Managing Indian Defense Policy: The Missing Grand Strategy Connection

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Abstract: India continues to build its material capabilities but there is rising concern about its ability to direct these toward the service of a grand strategy. India’s history highlights that a crucial requirement for developing a grand strategy is an integrative, coordinative state. However, historical and current Indian defense reform efforts implicitly admit this absence of an integrative defense policymaking structure. Recognizing the grand strategy lessons from India’s own history will assist defense reform initiatives.

India is today accruing the material elements of global great-power status. With annual economic growth of at least around five to six percent, it is predicted to be one of the world’s four largest economies by 2045.1 This affords ambitious power-projection plans. It is developing a blue-water navy and ambitions to manage the Indian Ocean; it is fielding a nuclear arsenal with a balance of land, air and sea platforms; and it is assembling a technologically cutting-edge air force, featuring modern Rafale and Sukhoi planes.2 Demographically, the United Nations estimates

that India will become the most populous country on the globe by 2028, with consequences for human development. The possibility that India is emerging as a major power is very credible.

![Map of India](image_url)

(Map of India, courtesy of U.S. State Department.)

However, although India is acquiring significant weapons platforms, critics have raised doubts about its ability to harness these resources in service of a long-term strategy. Indeed, the existence of an Indian “grand strategy” that sets out political objectives for Indian power projection—and then ensures military, economic, intelligence and educational development—coordinated toward these objectives, is presently being debated within Indian strategic circles. This debate focuses particularly on the ultimate requirements and specific policy proposals for an Indian grand strategy. However, these debates have focused primarily on current Indian policy problems and recommended solutions based upon Western historical role models. Taking a broader perspective, with a wider range of historical case studies, may help reframe the debate in the Indian context, as well as the general academic discourse on grand strategy.

The article contends that grand strategy ultimately requires two elements: a political leadership able to set the political objectives for securing and advancing the interests of the polity; and a coordinating policy infrastructure that holistically integrates and applies resources in service of those interests. This knowledge can be used to inform the contemporary Indian discourse on defense reforms, which

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implicitly bemoans the absence of an Indian grand strategy through identifying the lack of a sufficiently integrative and coordinating state. Refocusing the debate on the basic requirement to extend integration and coordination will aid Indian policymakers in locating a starting point for constructing a grand strategy, while also developing academic theoretical work on grand strategy by distilling essential elements for its practice.

Theoretical Origins of Grand Strategy

The idea of grand strategy as a modern academic concept, as the highest level of strategic perspective, has roots in Western military thought. Two British historians, Sir Julian Corbett and B.H. Liddell-Hart, writing in the early twentieth century, sought to develop this concept. Both envisioned grand strategy as a certain perspective adopted by wartime political leaders that both transcended the strategic aims sought in the conflict and the operational and tactical objectives that supported these strategic aims. This perspective entailed a more holistic view of the mobilization and dedication of state resources toward the strategic objectives, and how those objectives could shape resource allocation and development toward their attainment.

Corbett referred to “major strategy,” which envisioned fully mobilizing all available state resources toward the war effort. Liddell Hart also emphasized this comprehensive resource mobilization. He defined grand strategy as intending “To coordinate and direct all the resources of a nation, or band of nations, toward the attainment of the political object of the war.”

These definitions suggested important domestic implications, in their inherent focus on applying economic, social, and other domestic resources toward the strategic objective. Indeed, this domestic element has remained a principal characteristic of the grand strategy concept. Strategic, operational and tactical levels primarily involve the art of applying resources outwardly against an external adversary. Grand strategy, however, deals with the domestic creation, development and coordination of diverse assets, in line with strategic objectives, to maximize state success in attaining them.

Later prominent works in this field observed that the issues highlighted by grand strategy are not confined to wartime. Setting political objectives for state security and ensuring that resource development and allocation supports these objectives is a valuable practice for states whether in peace or in war.

