



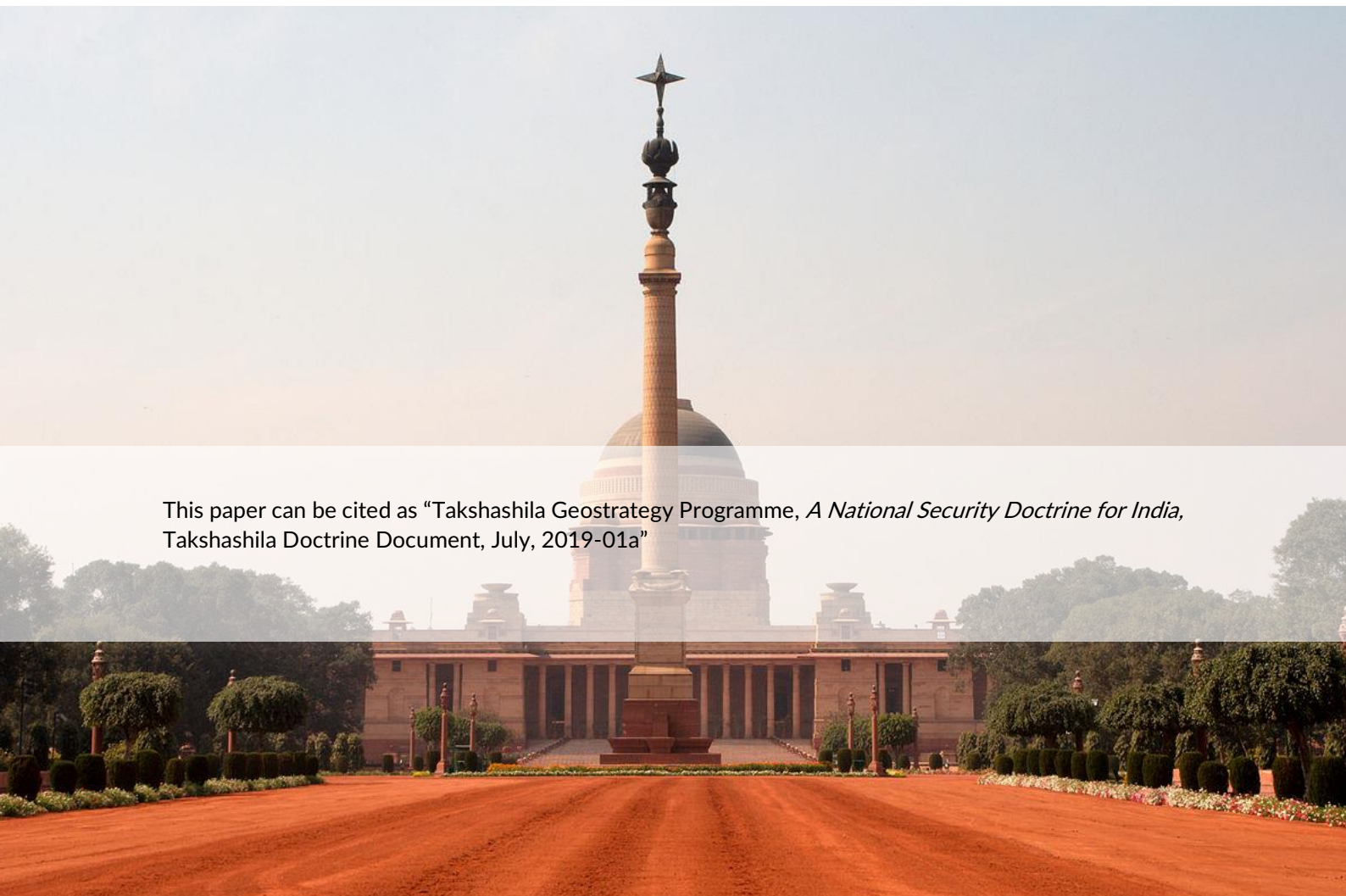
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# *Takshashila Doctrine Document* A National Security Doctrine for India

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<sup>1</sup> This document is prepared for the purpose of discussion and debate and does not necessarily constitute Takshashila’s policy recommendations. To contact us about the research, write to [research@takshashila.org.in](mailto:research@takshashila.org.in)

# The Doctrine

The guiding light of a National Security Doctrine should be *Yogakshema*.

