving multiple agencies, both police and military, including the National Security Guard (NSG) and Special Forces (SF)..

Maintain **close surveillance and monitoring** of the internal security situation in areas of heightened threat.

Neutralize **anti-Indian efforts/propaganda** by potential adversaries/ inimical elements. Promote/protect diaspora interests in the region and the world.

Protect **national interests against internal threats** like terrorism (including nuclear terrorism), insurgency and militancy to negate secessionist and related destabilizing efforts.

Conclusion:

Drawing up a National Security Strategy of India must be a key agenda for the government. The security strategy document must take the Constitution of India as its guide and its objective should be safeguarding and consolidation of India's democracy.