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insight recognizes the necessity for political leaders to balance and prioritize resources as they decide and refine grand strategy. Paul Kennedy incorporated these two aspects of peacetime relevance and the necessity of political judgment in resource development when he wrote:

The crux of grand strategy lies therefore in policy, that is, in the capacity of the nation's leaders to bring together all of the elements, both military and nonmilitary, for the preservation and enhancement of the nation's long-term (that is, in wartime and peacetime) best interests. It is not a mathematical science in the Jominian tradition, but an art in the Clausewitzian sense—and a difficult art at that, since it operates at various levels, political, strategic, operational, tactical, all interacting with each other to advance (or retard) the primary aim.\(^8\)

Another recent trend has been to question whether grand strategy is an option that states can choose to develop, or an unavoidable perspective that is forced upon all states by the international system. Edward Luttwak has argued that the grand-strategy level of politico-military analysis is indeed intrinsic to statehood:

All states have a grand strategy, whether they know it or not. That is inevitable because grand strategy is simply the level at which knowledge and persuasion, or in modern terms intelligence and diplomacy, interact with military strength to determine outcomes in a world with other states, with their own “grand strategies.”\(^9\)

Luttwak’s definition reduces grand strategy to an essence of political comprehension and the structured management of interactions with the outside world that flow from this political comprehension. Locating and abstracting the essence of grand strategy to make it more understandable, is indeed a feature of the contemporary discourse on this concept. This article joins this project, by analyzing Indian history to understand the basic principles of grand strategy.

Most research on grand strategy traditionally has utilized Western case studies, and especially those from the twentieth century.\(^10\) While there is an

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\(^8\) Kennedy, “Grand Strategy,” p. 5.


Increasing body of work regarding China, the study of India regarding grand strategy is a nascent field, and to date has revolved around the question of whether or not India, in fact, has anything that can be called a grand strategy.\(^{11}\) The relevance of Indian history to the academic discourse on grand strategy, and the extent to which this history can inform contemporary policy dilemmas on reforming Indian national security management, remain underdeveloped areas of scholarship.\(^{12}\)

Incorporating Indian historical examples into the discourse on grand strategy will, thus, help further develop our understanding of the concept, while illuminating potentially universal aspects to its operation by this focus on non-Western contexts.

**Grand Strategy in Indian History**

Governing a wide expanse of people and land over several centuries, India’s history suggests a wealth of ready case studies to be analyzed. These lessons can be extracted from historical texts, as well as successful practice. A recent innovation in scholarship has been to consider two specific case studies: the *Arthashastra* opus of advice on statecraft, and the practice of the Mughal empire in providing a secure and coherent polity. However, related scholarship has focused mainly upon extracting specific strategic lessons or discussing a grand strategy in those instances. By and large, these experts have not attempted to develop theoretically the concept of grand strategy flowing from their use as case studies.\(^{13}\) These cases, while


\(^{12}\) For a notable exception, see Manjeet Singh Pardesi, *Deducing India’s Grand Strategy of Regional Hegemony from Historical and Conceptual Perspectives* (Singapore: Nanyang Technological University, 2005).

valuable, have yet to attain a prominent role in Western scholarship on grand strategy. Thus, we will focus on these cases, aiming to distill the essential principles of grand strategy, an endeavor with both theoretical and policy relevance as India attempts to articulate a grand strategy today.

The *Arthashastra*

The *Arthashastra* by Kautilya, a masterwork of advice on statecraft, is often compared to, but is far more comprehensive than, Machiavelli’s *The Prince*. Dating from around 300 B.C. at the earliest, the work serves as a handbook on effective governance. It was written for Chandragupta Maurya, an emperor from 321 BC whose aegis encompassed large areas of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and north India. Spanning several volumes and all conceivable aspects of political administration, the work has been cited approvingly by a prominent Indian realist scholar as asserting “The meta-strategic objective being for the state, and its embodiment, the ruler, to achieve the position of the *chakravartin*—the universal hegemon—within whose very large territorial ambit strife is eliminated, peace forcefully imposed and order maintained.”