बलं शक्तिः | सुखं सिद्धिः|

“Strength is power. And well-being is the goal.”

(Arthashastra, 6.2.31,32)

1. To create and defend a conducive environment for *yogakshema* (well-being, prosperity, and happiness) of all Indians. At this stage of India’s development, national security is primarily focused on protecting and promoting India’s economic development.
  - a. As a *Swing Power*, we must seek to shape the world’s political, economic, and technological order
  - b. And defend India’s interconnectedness with the world
2. National security also includes protecting the constitutional order, individual liberty, territory, social cohesion, and national resources.
  - a. Securing the Republic of India and its institutions
  - b. Protecting the rights of all Indians
  - c. Comprehensive view of territory including land, sea, air, space, and cyberspace
  - d. National strength ultimately derives from social cohesion
  - e. Sustain and enhance natural, environmental, and social capital
3. Amass and project power across all domains.
  - a. Develop both continental and maritime power projection capabilities
  - b. Develop comprehensive deterrence across all domains
  - c. Humane and effective management of internal security
  - d. Develop intelligence as a credible instrument of statecraft
4. Reimagine national security capacity
  - a. Boost the fighting spirit of the armed forces
  - b. Federal “whole of government” approach to national security management
  - c. Nurture a globally competitive defence technology industry
  - d. Build leadership across government that understands the prudent use of power

# Explaining the Doctrine

In the 21st century, India faces challenges of unprecedented scale and complexity that necessitate new ways of thinking about national security. We propose that *yogakshema*, an idea pioneered in the Arthashastra<sup>1</sup>, should be the guiding light of India's national security doctrine. Simply put, the State must provide security, *kshema*, and economic opportunities, *yoga*, to all its citizens. In June 2019, we proposed 4 points to achieve this.

1. To create and defend a conducive environment for *yogakshema* (well-being, prosperity, and happiness) of all Indians. At this stage of India's development, national security is primarily focused on protecting and promoting India's economic development.
2. National security also includes protecting the constitutional order, individual liberty, territory, social cohesion, and national resources.
3. Amass and project power across all domains.
4. Reimagine national security capacity.

This document aims to elaborate on these points and elucidate the strategic reasoning behind them. In the first section of this document, we address the question of how a national security doctrine can provide opportunities for prosperity. India has a special place in the global order thanks to its large, young population and its critical geopolitical position. Its status as a swing power should be leveraged to shape global debates in ways that benefit its citizens. This is a matter of critical national interest: India's economy is deeply connected to the world, and citizens' prosperity depends on them being able to import and export goods and services on favourable terms.

The rest of the document addresses questions of *kshema*. Within India's borders, the State must ensure that the rule of law is implemented within the bounds laid out by the Constitution. The Republic of India's institutions must be kept effective and efficient. And citizens' rights - no matter their caste, class, gender, or creed - must be defended.

Beyond India's borders, in an anarchic, multipolar world, we argue that India must amass and project power across all domains, so it can defend its citizens' interests in all domains. This means thinking about India's "territory" in new ways - it's no longer just about land, but about maritime domains, air, space and cyberspace. It also means that India needs to think about power as something the State can leverage in many ways in the global order. India needs to use all the means at its disposal to shape the world's diplomatic, economic, and technological order. In summary, the overriding imperative of a national security doctrine is to provide *yogakshema*.

## 1. To create and defend a conducive environment for *yogakshema* of all Indians.

To Kautilya, composer of ancient India's premier text on statecraft, *yogakshema* encapsulated the basic duties of a State towards its citizens. In this vision, peaceful enjoyment of prosperity was to be the primary goal of a Kautilyan state rather than defending territorial integrity or protecting ethnic identities. It is this individual-centric perspective that India should strive to retain in thinking about the objectives of a national security policy.

