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## India needs a 'National Security Strategy'

(The Hindu, 23-09-24)

### What is National Security Strategy (NSS) and why it is important for a Nation like India?

- A National Security Strategy (NSS) is a comprehensive, high-level document that outlines a country's strategic vision, objectives, and priorities for safeguarding its national security interests.
- It serves as a **guiding framework** for defense, foreign, and internal security policies, encompassing both traditional and non-traditional threats
- Given the flux in the neighborhood and changing global dynamics, a well-defined NSS signals a nation's resolve and enhances its **deterrence posture**.
- An NSS can articulate India's vision for regional cooperation and **promote stability in its neighborhood**
- **Economic ambitions** to become a \$4 trillion economy can be realised if there is clear security strategy
- It helps prioritize **resource allocation** based on the identified threats and challenges. Ex: Indo-Pacific theatre as priority will make sure that Submarine strength is increased.
- It facilitates a broader **national consensus** on security priorities, fostering public awareness and support for national security initiatives.
- A well-defined NSS fosters Strategic Communication in an increasingly interconnected world

### How do different countries approach their national security strategies?

- U.S.: Balances values and national interests, focuses on maintaining leadership
- UK: Stresses working with allies for a global role, even when it is an exaggeration
  - UK can hardly afford aircraft for its carriers, but it still helps to project oneself as a "European power with global interests".
- France: Used to restate nuclear deterrent and bid for European leadership
- These strategies often serve as power projection exercises, both internally and externally
  - Externally, it is aimed to put the fear of god into such newly rising upstarts as China, and, internally, to project strength and determination to voters

### Why challenges do India face in coming up with NSS?

- Requires a clear statement of threat (ex: China), which could complicate diplomatic relations (not just with China but also other relations)
- Needs to address sensitive issues like defense capabilities and weaknesses (ex: India's submarine strength is about a fourth of China's)
- Must allow for foreign policy flexibility (e.g., balancing stance on conflicts like that of Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Gaza)
- Transparency benefits strong nations, not those Nations (like India) that is struggling to become a global power.
- Public documents may demand chest-thumping, which could be counterproductive especially in India where it can face political opposition.

### What should be the way forward?

- Integration of economic priorities with security concerns

- Setting direction for industry, financial institutions, and other economic sectors
- Keeping it simple, short, and specific
- Maintaining secrecy during the preparation stage to protect strategic interests

*Can you answer the following question?*

*Critically examine the need for a National Security Strategy in India, discussing the challenges in formulating such a strategy and the potential benefits it could bring to the country's strategic interests.*

## **Capturing the cost of healthy diets**

(The Hindu, 23-09-24)

### **What is the current state of nutrition in India?**

- Despite falling poverty rates and rising incomes, India struggles with nutritional outcomes
- High rates of undernutrition among children persist
- Rising rates of anaemia among adults
- Increasing prevalence of obesity and overweight in both rural and urban areas

### **Why is the cost of healthy diets a concern in India?**

- 55.6% of India's population (788 million people) could not afford a nutritionally adequate diet as of 2022
- Rising food prices, especially for nutritious foods like vegetables, fruits, pulses, and eggs
- Stagnating or declining real wages make healthy diets increasingly expensive

### **What are the limitations of the 'Thalinomics' approach to measuring food costs?**

- Does not adequately reflect nutritional recommendations
- Excludes several nutrient-rich food groups (e.g., green leafy vegetables, dairy, nuts and seeds)
- Relies on outdated consumer expenditure data
- Does not account for diversity in tastes and local food availability

### **What alternative method do the authors propose for measuring the cost of a healthy diet?**

- Cost of a Healthy Diet (CoHD) metric
- Uses readily available price data, not relying on expensive household consumption surveys
- Based on food group-wise energy recommendations from national Food-Based Dietary Guidelines
- Captures short-term fluctuations in costs of perishable nutritious foods
- Provides a more accurate representation of the true cost of nutritious diets, especially during crises

*Can you answer the following question?*

*Discuss the limitations of the current 'Thalinomics' approach and evaluate the potential benefits of adopting a Cost of Healthy Diet (CoHD) metric for policy-making and nutritional intervention strategies.*