The text makes recommendations for managing all levels of policy that the political leader may need to contend with, from policing and social order to major war. Unlike *The Prince*, which briefly set out general ethical principles to guide statecraft, the *Arthashastra* offers detailed, policy-specific recommendations. These include the required personality and outlook of an effective ruler, which must entail a personal life of moderation, a good education and constantly inquisitive mind, valuing the importance of intelligence and information flows for policymaking, and a continual focus on building political and economic stability for the polity.

With these attributes, the leader will then be equipped to recognize several domestic and external problems that may arise. The work suggests plans for each of these, too, categorizing different forms of domestic revolt or external conflict and response types, based upon the specific adversary and available resources. In this way, the text emphasizes the importance of a political leadership that is able to understand and promote long-term interests of the polity, recognize current and changing domestic and external conditions and set clear directives to advance long-term interests and resolve each contingency. The mind of the leader is, therefore, of the utmost prominence to the polity. As the text says: “The king and his rule encapsulate (all) the constituents of the state.”

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Having established this point and made recommendations for building a capable political leadership, the *Arthashastra* focuses primarily on effective management of administration and ensuring that these support resource development. It details the division of government into specific departments and even suggests salaries for officials at each departmental level. This division of labor is necessary for effective administration but must ensure clear information flow to the ruler. The work recommends widespread use of domestic and external spies, and suggests specific common maneuvers they can employ toward state ends. The *Arthashastra*, therefore, envisions an efficient state with comprehensive control over resource development that is designed to implement the ruler’s wishes down to the village level.

However, this work reserves formulating strategy to the ruler. His role is to set political priorities and allocate resources to these, based upon the information he receives. Political judgment based upon often incomplete information is necessary in this process, and this responsibility is what differentiates the ruler from his officials. The volume argues that “The work of government is threefold—that which the king sees with his own eyes, that which he knows of indirectly through reports made to him and that which he infers about work not done by knowing about work that has been done.”

The *Arthashastra* serves as a cumulative manual for grand strategy development. It is telling that it organizes its recommendations into two main categories: those focused on cultivating the perception, judgment and decision-making ability of the political leadership, and those focused on building a responsive, coercive state able to implement the will of the leadership and develop and extract the necessary resources for it. While the volume is still a work of its time, in its focus on personalized kingship as the default form of rule and on building effective state mechanisms to enforce and inform this rule, these two bedrock themes—effective political judgment by the leadership and a supportive implementation structure—recur throughout the text.

**The Mughal Empire**

The second case study is the Mughal empire, the political entity immediately preceding British colonial rule in India, the one that established political control over much of the territory that constitutes India today. Emperor Akbar I (1556–1605 A.D.) was a prominent member of the Mughal dynasty, who oversaw much of its political and territorial growth. His responses to the conditions he faced set much of the path of subsequent Mughal statecraft, and can also inform our search for underlying basic principles of grand strategy.

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Akbar faced different conditions from those imagined by Kautilya: the early Mughal empire did not enjoy a monopoly of force over its region, and the Indian subcontinent held a highly heterogeneous population with diverse religious and social traditions. In response to these conditions, Akbar began a process of gradual accretion of territory, and carefully incorporated its populations into the Mughal polity. This accommodationist strategy, an example of the Kautilyan emphasis on clear sighted politico-military judgment by the state leadership, was further reflected in the Mughal state consolidation. For Akbar, continued expansion and consolidation of his rule would not be complete without a supportive infrastructure of adequate capacity.

There were some differences between Akbar’s practice and Kautilya’s dictates. Where Kautilya had emphasized building the state’s coercive and extractive power, Akbar achieved this also through a logic of integration. The diverse political and social ecosystems he conquered would remain most loyal only if they secured stakes in the Mughal political system. Persian and native Indian aristocratic families, including Hindu Rajputs, were recruited aggressively into the Mughal political matrix as constituent members rather than voiceless tributaries. As Vivekanandan notes, “The Mughal imperium recognised the political significance of nurturing a composite ruling class and the centrality of debate and integration in building state capacity.” Developing the state as a mechanism of imperial political integration, and thus legitimization, was essential for further conquests.