The Indian State today must thus aim to protect and promote India's economic development. By positioning the interests of the citizen and the individual at the centre, a national security doctrine must rethink what defines India's interests in the world order, and the means by which they may be advanced.

### 1a. As a Swing Power, we must seek to shape the world's political, economic, and technological order

A Swing Power is, by nature of its friendly relationships with other powers, able to change the contours of international debate through selective support on various issues. For example, if India's relationships with the US and China were better than the relationships the US and China share between themselves, India could arbitrage the engagement to act as a balancer on international issues while advancing the national interest on others.

Since Independence (and well before), India has been able to play this role not only within the Indian Ocean region but the world at large. With a significant proportion of the world's population within its borders - a population that is overwhelmingly young - India is poised to shape the world in deep ways in the years to come. India's strategic and regulatory choices on data privacy, tech infrastructure, market access, and defence acquisition - among others - will have significant effects on its neighbourhood, on the world's superpowers, and relations with these actors. It is in India's interests that these choices be judicious, calculated, and help shape a global order that will be conducive to maximising the *yogakshema* of our citizens.

### 1b. Defend India's interconnectedness with the world

India's economic, technological, and political connectivity with the post-war world has significantly improved the lives of its citizens. In the years to come, this connectivity will be critical in ensuring favourable outcomes for consumers, manufacturers, and all participants in India's economy. India should resist the temptation to cut itself off from these opportunities, and indeed pursue policies that increase access to them. Owing to their tremendous importance for economic development, India needs to ensure

that these connections are not jeopardised by actors either within or beyond its borders.

## 2. National security also includes protecting the constitutional order, individual liberty, territory, social cohesion, and national resources.

The term national security encompasses protection not just from external adversaries but also from internal threats. It extends beyond the defence of borders to ensuring social harmony, individual freedom, and even sustainable national resource management.

### 2a. Securing the Republic of India and its institutions

A republic is governed by the rule of law and not the rule of majority of men or women. This idea of the Republic is critical for protection of individuals' rights.

The Republic of India's institutions, as set up by the Constitution, provide a system of checks and balances to ensure the responsible exercise of State power. In order to ensure that citizens' rights are protected, and to ensure that the Republic functions as the Constitution intends, institutional health is thus a critical priority for the State. This ranges from bodies such as the RBI, to the Competition Commission, the Civil Services, the Election Commission and others. While it might seem paradoxical to expect the State to limit itself in this manner, we hold that a healthy, secure Republic needs to do exactly that.

### 2b. Protecting the rights of all Indians

In the absence of the rule of law, anarchy is inevitable - whether it is called the State of Nature or the Law of the Fishes (*matsya-nyaya*)<sup>2</sup>. It is the existence of a State that makes enforcement of individual rights possible. The fundamental rights in the Indian Constitution provide a clear basis for the state's social contract with its citizens, the bedrock for its provision of *yogakshema*.

A State that does not provide these rights to all its citizens - irrespective of gender, caste, class, or creed - has failed in its basic duties. A national quest to strengthen Indian power means little if it does not secure the rights and safety of all Indians. This demands capacity-building in various domains, from law enforcement to judiciary capacity and beyond.

### 2c. Comprehensive view of territory including land, sea, air, space, and cyberspace

Technological advances have made it possible for States to project power into new domains throughout human history. Just as air and undersea power came into existence in the 20th century, space and cyberspace are

more accessible than they have ever been in the 21st century. They will pose security challenges and economic risks to states. Many States are already investing in developing the ability to project power into these new territories.

India's national security doctrine must aim to provide *yogakshema* to Indian citizens in whatever domain they inhabit: safety from threats and access to opportunities, whether in sea-lanes, satellite orbits, or social media.

## 2d. National strength ultimately derives from social cohesion

A democratic nation-state torn by social strife will inevitably struggle to build consensus to foster coherent long-term strategies. Arguably, the need for social cohesion (though often in an inequitable form) has preoccupied Indian thinkers and rulers, and a deliberate policy of building support in multiple social constituencies in a diverse society is apparent throughout the subcontinent's history.

