

# **Report on Interaction with a Delegation from Centre for Defence Strategic Studies (CDSS), Australia**

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**General.** A delegation from Centre for Defence Strategic Studies (CDSS) interacted with CENJOWS on 06 Jun 2011. The team comprised 16 officers (Civil and Military) including seven officers from the other East Asian countries. Director Emeritus, Lt General (Retd) AS Kalkat, SYSM, PVSM, AVSM, VSM warmly welcomed the team lead by Dr Ryan and accompanied Defence attaché from Australia. He opened the meeting with brief reference to the historical perspective Australian Armed Forces, and Australian Defence white paper 2009, wherein a broad statement of Defence vision with a stake in the maintenance of an Asia-Pacific regional security environment with strategic interest in the security, stability of its immediate neighbourhood namely, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, East Timor, New Zealand and the South Pacific island states is given. Director Emeritus also highlighted the significant contributions of Australian Armed Forces at their national and international level.

## **Issues Discussed.**

The discussion on Strategic defence issued followed a brief presentation on vision and purpose of CENJOWS by the Director, Maj Gen (Retd) KB Kapoor, VSM. The presentation by the director had generated a considerable interest among the audience. Their queries essentially related to the Higher Defence decision structure at the national level, India's integrated defence structure and integrated defence planning, India's defence procurement and production policy, unsolved border issue with China and India's Look East Policy.

**Higher Defence Structure.** The roles of Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) and National Security Advisor (NSA) were explained to the team by the Director. He also allayed their misconception that in absence of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) India would not be able react to the threats in the integrated manner. They were explained the existing joint structure comprising Chairman, Chief of Staff Committee (COSC) and creation of the institution of Integrated Defence Staff (IDS) under the Chief of Integrated Defence Staff to the Chiefs of Staff Committee (CISC)

synergises the capabilities of three services. Hence, we don't suffer from any operational handicap. However, consultations on adopting a suitable concept of CDS are being actively pursued at an appropriate level.

India's Procurement and Production Policies. The team was told that India is giving considerable attention in developing its indigenous defence production base but, till we attain a reasonable level of capability. With modernisation of defence forces on the anvil, the high end technology defence equipment with full transfer of technology is carried out so that we reduce dependence on further import. Thereafter, the highlights of existing Defence procurement policy and participation of Civil Industry in defence production were explained to the delegation.

Defence Planning. On our defence planning, it was clarified that as on now the defence planning is based on threat based approach but, once we develop adequate capability, we could follow the capability based approach in defence planning

Border Issue with China. On a query on un-resolved border issue with China, Gen Kalkat explained that main reason for the unsolved border issue with China is due to trust deficit between the two countries. To solve the outstanding border issue, both China and India would need to further enhance their bilateral trade and show sensitivity to each other's concerns.

Impact of Caste and Religion. Yet on another question on constitution of defence forces, Gen Kalkat clarified that not only our defence forces are scrupulously apolitical but, there is no differentiation on the basis of caste, creed and religion and every personnel gets equal opportunity to progress in service as per his competence.

Look East Policy. We pay great deal of importance to our relations with Southeast and East Asian countries. There was some neglect in this area about two decades ago due our involvement in regional problems but, this situation has been corrected by laying emphasis on areas of common interest and trade. In pursuance to this policy, India recently has signed a free trade agreement on goods with ASEAN; another agreement on services is on the anvil which is expected to uplift the trade from current \$ 60 billion level which is presently highly biased towards ASEAN.

Conclusion. The discussion concluded after the delegation members clarified our queries on constitution of Australian Armed Forces composition which is predominantly biased towards Air and naval wings with a small component of Army and Australian reservation on non supply of Uranium to India.

(Report compiled by Gp Capt (Retd) GD Sharma, VSM, Sr Fellow)