23 Subrahmanyan, “Three Empires,” pp. 84-86.
24 Subrahmanyan, “Three Empires,” pp. 84-86.
However, this process did not obscure the ultimate authority in the Mughal system, nor its basic purpose of ensuring the emperor’s writ ran as far as possible to territorial outposts and low officials. Political centralization progressed alongside integration, and the diversification of the Mughal elite that was the result of integrative policy was still conditioned upon their recognizing that their positions were still to serve the emperor. Richards describes how this effective system was devised:

The young emperor resorted to a system of honorific ranks or mansabs derived from his Mongol background. From these precedents Akbar created a comprehensive system in which every officer or official was ranked. [...] Increases or decreases in rank followed no set rules but were dependent upon royal favour.26

Despite the seeming differences between Kautilyan and Mughal statecraft, some commonalities asserted themselves. Akbar paid particular attention to developing intelligence and surveillance capacities, and thus to the coordinative power of the state in transmitting sensitive information from territorial peripheries to the emperor.27 Economic policy also helped develop state resources. International trade was encouraged, and many internal tariffs and tolls were removed, reducing production and transport costs and integrating the imperial economy.28

The example of Akbar’s practice adds granularity to our exploration of grand strategy. The recurrent themes in these prominent cases of Indian authorship and practice of grand strategy, from different historical contexts, suggest that the basic precursors for a successful grand strategy are:

I. A well-informed political leadership able to balance competing priorities; deliver clear, integrated political judgment of external and internal policy; and allocate all appropriate state resources to meeting these ends;

II. A supportive state infrastructure that can develop, coordinate and integrate resources to inform, support and implement political judgments.

These two foundational requirements for a grand strategy differ from those for strategic, operational and tactical levels in their focus on marshalling all available resources toward the ends of policy, a concern reserved to the grand strategy level of statecraft. This study has policy, as well as theoretical relevance, by examining the contemporary Indian discourse on reform of the national security apparatus. As we

27 Vivekanandan, “Mughal Strategic Discourse,” p. 79.
will see, these implicitly target the absence of the second requirement—a supportive, integrative, coordinating defense policy infrastructure—and thus bemoan the poor functioning of Indian grand strategy. Recognizing this connection can further aid both theoretical development and the Indian defense reform process.

**The Grand Strategy Problem in Indian Defense**

The current Indian defense policy management system prioritizes ensuring control by elected politicians and civilian bureaucrats at the apex of the system over building integrative and coordinative capacity within the Ministry of Defence. This has been the case since independence in 1947, when the basic structures and underlying logic of the system was first devised. Here we will analyze the dysfunctions that emerge in defense policy from this design; how these resemble the absence of the second requirement of adequate state support for grand strategy development; and how recognizing this connection can support the likelihood of successful reform of this system in aid of Indian grand strategy development.

![Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru](image1.png) ![Lord Mountbatten](image2.png)

Founding Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru requested that Lord Mountbatten, the last Viceroy of British India, suggest an effective defense management system for the newly independent state. This task was assigned to Lord Ismay, an official serving Mountbatten. Seeking to prioritize civilian supremacy in defense policy, Ismay’s plans envisioned a robust vertical civilian ladder of authority and a decentralized military structure.29

A Defence Committee of the Cabinet sat at the top of the system. This committee would receive advice from—and direct orders to—the next level, the Defence Minister’s Committee, the highest committee on which military officials could sit. A Chief of Staffs Committee, consisting of the top official for each of the

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three services, served as the third level. This vertical structure clearly restricted the role of the military to lower tiers in the policymaking system. Nevertheless, to ensure some military cohesion and encourage coordinative capability within the defense system, Ismay reportedly recommended the establishment of a military chief of defense staff, who would speak for the uniformed services in a single voice to civilians.