Even the *Arthashastra* wrangles with the ideas of *dharma* (a concept derived from the Sanskrit root *dhr* - "to uphold, to maintain", a cosmic principle which engages with the ordering of societies<sup>3</sup>). India's history is also replete with examples of syncretism and tolerance of diverse social and religious traditions, from the Kushan to the Mughal Empires, from the Sangam Period to the Deccan Sultanates.

India's Constitution enshrines ideas and values that seek to inculcate this culture of tolerance, and the Indian state must fiercely defend and uphold them. It is in the national interest that all Indians are invested in the survival and integrity of the nation-state. A free society based on respectful mutual coexistence, ruled by a legitimate State dedicated to ensuring its survival, is the ideal outcome.

Social cohesion will arise if the nation-state provides *yogakshema* to all. Political will arises from social cohesion. Power arises from political will, and the broader its base, the better.

## 2e. Sustain and enhance natural, environmental, and human capital

India faces severe issues in terms of water availability, air quality, and management of natural resources. This makes it difficult to ensure sustainable long-term growth, which ultimately harms citizens' *yogakshema*.

We suggest that a better way to think about India's resources is to think about the maximisation of its human capital. This requires an approach to development that emphasises the economic productivity of all citizens as determined by their health, employability, and other indicators. Such a view

forces the State to ensure that citizens live within, and interact with, urban and natural environments in sustainable ways.

### 3. Amass and project power across all domains.

*Matsya-nyaya* still prevails in the domain of inter-State conduct. The rules of the game that apply to international affairs and geopolitics are very different from the domestic context. There is no constitution or a written code of conduct here. There is no sovereign authority that can impose itself on all the nations of the world. The fundamental law which then applies to international relations is that of Power. It is therefore imperative that a State amass and project power, even if only to preserve its own interests and those of its citizens. In an interconnected world where the interests of Indian citizens exist in the maritime, continental, digital, and other domains, the State must thus have the ability to deter and coerce rivals in all these spaces in order to provide *yogakshema*.

#### 3a. Develop both continental and maritime power projection capabilities

Despite having the world's second largest armed force, the Indian State's power projection and deterrence capabilities are somewhat weighted in favour of its continental borders rather than its maritime borders. While India faces powerful rivals armed with nuclear deterrents in Asia, its maritime geography is far more favourable.

An appropriate balance must thus be found between India's continental and maritime power. India's maritime geography must be harnessed to project power across the Indian Ocean, in order to deter rivals and reassure allies within and beyond the neighbourhood. This must proceed alongside an extensive reorientation and modernisation of India's continental power projection capabilities. These will bolster India's status as a major power, secure the *kshema* of its citizens, and expand its ability to secure favourable diplomatic and economic outcomes for them.

#### 3b. Develop comprehensive deterrence across all domains

21st century nation-states are seeking to assert sovereignty across more domains - with Russia, China and Iran formulating concepts of cyber-sovereignty and looking to develop capabilities in cyberspace and space. As touched upon in 2C, India must ensure security for its citizens in these domains, and this means it must invest in building deterrent capabilities in all domains where its citizens are present - land, sea, air, space, and cyberspace - in order to ensure *kshema*.

To achieve this, some doctrinal and conceptual shifts may be needed. Given India's current resource constraints, deterrence may sometimes need to be developed in an asymmetric manner, focussing on rivals' vulnerabilities while maximising India's advantages.

### 3c. Humane and effective management of internal security

For decades now, India's security forces (as mandated by the political leadership) have been engaged in containing violence in certain parts that have become hotbeds of violence and insurgency. Even though the root of these internal security issues is rising social discontent rooted in the unfulfilled aspirations of individuals, the deployment of security forces occurs in a void of policy action. Generations of India's citizens have been subject to or witnesses of violence with no clear end in sight.

The challenge for the State is thus two-fold: first, to counter the violence caused by its own people using humane, constitutional methods; and second, to address the aspirations of discontented citizens through the provision of *yogakshema*.

### 3d. Develop intelligence as a credible instrument of statecraft

A strong intelligence machinery is a critical element of a state's national power. It can successfully identify opportunities for low-cost, high-impact interventions and inform decision-making to attain a comparative advantage in a wide array of domains.

