

Cabinet Committee on Security(CCS)

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Cabinet Committee on Security(CCS) : Safeguarding India's Sovereignty

Context

In response to the **recent terrorist attack in Pahalgam**, Jammu and Kashmir, the **Prime Minister convened an urgent meeting** of the **Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS)** at his residence. The attack, seen as a major threat to India's internal security and sovereignty, necessitated immediate strategic and diplomatic decisions. Such high-level meetings signify the critical role of institutional mechanisms in addressing national security challenges in real time.

Cabinet Committees and the CCS

Cabinet Committees are **extra-constitutional bodies**, meaning they are **not mentioned in the Constitution of India**. They are constituted under the **Transaction of Business Rules, 1961** to streamline governance and decision-making in vital areas.

The **Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS)** is the apex body responsible for:

- Making decisions on **national security, internal law and order, and defence expenditure**.
- Addressing urgent concerns related to **external security and strategic policies**.
- Deliberating on matters of **atomic energy**.

The CCS also plays a crucial role in **major appointments** within the national security architecture.

Composition of the CCS

The composition of the CCS is as follows:

- **Prime Minister** (Chairperson)
- **Defence Minister**
- **Home Minister**
- **Finance Minister**
- **External Affairs Minister**

Additionally, depending on the situation, the **Chiefs of the Armed Forces**, **senior bureaucrats**, and the **National Security Advisor (NSA)**, presently **Ajit Doval**, attend and assist in discussions. The **Cabinet Secretariat** is responsible for maintaining the records of all CCS meetings.

Past Instances of CCS Meetings

The CCS has historically been activated during:

- **India-Pakistan wars of 1965 and 1971**
- **Kargil Conflict, 1999**
- **Kandahar hijacking, 1999**

These instances underline the CCS's critical role during periods of national crisis.

Recent Decisions by CCS After Pahalgam Attack

Following the attack, the CCS announced a series of tough measures:

- **Suspension of Indus Waters Treaty (1960):**
India will hold the treaty in abeyance until Pakistan **credibly and irreversibly stops supporting terrorism**.
- **Closure of Integrated Check Post at Attari:**
The **Attari-Wagah border** will be closed immediately, halting cross-border movement.
- **Suspension of SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme (SVES):**

Special visa exemptions for South Asian nations under SVES will be suspended.

- **Diplomatic Measures:**

- **Defence, Naval, and Air Advisors** in the **Pakistani High Commission** in New Delhi are declared **Persona Non Grata** and given a **week to leave** India.
- India will also **withdraw its Defence, Navy, and Air Advisors** from the **Indian High Commission in Islamabad**.
- **Five support staff** related to the defence advisors will be withdrawn.
- The **strength of both High Commissions** will be **reduced from 55 to 30** personnel.

Significance of the CCS Response

The CCS's swift and decisive action reflects:

- India's firm **zero-tolerance policy towards terrorism**.
- Increasing importance of **national security in foreign policy**.
- Strategic use of **water diplomacy** as a pressure tool.
- Assertion of India's **sovereign right** to safeguard internal peace and stability.
- Setting a precedent for a **tough diplomatic posture** in the future against state-sponsored terrorism.

The developments also highlight the need for continuous evolution of India's security mechanisms in the face of emerging hybrid threats.

"The price of freedom is eternal vigilance." — Thomas Jefferson

Source : The Hindu