However, Nehru refused to establish a chief of defense staff, and this proved the only one of Ismay’s principal recommendations that Nehru rejected in building the defense policy system. Nehru was concerned about empowering a military official as an alternative site of authority during the unstable early days of the state.

This system, designed by Ismay and Nehru, still exists. There are regular military frustrations at their inability in the system to attract the attention of senior civilian decision makers to defense issues. Frustrations have surfaced especially in the midst of several of India’s wars and crises. Most recently, in 2012, then-army chief V.K. Singh wrote a letter to then-Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in 2012 claiming substantial shortfalls in munitions, resulting from failings in the procurement procedures of the civilian bureaucracy, and arguing that military officers should take control of procurement where necessary. This criticism, alongside previous military objections to the policy structure, has emphasized a desire to build integrative planning throughout the defense system.

The lack of a truly integrative, coordinative state is highlighted by examining the Ministry of Defence. This design follows the same structural logic as the rest of the national security system of ensuring a decentralized military and civilian dominance in all policymaking. As a move toward a joint force, an Integrated Defence Staff (IDS) was set up in 2001 to coordinate the three military services.

However, the IDS's structural position further underscores the poor integration and coordination of resources within the Indian defense system. Rather than working closely within the Ministry of Defence, this institution is distanced

from the Ministry as an “attached office.” The IDS is staffed by officials from the Ministry of External Affairs, and from the Finance, Research and Development, as well as general Defence wings of the Ministry of Defence. While these layers of bureaucrats have little defense specialization, they form the primary link for the military with the political leadership. Their interactions have been documented acerbically by a former chief of the naval staff:

Under the present system, each department of the MoD forms a separate layer of bureaucracy; so a case emanating from the Service HQ, will receive independent scrutiny by the Department of Defence, and the Department of Defence Finance (and often the Ministry of Finance), and the queries are often sequential and repetitive. With many queries to be answered on file, and each file movement taking many weeks, it is no surprise that cases take years to fructify. 

This system perpetuates a lack of organized, coherent long-term defense planning; growing procurement backlogs as regional peers race ahead; and a reliance upon ad hoc responses to crises as they emerge. This proves more difficult to execute as the crises and technologies required grow more complex. Certainly, this is far from the coordinating, integrative policy structure that has marked successful instances of grand strategy development and implementation.

Reforms and the Grand Strategy Link

India’s defense reform campaign, led by defense scholars and military officials, has existed nearly as long as the current system itself. This drive focuses on extending resource integration and coordination throughout defense policymaking. Secondly, it recommends a state infrastructure able to adequately implement political judgments and to combine state resources to meet these judgments. This is currently missing in India. Recognizing this link between the grand strategy discourse and India’s defense predicament can help New Delhi develop a better articulation of political judgment to state resources.

The first major effort at defense reform came after India’s shocking defeat by China in the 1962 war. The defeat generated civil–military tensions and military demands for a greater integrated role in policy development following the war. This led to the implementation of some reforms. Defense expenditure was subsequently increased, and the military was given greater access to civilian policymakers. The latter was achieved through setting up regular “morning meetings” of the service chiefs with the defense minister. However, these often amounted to informal conversations, rather than following a set agenda with actionable outcomes.

35 "Organisation," Government of India, Integrated Defence Staff,
http://ids.nic.in/organisation.htm.
The military was also granted greater operational control, with more discretion permitted in how it executed political directives. To further support defense preparedness, a planning cell was set up in the Ministry of Defence. An initial defense plan was prepared for the period 1964–69, but the cell did not receive adequate political attention or resources to make a difference to defense policy management.® The cell was then divided into multiple cells in each defense division, overseen by a coordinating cell. However, the contribution of these cells amounted to a “compilation of different requirements (of various agencies) without any analysis.”\(^3^9\)

A reorganization of the Joint Intelligence Committee after the 1962 war had similar effects: members from different government agencies merely represented their agency interests and made little effort to coordinate them into cohesive planning. Despite the ostensibly substantive nature of the defense reforms, they ultimately did little to offer integrative structures within the system.