With the objective of reducing uncertainty, the mandate of every intelligence community (IC) is typically understood as a two-piece puzzle that combines strategy with tactics. At the strategic level, information is analysed to shape security plans and policy. Tactical intelligence is understood as an amalgamation of two parts – anticipatory intelligence and on-going operations. India has been fairly successful in tasks pertaining to anticipatory intelligence by detecting, identifying and alerting authorities about potential threats to national security. Though a few failures have become known, the IC in India has also successfully carried out covert operations and continues to do so. The strategic level of intelligence use, however, has not received the necessary attention and remains almost neglected. An extensive study of existing systems is needed. This is the first step in forming a well-founded response to existing threats to national security whilst also mapping the path to thwarting threats that may arise.

In addition, for intelligence to remain a credible instrument of statecraft in future, reforming the IC must remain an on-going process with constant review of the capacity of the agencies and developing capabilities in order to comprehend and tackle rapidly changing security concerns.

## 4. Reimagine national security capacity

National security capacity is not limited to equipment and numbers, but also depends on the efficiency with which power can be converted to various forms and applied across domains, on morale, and on the ability of India's leadership to deploy it in a considered manner.



#### 4a. Boost the fighting spirit of Armed Forces

Any country with a large armed force - especially one aiming to be a major power - must ensure that its soldiers are ready, willing and able to serve. Their morale is intimately connected to welfare measures that provide assurances to them, which necessitates that India take care of its soldiers, during and after their service.

Public opinion plays an equally important role in boosting the fighting spirit of the armed forces. Civil-military relations should be nurtured both in peacetime and during times of conflict through continuous interaction and the use of strategic communication tools.

#### 4b. Federal “whole of government” approach to national security management

The complex nature of war also requires India to develop joint services structure commands at the earliest, with a Chief of Defence Staff as a permanent institutional body responsible for the deployment of force in space and cyberspace as well.

However, national security management is not only the domain of the armed forces, and the State has a wide array of economic, military and diplomatic tools it could potentially deploy to coerce potential threats. These include market access, visa controls, investment deals, diplomatic support, and so on. Every possible means should be developed and integrated into a toolkit used by the national leadership to preserve and advance citizens' *yogakshema*.

#### 4c. Nurture a globally competitive defence technology industry

Self-development of defence technologies not only has positive strategic implications but can help achieve economic objectives as well. Promoting investments in R&D and manufacturing of defence technologies and allowing private players into the market (either independently or via partnerships) would help India develop and manufacture new assets at significant scale. These enhanced capabilities must be supported by efforts to establish credibility in the global arms industry.

#### 4d. Build leadership across government that understands the prudent use of power

In order to engage with the world in a way that advances the national interest, it is critical that relevant segments of the political, military and civil services leadership understand the dynamics of the global environment. Legislators, policymakers and implementers must have the ability to not only navigate complex international spaces but also to exercise power within them. This necessitates capacity-building and coordination at all levels of government.

This may be achieved in many ways. University curricula on diplomacy and statecraft should be updated and used to build a talent pool. Dedicated institutional research services and training programmes for new legislators could be developed so that they have an understanding of the tools of statecraft available to them and the latest trends in the development and deployment of power. They should be able to make informed decisions on issues ranging from military modernisation to technology policy without responding to them purely due to the advice of bureaucrats or short-term public pressure and adopt a long-term view that serves the national interest.

## Conclusion

The Kautilyan concept of *yogakshema* is a powerful tool to think through what constitutes national interest and how to advance it. Through the course of this document, we have used it to propose broad ideas on how to think about national security. This is a *doctrine*, not a *strategy*: the principles discussed could form the basis of detailed strategies dealing with issues such as cybersecurity, expeditionary capabilities, or data privacy guidelines.

# References

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<sup>1</sup> *Arthashastra* 6.2.31-32.

<sup>2</sup> *Arthashastra* 1.4.14, 1.13.5.

<sup>3</sup> Holdrege, Barbara A. "Dharma." In Mittal, Sushil, and Gene Thursby, eds. *The Hindu World*. New York: Routledge, 2004. 213.