



**Dr Manoj Joshi on**

## **Transformation and Jointness : The Chinese Way\***

**T**ransformation and jointness are two concepts that need examination, the first obviously being a more expansive concept incorporating concepts, doctrines, equipment and organisation. Rightly understood, military transformation is less about emerging technologies, hardware and software, and far more about the mindset of military and civilian professionals dealing with defence.

The term 'jointness', means different things to different people; in the US Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, 'joint' is as in any activity, operation or organisation in which elements of two military departments participate. In this analysis the term is used to mean the effective integration of the combat capabilities of the three services. In the United States, the evolution of this 'effective integration', as

well as the mind set among military officers who facilitate it, has progressed unevenly since the passage of the Goldwater Nichols Act of 1986.

America now fights wars almost solely under joint commands. Most recently and vividly, this was seen in the integration of combat effects in Afghanistan and Iraq. In addition, there were operations in the so-called global war on terrorism. What these operations revealed that from the top to the tactical level, there was a great deal of interoperability. I recall an example of an article I read which said that a captain seeking a strike against a particular target could expect his needs to be met through an air force jet flying overhead, an Army ATACMS missile or a cruise missile fired by a Navy ship or submarine.

There also have been less pronounced but consistent successes toward jointness

made in peacetime—the steady evolution in joint doctrine and exercises, for one example. But it is also the case that jointness has failed to evolve in other areas in which it was anticipated and intended by the framers of the Goldwater-Nichols Act. There are still only few standing joint forces ready for joint deployment and employment and, rather, forces are, by and large, still assembled only at the time of deployment. Further, there has been only glacial movement toward such joint force.

The Goldwater Nichols perspective was to leverage the capabilities of individual services to meet the requirements of the joint force. While the challenge now is to move towards a joint interdependency where, as the Chinese see it, 1+1+1+1 will be greater than 4, or in other words, service capabilities are magnified through integration.