**Arun Singh Committee Report**

Another effort to reform the defense policy system came with the Arun Singh Committee Report in 1990. Understanding that individual civilian defense agencies resisted losing their bureaucratic position through creation of coordinating mechanisms, this “Committee on Defence Expenditure” limited its focus to reviewing financial aspects of defense policy management. Still, it recommended that each service chief obtain greater input regarding related expenditures, alongside other measures to encourage civil–military cooperation and transparency in procurement planning. Despite the mild nature of these recommendations, the political support and resourcing to implement them was not forthcoming, and the report was shelved.\(^4^0\)

The V.P. Singh government of 1989–90, which had commissioned the Arun Singh report, also showed an interest in a prospective National Security Council for India. A council was established, with a promising remit to “take a holistic view of national security issues in the light of the external, economic, political and military situations and their linkages with our domestic concerns and objectives.”\(^4^1\) The council consisted of the prime minister and ministers for defense, external affairs, finance and home affairs. Other government ministers,

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regional chief ministers and experts could attend as needed. The council was supported by a secretariat and a National Security Advisory Board. However, it met early with the now familiar, civilian bureaucratic resistance to losing ground through building integrative and coordinating structures. Plus, the council only met once before disappearing with the V.P. Singh government in 1990.

The incoming BJP-led government of 1998 established perhaps the most comprehensive defense reforms. A National Security Council was established, consisting of the prime minister and ministers of defense, external affairs, finance and home affairs. However, this council also included a new position of national security advisor, a civilian appointed to act as a new bridge from the defense policy structure to the Prime Minister's Office.

The next level down in the command chain is a Strategic Policy Group, which involves members from various individual agencies, including the three service chiefs and heads of the Department of Atomic Energy, Defence Research and Development Organization, and intelligence agencies, among others. Finally, there is a National Security Advisory Board comprised of security experts and retired civil servants, which gives nonbinding suggestions about defense policy to the command chain. While these changes have brought more coordination to defense planning, the relegation of military participation to the second tier of policy discussion and the absence of a single chief of defense staff means there is still not a truly integrative, coordinating defense policy structure.

Indeed, in establishing a small group of elected civilian officials without military advisors at the highest levels of the Council, these reforms could even be viewed as merely formalizing the existing practice of ad hoc decisions by an informal group of the prime minister and his close civilian confidants. The weak coordination mechanisms below the Council significantly undermines the state's capacity to integrate resources supportive of political judgments, such as through conducting long-term strategic planning and efficient procurement.

**Kargil Review Committee**

The progress yet to be achieved in building integration and coordination in the defense system was highlighted starkly by the 1999 Kargil war and the review report commissioned afterward. Intelligence agencies were surprised by the scale of incursions by Pakistan-based militants and the Pakistan army. The response was complicated by the Indian military inter-service distrust, creating problems in sharing information across services and for planning a multi-service response to the crisis.

43 Mukherjee, *Failing to Deliver*, pp. 10-12.
The Kargil Review Committee emphasized the need for better coordinating civilian and military inputs into the defense policymaking process. It also highlighted the poor management of intelligence collation and assessment, noting that: “There is no institutionalized mechanism for coordination or objective oriented interaction between intelligence agencies and consumers at different levels.” The report called for integrating Indian intelligence agencies, and moving the military headquarters within the Ministry of Defence, rather than keeping them structurally separate.46

The government convened a Group of Ministers in 2000 to assess the recommendations of the Kargil Review Committee. This group was divided into subcommittees examining implications for defense, intelligence, internal security, and border management. Their final report, issued in 2001, accepted most of the Kargil Review Committee’s suggestions. Notably missing, however, was the chief of defense staff, although an Integrated Defence Service was established within the Ministry of Defence including the three service chiefs. While many other proposals were implemented—for example encouraging the development of service think tanks, and bringing the three individual services closer to their civilian bureaucratic overseers through the Integrated Defence Staff—these proposals did not increase the coordinative and integrative capacity of the system, nor did they challenge the civilian bureaucracy by merging them or demoting their individual influence through creating new integrative structures.47

This underlying weakness of coordination, the second principal condition for a successful grand strategy, continues to be addressed with current defense reform efforts. The absence of defense and security policy coordination led to intelligence and response failures that exacerbated the horrific terrorist attack on Mumbai in 2008.48 Recognizing this continued need for integrative planning and responses in defense policy management, the Indian United Progressive Alliance government assembled another commission in 2011, chaired by former cabinet and defense secretary Naresh Chandra.

Rather than the previous call for a single chief of defense staff, this committee reportedly suggested an emphasis on the committee role in empowering the existing chair of the Chiefs of Staff Committee. The report further suggested greater bureaucratic cooperation, both in assigning more military servicemen to the Ministry of Defence, and ensuring better relations between the Ministries of Defence, External Affairs and Home Affairs.49 It also called for three new operational commands incorporating all three military services, and building

46 For the Kargil Review Committee report recommendations, see Annexure B of Government of India, Group of Ministers Report on Reforming the National Security System (New Delhi: Government of India, 2001), pp. 121-123.
coordinative capacity across the Integrated Defence Staff. However, the report itself remains classified, and it appears to have been shelved by the government.

The defense reform drive, therefore, implicitly targets this second condition of a sufficiently integrative and coordinative state structure required for a grand strategy to operate. Several Indian experts released a prominent report further contending that the lack of coordinative practices extends to several aspects of government, including economic and technology development, as well as defense policy management.\textsuperscript{50} Indeed, as Ashley Tellis has concluded, reforming this system is a core requirement for India to adequately manage its resources and align these with political objectives:

What does all this imply in terms of conclusions about India’s capacity to develop the defense capabilities that would make it a great power in this century? My argument essentially would be that its capacity to master the creation, deployment and use of military instruments is still not assured at this point in time.\textsuperscript{51}

\textbf{Conclusion}

As the defense reform campaign continues to progress, its recommendations are becoming more numerous and detailed. As policymakers consider these various suggestions, we propose that the bedrock aim of their response should recognize the ultimate link of this discourse to that of grand strategy, and uphold the principle of extending coordination and integration throughout the defense policy system.

While this may appear an obvious suggestion, it may be lost in the midst of discussions on, for example, the most politically acceptable variation of a chief of defense staff position.\textsuperscript{52} As illustrated, Indian history contains rich resources to build into the academic-theoretical debate on grand strategy. Our analysis of the two essential elements for grand strategy to successfully function, which have remained largely similar across the Kautilyan, Mughal and current eras, will help develop both the theoretical discourse on grand strategy and policymaking in India, as well as in other states aiming to develop and implement a coherent grand strategy.

Solutions to the Indian grand strategy problem are available from its own past. However, to crystallize the current debate on reform proposals on national security management and ease the path to their possible adoption, policymakers should assess each proposal on its contribution to building the coordinative and integrative capacity of the system. This perspective will aid India in fielding a grand strategy that best matches political judgment to all available supportive resources.

\textsuperscript{50} Sunil Khilnani, et al., \textit{Nonalignment 2.0: A Foreign and Strategic Policy for India in the Twenty-First Century} (New Delhi: Centre for Policy Research, 2012).


\textsuperscript{52} The Naresh Chandra defense reform committee reportedly held robust debates on this specific concern. See Nitin Gokhale, “Hopes for Indian Defence Reform Fade,” \textit{The Diplomat}, Indian Strategic Studies, Dec. 20, 2013.